



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

#### Forty-sixth Session

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This document highlights evolving policies and related matters of FAO and WHO that could be of interest or relevance to the work of Codex and is structured as follows:

**Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO:** 3.1 *World Food Safety Day*, 3.2 *UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025*, 3.3 *UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment*, 3.4 *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023*, 3.5 *Healthy Diets guidelines*, 3.6 *Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative*, 3.7 *FAO and WHO's work on AMR*, 3.8 *Joint FAO/WHO Scientific Advice to Codex Alimentarius*.

**Matters arising from FAO:** 4.1 *FAO Governing bodies*, 4.2 *FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031*, 4.3 *Agrifood systems transformation agenda*, 4.4 *FAO's work on marine biotoxins*, 4.5 *FAO's work on food fraud for fisheries and aquaculture products*, 4.6 *FAO's work on e-notifications for fisheries and aquaculture products*, 4.7 *Update on the Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition*, 4.8 *Development of the Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition*, 4.9 *FAO's work on harmful algal blooms*, 4.10 *FAO Good Hygienic Practices and HACCP toolbox for Food Safety*, 4.11 *Literature review on the impact on the gut microbiome of pesticides residues, microplastics and veterinary drugs*, 4.12 *Laboratory methods supporting Codex standards*, 4.13 *Joint FAO/IAEA Centre International Symposium on Food Safety and Control, 27 to 31 May 2024*, 4.14 *Food safety and new/emerging technologies*, 4.15 *Food Safety in the Circular Economy*, 4.16 *Food safety implications from the use of environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems*

**Matters arising from WHO:** 5.1 *World Health Assembly Resolution and The Update of WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety*, 5.2 *Healthy Diets guidelines*, 5.3 *Food environment policy guidelines*, 5.4 *WHO update to the recommendation on the quantity and duration of ready-to-use therapeutic food for treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema*, 5.5 *Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is now on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML)*, 5.6 *WHO guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and children 6-23 months of age*, 5.7 *WHO technical support on the Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes*, 5.8 *Elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids*, 5.9 *Population sodium/salt intake reduction*, 5.10 *Alcohol*, 5.11 *World Health Assembly Decision on Traditional Food Markets*

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 CCEXEC and CAC are invited to:

- note the information given in this document; and
- take necessary actions to best take into consideration the policies of the parent organizations.

## 3. Matters arising jointly from FAO and WHO:

### 3.1 *World Food Safety Day*

3.1.1 For the fifth time, WHO and FAO, the parent organizations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, jointly facilitated the observance of the World Food Safety Day inviting governments, food businesses, non-profit organizations, academia, schools, universities and consumers around the world to come together on

June 7 in order to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks. The campaign started on 7 March 2023 with the launch of the theme “Food standards save lives”. Over 500 initiatives took place in 139 countries including conferences, webinars, training sessions, workshops, sporting events and video campaigns. WHO and FAO Directors-General opened the global high-level event<sup>1</sup> hosted at FAO headquarters in Rome by FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat on June 7. The news articles summarizing many of the activities are available on the WFSM website.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.2 UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025**

3.2.1 The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2016,<sup>3</sup> aims to accelerate implementation of the ICN2 commitments, achieve the global nutrition and diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets by 2025, and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to the leadership of Brazil, UN General Assembly resolution 77/285<sup>5</sup> on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition was adopted on 16 May 2023, which was based on the third progress report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025).<sup>6</sup> The resolution reaffirmed Member States’ commitment to undertake 10 years of sustained and coherent implementation of policies, programmes and increase investments to eliminate malnutrition in all its forms, everywhere, leaving no one behind. UN Member States also emphasized the need to advance the global nutrition agenda in a manner consistent with the right to adequate food and in a coherent way across multiple sectors, and to maintain political momentum to scale up nutrition action in the context of the follow-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

3.2.2 Progress reports on the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition were also submitted to the WHO Executive Board held in January-February 2023<sup>7</sup> and to the FAO Programme Committee held in March 2023<sup>8</sup> and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to be discussed in October 2023. The reporting on nutrition action in these important multilateral forums cannot be underestimated as this periodic reporting stimulates Member States and other stakeholders to regularly assess progress towards achievement of global and national nutrition targets and commitments.

### **3.3 UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment**

3.3.1 The UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2), which took place at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy from 24 to 26 July 2023, provided a unique opportunity to review the progress made in transforming agrifood systems to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2021, 155 countries have appointed food systems national convenors and 127 have adopted national food systems transformation pathways, demonstrating the significant political commitment to transforming agrifood systems for the SDGs. Approximately 70 percent of countries (86 of 127) indicate food safety and quality as an important issue. Some 101 countries submitted voluntary country progress reports at UNFSS+2, providing a valuable insight into the progress and efforts being made to transform agrifood systems worldwide.<sup>9</sup>

3.3.2 FAO worked closely with Italy, as the official host of the UNFSS+2, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, other Rome-based UN Agencies (RBAs) and the wider UN system to deliver this high-level event. As part of this support, FAO was responsible for two thirds of the 30 sessions of the Stocktake, including leading the planning, preparation and delivery of 11 sessions and co-leading an additional nine sessions. WHO was assigned to lead one Leadership Dialogue on Food Systems for People’s Nutrition and Health. WHO invited UNICEF to co-lead this session.

3.3.3 The three-day Stocktake process delivered three important documents: the UN Secretary-General’s Making food systems work for people and planet UN Food Systems Summit +2 report; the Stakeholders’ Contribution Document<sup>10</sup> and the UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation (FST) Making food systems work for people and planet.<sup>11</sup> In the Call to Action, the Secretary-General highlights six areas that require concerted action by leaders in governments, IFIs, farmer associations,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/wfsd-homepage/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/wfsd-news/en/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/259>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/nutrition>

<sup>5</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/77/285>

<sup>6</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/76/796>

<sup>7</sup> [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB152/B152\\_24-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB152/B152_24-en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/nl209en/nl209en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/member-state-dialogue/national-pathways-analysis-dashboard/en> (accessed 21 Sept 2023)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/stakeholders/stakeholder-contribution-document-unfss2.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/fs-stocktaking-moment/documentation/un-secretary-general-call-to-action/en>

business, civil society, scientific institutions, youth, indigenous farmers and the media to prioritize the implementation of future food systems:

- Incorporating food systems strategies into all national policies for sustainable development, for people's livelihoods, nutrition and health, for economic growth, climate action and nature, and to address post-harvest losses, leaving no one behind.
- Establishing food systems governance that engages all sectors and stakeholders for a whole of society approach, combining the short and long term.
- Investing in research, data, innovation and technology capacities including stronger connections to science, experience and expertise.
- Deepening joined-up participatory design and implementation inclusive of women, young people and indigenous peoples at the local level, with knowledge sharing, cross-sector programming, multi-stakeholder partnering, context and place-based actions, stronger and more diverse production, and mutual accountability.
- Promoting increased engagement of businesses, including through public private partnerships, to shape the sustainability of food systems and establish and strengthen accountability mechanisms, recognizing their centrality for food systems.
- Ensuring access to short and long-term concessional finance, investments, budget support and debt restructuring.

The Food Systems Summit +2 Stock Taking Moment will inform upcoming processes, including the SDG Summit, COP 28 and the Summit of the Future for 2024.

### **3.4 *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023: Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural–urban continuum (SOFI 2023)***<sup>1213</sup>

3.4.1 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO partnered to produce the joint report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023. This report provides an update on global progress towards the targets of ending hunger (SDG Target 2.1) and all forms of malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2) and estimates on the number of people who are unable to afford a healthy diet. Since its 2017 edition, this report has repeatedly highlighted that the intensification and interaction of conflict, climate extremes and economic slowdowns and downturns, combined with the unaffordability of healthy diets and growing inequality, are pushing us off track to meet the SDG 2 targets. However, other important megatrends must also be factored into the analysis to fully understand the challenges and opportunities for meeting the SDG 2 targets. One such megatrend, and the focus of this year's report, is urbanization. New evidence shows that food purchases in some countries are no longer high only among urban households but also among rural households. Consumption of highly processed foods of high energy density and minimal nutritional value, and food away from home is also increasing in peri-urban and rural areas of some countries. These changes are affecting people's food security and nutrition in ways that differ depending on where they live across the rural–urban continuum. This timely and relevant theme is aligned with the United Nations General Assembly-endorsed New Urban Agenda, and the report provides recommendations on the policies, investments and actions needed to address the challenges of agrifood systems transformation under urbanization and to enable opportunities for ensuring access to affordable healthy diets for everyone.

### **3.5 *Healthy Diets guidelines***

3.5.1 WHO and FAO are updating the guidance on what constitutes a healthy diet. The guidance builds on several evidence reviews, and discussions of the HDMI group described below. The new guidance will outline four core components of what constitutes healthy diets based on evidence of human health considerations. The new guidance was presented in the CODEX meeting in July 2023, and will be published on the respective organizational websites later this year.

### **3.6 *Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative***

3.6.1 FAO, WHO and UNICEF co-lead the Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative (HDMI), together with experts on dietary assessment. This initiative was established in 2022, after the leading organisations identified the need for consensus and action related to appropriate indicators and measures for monitoring healthy diets. The HDMI aims to create consensus on the measurement of the healthfulness of diets and support a series of activities that will enhance the quality of monitoring of healthy diet. Priorities and the approach to advancing

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world/en>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2022/en/>

the field of healthy diet monitoring was discussed and an initial work-plan developed during a technical expert meeting in Bellagio, Italy, in late 2022. The meeting report<sup>14</sup> includes the discussions and conclusions made on the suitability of existing metrics for assessment and monitoring of healthy diets nationally and globally. It also includes a roadmap for the HDMI for the next two years towards the development of a global guidance on healthy diets metrics. Following on from this meeting, a report<sup>15</sup> assessing the validity, usefulness and fitness for purpose of existing healthy diet metrics as global and national monitoring indicators was published by the HDMI. The report presents a comparative assessment of selected healthy diet metrics and discusses priorities and opportunities to improve diet monitoring. The HDMI group continue to work closely together to generate and consolidate evidence related to the monitoring of healthy diets, with the aim to advance the development and validation of measures and provide guidance to countries for their utilization.

### **3.7 *FAO and WHO's work on AMR***

For more details regarding the FAO and WHO work on AMR, the Committee is invited to consider the information provided separately in the report on FAO and WHO Capacity Development Activities.

### **3.8 *Joint FAO/WHO Scientific Advice to Codex Alimentarius***

For more details regarding the work of the joint FAO/WHO scientific advice work to Codex Alimentarius, including the work of JECFA (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives), JEMRA (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment), JMPR (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Pesticide Residues), JEMNU (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Nutrition) as well as the work of ad-hoc expert committee, the Committee is invited to consider the information provided separately in CAC/46 INF/2.

## **4. *Matters arising from FAO***

### **4.1 *FAO Governing bodies***<sup>16</sup>

4.1.1 The 43rd Session of the FAO Conference was held from 1-7 July 2023. The Conference endorsed the Report of the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). In its discussions on the Review of the State of Food and agriculture, the Conference stressed the importance of sustainable supply chains for timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including achievement SDG 1, 2 and 10; and noted the impact of trade restrictions and barriers for the global food security and nutrition, especially in low- and middle-income countries. In reviewing the Programme Evaluation Report 2023, the Conference highlighted the observations and recommendations arising from the evaluations of FAO's programme of work, including on the importance of: building strategic and inclusive partnerships; giving higher prioritization to areas of recognized FAO technical expertise, such as sustainable use of water for agriculture and antimicrobial resistance (AMR); and encouraging unearmarked or lightly earmarked voluntary contributions to finance innovation and underfunded and emerging areas in FAO. The Conference appointed Dr QU Dongyu to the office of Director-General for a period of four years from 1 August 2023, the term of office expiring on 31 July 2027. The Conference further approved the Medium-Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-25.

### **4.2 *FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31***

4.2.1 The FAO COAG emphasized at its 27th Session the connection between food safety and food security, as well as the role food safety plays in FAO's support in achieving more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. COAG27 requested that FAO develop a new Food Safety Strategy to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Further to the World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 73.5 to strengthen efforts on food safety, COAG27 requested that FAO collaborate with the WHO to ensure that their respective food safety strategies are aligned and mutually supportive.

4.2.2 Following the Committee's request, and taking into account the global strategic context, FAO developed a set of Strategic Priorities for its work on food safety, while maintaining its vision to provide "Safe food for all people at all times" and the mission "To support Members in continuing to improve food safety at all levels by providing scientific advice and strengthening their food safety capacities for efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems." These Strategic Priorities are articulated around four Strategic Outcomes that result from an iterative consultative process led by FAO with its Members and international partner organizations, including, notably WHO.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/healthy-diets-metrics-technical-expert-meeting-on-harmonizing-and-mainstreaming-measurement-of-healthy-diets-globally>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240072138>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/nl148en/nl148en.pdf>

4.2.3 Further to their endorsement by the 28th Session of the COAG, the FAO Council has finally approved the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety at its 171st Session in December 2022.<sup>16</sup>

4.2.4 FAO expects the Strategic Priorities for Food Safety to act as an instrument that will spur investments and secure adequate human and financial resources for FAO to successfully implement its food safety programme and to provide international guidance, policy and advocacy for policymakers.

4.2.5 These Strategic Priorities encourage a more consistent integration of food safety in the development of sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems, food security and nutrition policies, and agriculture development strategies. In developing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the Organization outlined Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) under its 4 “Betters”, a number of which are centered around or include important food safety activities [in particular, but not limited to, PPAs “Safe food for everyone” (BN3) and “Transparent markets and trade” (BN5) under Better Nutrition, and PPA “One Health” (BP3) under Better Production].

4.2.6 During the development of the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety and the WHO Global Food Safety Strategy, FAO and WHO maintained a standing and rigorous information sharing and discussion mechanism. Both organizations have committed to plan the development of a joint framework for implementation, following the endorsement of the respective strategic directions.

### **4.3 Agrifood systems transformation agenda**

4.3.1 FAO is advancing the agenda for agrifood systems transformation as part of its global responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (No hunger) and 10 (Reduced inequalities). It is building a programme of work designed to lead to transformative changes to accelerate the implementation of actions required to achieve the SDGs: transformation of mindsets; of institutional arrangements; and of alignment in policies, practices and investments. These efforts to fix fragmentation will aim to operationalize the “systems approach” needed to lead to transformative outcomes on the SDGs. FAO recognizes these changes are needed both internally to FAO and externally. As set out in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, it is only by recognizing that the different parts of system are interrelated that people and institutions will be able to work collectively to fully leverage the power of agrifood systems to provide solutions. The work to advance the agrifood systems transformation will include the development of clear definitions of terms and a positive, solutions-focused narrative making it clear why taking action recognizing the inter-relationships in the system is needed and evidence of risks of not taking these approaches. The narrative will help people see where they fit in this system, the contribution they can play in transformation and how they can measure early signs of transformation. FAO also hosts and conducts work in support of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub which was established following from the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. The Hub has a coordinating and connector role, drawing on the capacities of the UN system, including FAO, and leveraging the advice and expertise from the wide ecosystem of actors involved in food systems.

### **4.4 FAO's work on marine biotoxins**

4.4.1 Over the last 5 years, FAO contributed to the development of tools and materials in the area of bivalve sanitation and harmful algal blooms monitoring and management, as well as ciguatera management. Publishing variety documents such as the “Joint FAO-WHO Technical guidance for the development of the growing area aspects of Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation Programmes”, the “Joint FAO-IOC-IAEA Technical guidance for the implementation of early warning systems for harmful algal blooms”, and the “FAO-WHO report of the Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning”. The focus of the “Joint FAO-WHO Technical guidance for the development of the growing area aspects of Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation Programmes” is the primary production of molluscs for consumption as live or raw bivalves, and in particular how to manage microbiological hazards at this stage. Chemical hazards, toxin phytoplankton, and biotoxins also presents big challenges, but are unaddressed in the document. The Joint FAO-IOC-IAEA Technical guidance for the implementation of early warning systems for harmful algal blooms focuses on monitoring to implement early warning systems for HABs present in their areas (marine and brackish waters), specifically for those affecting food safety or food security (benthic HABs, fish-killing HABs, pelagic toxic HABs, and cyanobacteria HABs). Although toxins producing HABs are addressed in the document, the topic of toxins monitoring is not part of the guidance. The only guidance that partially addresses marine biotoxins monitoring is the “FAO-WHO report of the Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning”. The need for further guidance for monitoring marine biotoxins has been identified during the implementation of field projects on these topics. For this reason, FAO, in close collaboration with IOC-UNESCO, will work in the development of a technical guidance for the implementation of marine biotoxins monitoring, which will be consolidated during an expert meeting happening early 2024.

#### **4.5 FAO's work on food fraud for fisheries and aquaculture products**

4.5.1 The fisheries and aquaculture sector is one of the food sectors most subject to fraud. This is due both to consumer demand, increasingly oriented towards processed products and therefore more difficult to recognize, and to the nature of the perishable product. In 2018, FAO published a report named "Overview of food fraud in the fisheries sector" to highlight the consequences of fraud for the fish sector, providing examples of the causes of fraud and highlighting the importance of legislative instruments and the Codex Alimentarius. Building on this effort, FAO decided to develop a report to showcase the most common frauds in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and available tools to prevent it. Experts on different areas are involved in the development of the case studies and chapters for the provision of available tools. The report will be published early 2024.

#### **4.6 FAO's work on e-notifications for fisheries and aquaculture products**

4.6.1 Over a third of global agrifood exports cross borders at least twice before reaching the final consumer. The complexity of fish supply chains creates new and ever greater challenges for the management of food safety. The existence of e-notification systems for food imports helps us understand current challenges and react to them. For this reason, FAO collects import notification data for fisheries and aquaculture products that is analysed at a later date to understand issues and practices and fill technical gaps. Import notification information can be found on the Globefish website<sup>17</sup> and the raw data extracted from a variety of publicly available portals globally can be extracted from FishStatJ.<sup>18</sup> During 2023, FAO has analysed a variety of issues related to the presence of residues in aquaculture products that will result in a paper that will be published early 2024.

#### **4.7 Update on the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition**

4.7.1 After a thorough two-year consultative process, the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition was adopted at the 166th Session of the FAO Council. This corporate document took effect in 2021 in order to guide and support the Organization in its mission to raise levels of nutrition.

4.7.2 FAO's operationalization of its work in nutrition has included the creation of a stronger enabling environment for FAO personnel and offices to promote healthy diets as an integral part of its Strategic Framework 2022-31 for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life. Some examples include the launch of a new internal e-learning course for all FAO employees on FAO's work in nutrition, the expansion of the internal Technical Network on Nutrition for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer support with which more than 800 FAO employees are engaged, and the inclusion of a section on food security and healthy diets in the newly updated Corporate Social and Environmental Safeguards Policy to guide FAO employees in ensuring all corporate activities *Do No Harm* to healthy diets and nutrition.

4.7.3 As requested by Members, action aligned by the Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition has been influenced by, adapted to, and based upon context. Across the five action areas of FAO's Work in Nutrition, in 2022 more than 70 percent of all FAO country offices from all regions of the world have reported implementing relevant activities. Specifically, 78 percent of FAO country offices reported supporting the generation, collation, and dissemination of data on healthy diets and agrifood systems, 74 percent confirmed the use by host governments of FAO-generated knowledge products related to healthy diets, 72 percent reported convening or supporting national dialogues regarding healthy diets, 75 percent reported providing policy or technical assistance for capacity strengthening in relation to agrifood systems and healthy diets, and 80 percent reported working to strengthen commitments to healthy diets and good nutrition for all.

4.7.4 The central role of healthy diets being achieved through an agrifood systems approach as articulated in the Vision and Strategy of FAO's work in Nutrition has led to FAO's emphasis on maintaining attention on agrifood systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition through communications, normative work, and global engagement. This has resulted in FAO's critical role in numerous Coalitions for Action created under the auspices of the UN Food Systems Summit, and in initiatives that forge new alliances and strengthen existing partnerships to support Members to reach multiple national priorities simultaneously, such as the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), launched by the Egyptian Presidency of the COP27, and the Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative implemented in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF.

4.7.5 The next steps will include expanding and accelerating normative work and global engagement, as well as country and regional action, by which FAO will advance the critical role of more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition, while leveraging opportunities offered by the four betters under its Strategic Framework 2022-31 to enhance this work. FAO will hold itself accountable to its efforts to fulfil its mission in nutrition by monitoring the indicators of the Accountability Framework and the Implementation Plan of FAO's work in nutrition, and reporting to the FAO

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.fao.org/in-action/globefish/import-notifications/en/>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.fao.org/fishery/static/FishStatJ/FishStatJ\\_4.02.7-Manual.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fishery/static/FishStatJ/FishStatJ_4.02.7-Manual.pdf)

Members on a biannual basis through regular corporate reporting, as well as, reporting on the progress towards the FAO ambitious and measurable pledges made at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit.

#### **4.8 *FAO's work on harmful algal blooms***

4.8.1 Climate change is making it more challenging to predict HABs, impacting food security, food safety, and the environment. Over the past six years, FAO and IOC/UNESCO have had a very productive partnership in many areas related to HABs. A joint IOC-FAO Secretariat was established for the Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB) to have a more robust and flexible collaborative structure. The IOC-FAO IPHAB, first established in 1991 as the organizational framework for a global partnership, encompasses decision-makers, policymakers, managers, scientists, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address the problem of harmful microalgae. More information about IPHAB can be found in the COFI-FT information document (COFI:FT/XIX/2023/Inf.8<sup>19</sup>).

4.8.2 One of the activities that benefited from the expertise of the panel was the development of the Joint Technical Guidance for the Implementation of Early Warning Systems for HABs<sup>20</sup>,

4.8.3 Improving HABs forecasting allows for the development of early warning systems for HAB events. Surveillance systems have been developed to monitor HABs in many countries. However, the lead time or data type may not be adequate to take effective action for food safety management measures or other purposes, such as transferring aquaculture products to other areas. Having forecast or early warning systems will help mitigate the impact of HABs and reduce the occurrence of HAB events. In this regard, FAO, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), led the development of the above mentioned Technical Guidance to guide competent authorities and relevant institutions involved in consumer protection or environmental monitoring in implementing early warning systems for HABs in their areas, precisely affecting food safety or food security.

#### **4.9 *FAO Good Hygienic Practices and HACCP toolbox for Food Safety***

4.9.1 FAO launched a new website, entitled "GHP and HACCP Toolbox for Food Safety" (accessible at: <https://www.fao.org/good-hygiene-practices-haccp-toolbox/en>) on World Food Safety Day 2023. This toolbox contains guidance on the application of the GHP and HACCP principles described in the revised edition of the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969). The contents have been developed for an audience with experience in food production and processing, handling, food safety management training, and food control. Specifically, the guidance materials are intended for competent authorities, food businesses, academia, organizations providing food safety training and food management capacity development. The toolbox captures the insights gained from decades of experiences from food safety capacity building programmes carried out by FAO in developing countries and was further developed in collaboration with the University of Guelph, Canada. The toolbox and the topical materials are designed for use on handheld devices. The web-content is currently available in English, French and Spanish and being translated into Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

#### **4.10 *Literature review on the impact on the gut microbiome of pesticides residues, microplastics and veterinary drugs***

4.10.1 As part of an organization-wide review of the impact of food systems on diet-related non communicable diseases, the Food systems and Food Safety Division in FAO released in May 2023 three publications, reviewing scientific literature on the effects on the gut microbiome and health of regulated substances and microplastics. These are available at the following links:

- residues of pesticides: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc5306en>;
- veterinary drugs: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc5301en>)
- and microplastics: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc5294en>).

4.10.2 The focus of the reviews is on food safety, aiming to identify research limitations, knowledge gaps and areas that need further investigation before using gut microbiome data in chemical evaluations and ultimately advancing food safety risk assessment. The three reviews can serve as a starting point for multidisciplinary discussions, involving risk assessors, to support regulatory science and policy development. A further review focusing on food additives is under preparation.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc7020en/cc7020en.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc4794en>

4.10.3 A webinar was organized in June 2023 (accessible at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXjBqUm1onc>) to discuss knowledge gaps and areas that need further investigation with respect to gut microbiome data needed in food safety risk assessment.

#### **4.11 Laboratory methods supporting Codex standards**

4.11.1 The Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture provides support to FAO/WHO's work in the areas of food authenticity and the control of residues and contaminants in food through applied research and development at its Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratories in Seibersdorf and coordinated research involving institutes from Member Countries.

4.11.2 A coordinated research project focusing on food authenticity; "The Implementation of Nuclear Techniques for Authentication of Foods with High Value Labelling Claims (INTACT Food, D52042, 2019-2024)" has 22 participating institutes in 19 countries and is mainly focused on protecting foods with strong regional or national identities that are vulnerable to counterfeiting or economically motivated adulteration due to their premium value. The outputs of these projects, including analytical methods, procedures and databases, will be of relevance mainly to the Codex Committees on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) and on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS).

4.11.3 The coordinated research project, "Integrated Radiometric and Complementary Techniques for Mixed Contaminants and Residues in Food" (D52041, 2017-2023) involving 17 countries was recently concluded following the final technical meeting held on 8-12 May 2023. Twenty-five multi-class analytical methods for at least 300 residues/contaminants in 17 different food commodities were developed/validated with many applied to routine laboratory use. The project also generated information on antimicrobial resistance including a correlation between drug residues and resistance genes.

4.11.4 The coordinated research project "Depletion of Veterinary Pharmaceuticals and Radiometric Analysis of their Residues in Animal Matrices" (D52043) arising from deliberations of the 23rd and 24th CCRVDF Sessions the need to support establishment of MRLs for targeted veterinary drugs, continues to make strides. The project involves 17 research/regulatory institutions from Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Chile, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Korea (Republic of), Morocco, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Sudan, Uganda, Uruguay and USA. The project's 3rd research coordination meeting will take in Ohrid, North Macedonia from 21 to 25 August 2023. Ten analytical methods have already been developed or validated and are in use. The depletion of amoxicillin in rainbow trout was conducted and relevant data generated. In-house synthesized radiolabelled amoxicillin was used. More support is required to build or enhance such capabilities, given the costs and inaccessibility of labelled drugs. Nevertheless, collaborations and partnerships are still needed to support synthesis or provision of radiolabelled of other veterinary compounds, access to animal facilities and good laboratory practice (certified laboratories, as well as provision of specialized training and/or benchmarking opportunities for the participants).

4.11.5 Research is progressing under a new 5-year coordinated research project on, "Nuclear Techniques to Support Risk Assessment of Biotoxins and Pathogen Detection in Food and Related Matrices". The project focuses on the development, validation, establishment and implementation of nuclear/isotopic analytical techniques and approaches to support rapid and cost-effective testing, investigation and control of biotoxins and pathogens of food safety, public health, zoonotic and antimicrobial resistance relevance. This research is necessary to facilitate global risk assessment as well as preparedness and ability to respond to current and future food safety and related emergencies associated with biotoxins and foodborne pathogens. The project involves 14 institutes in 12 countries, limited by available funding, but has attracted research proposals from several others. The project's 2nd research coordination meeting will take place from 2-6 October 2023 in Vienna, Austria.

#### **4.12 Joint FAO/IAEA Centre International Symposium on Food Safety and Control, 27 to 31 May 2024**

4.12.1 The Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture wishes to announce the International Symposium on Food Safety and Control to be held from 27 to 31 May 2024 in IAEA Headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

4.12.2 The purpose of this symposium is to bring together experts and stakeholders in food safety and food control systems to consider the protection of the integrity of the food supply chain and measures to improve its resilience to food security challenges (e.g. disruptive events, climate change, foodborne disease, food fraud, antimicrobial resistance). Contemporary and new uses of nuclear and complementary techniques will be presented and food safety regulation, standards as well surveillance discussed. Future perspectives and opportunities will also be discussed. As a networking forum, the symposium will facilitate a broad understanding of food safety and food control systems and promote the peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

Main topics:

- Food authenticity and fighting food fraud
- Food and phytosanitary irradiation
- Chemical residues and contaminants in food and feed
- Preparing for, and responding to emergencies and incidents affecting the food supply
- Detection and characterization of pathogens in food
- Standard setting and risk assessment
- One Health, holistic approaches to human, animal and environmental health.

Abstract submission is open until 17 November 2023.

No registration fee is charged to participants. Please see key deadlines on the website.<sup>21</sup>

All persons wishing to participate in the event must be designated by an IAEA Member State or should be member of an organization that has been invited to attend. Additional mechanisms to invite other interested participants can be discussed. Participants from Member States or from invited organizations need to register using the InTouch+ platform, accessible through the Symposium website.

For any question, please get in touch with the Symposium Secretariat (Ms. Christina Vlachou; C.Vlachou@iaea.org; Tel.: +43 1 2600 28395).

#### **4.13 Food safety and new/emerging technologies**

**4.13.1 Safety assessment of food derived from recombinant-DNA animals and microorganisms:** FAO regularly collaborates with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) to ensure the synergy of three relevant databases namely: FAO GM Foods Platform; OECD BioTrack Product Database; and the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The three organizations regularly meet to discuss collaborative activities. The FAO GM Foods Platform (<http://www.fao.org/gm-platform>) employs the consistent OECD Unique Identifier systems, as other two databases maintain the same. Currently, the FAO GM Foods Platform does not include records on GM animals and microorganisms, as well as food derived from other types of biotechnologies such as gene editing. Since the Codex ad hoc inter-governmental task force on food derived from biotechnology (TFFBT) has been dissolved in 2007, FAO wishes to receive Codex Members' inputs on whether or not the Platform can host safety assessment information of such products in the future.

**4.13.2 Food safety aspects of precision fermentation:** Precision fermentation, also possibly known as industrial (microbial) fermentation or precision biomanufacturing, refers to a process that utilizes microorganisms such as bacteria, yeast, or fungi to produce specific target products through controlled production systems. A wide range of products such as proteins, enzymes, vitamins or other bioactive substances can be produced through precision fermentation. The precision fermentation process typically involves culturing the microorganisms in a controlled environment, providing them with the necessary nutrients and conditions to maximize the production of the desired product. While the core concept of precision fermentation possibly remains consistent, different sources or experts may provide variations in the definition based on their specific scopes, perspectives or purposes. Such variations have become prominent in the last several years, possibly making the regulatory categorization of the products a challenge for food safety regulators and competent authorities. Therefore, FAO is currently working with various collaborators to develop a literature synthesis on 1) nomenclature, 2) product information and 3) regulatory frameworks. The report will be made available in 2024.

**4.13.3** The FAO Development Law Service (LEGN), in partnership with the FAO Food Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF), will soon publish a Legal Paper: "*Regulatory approaches to ensure the safety and quality of new food sources and production systems*". The publication will review the most common regulatory approaches adopted by countries to govern new food sources and production systems. Its focus will be on national legislation, which is an essential component of building trust in agrifood systems. Legislation is also an important tool which can be used to help ensure the safety of new food sources and production systems (NFPS) and that consumers have adequate information, all while facilitating further innovation and development in the sector. The primary objective of the Legal Paper will be to provide guidance on the state of existing legislative practices to support more informed discussions at the international level. That includes support for ongoing discussions within the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Furthermore, LEGN and ESF work on a publication on the e-commerce of food. This publication identifies legal challenges and potential

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.iaea.org/events/fsc-symposium-2024/participation-and-registration>

regulatory solutions to address the risks associated with the increased purchase and distribution of food online, both business to consumers and through internet platforms.

#### **4.14 Food Safety in the Circular Economy**

4.14.1 FAO is developing a report that provides a synthesis of the current and emerging evidence around the various challenges and opportunities to manage food safety in the context of a circular economy. Agrifood systems require sustained growth to maintain food security for the global population, while facing unprecedented pressure from the challenges of climate change and resource depletion. Under these circumstances, evaluating, planning and transitioning to circularity will be critical to improve sustainability in the long run while facing those challenges.

4.14.2 While circular economy initiatives offer considerable promise in improving sustainability and increasing performance, these benefits need to be considered vis a vis with the possible food safety risks arising from contaminants that can be (re) introduced, persist and accumulate in circular systems. Therefore, protecting food safety is key for the success of transitioning our current linear agrifood systems to be more sustainable and resilient through circular economy. In the report, food safety implications are explored across five themes – water reuse, food loss and waste, packaging waste, integrated farming systems, and changing consumer behaviour.

4.14.3 The report is currently being finalized and should be ready in the coming months.

#### **4.15 Food safety implications from the use of environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems**

4.15.1 The challenge of feeding a growing world population while responding to the climate crisis, requires development of practices and technologies to increase sustainability of agrifood systems and reduce harmful effects on the environment. Among those approaches, environmental inhibitors are used to improve the production efficiency of crops and livestock while reducing emissions of greenhouse gases such as methane or limiting the loss of nitrogen from cultivated fields and pastures.

4.15.2 An inadvertent presence of environmental inhibitors in food commodities can raise health concerns as well as trade disruption if standards are not established. Challenges related to food safety risk assessment and management of these substances include the lack of internationally harmonized maximum residue levels (MRLs), agreed definition for environmental inhibitors and insufficient safety information for some compounds.

4.15.3 FAO is working on a publication that provides an overview of various synthetic and biological environmental inhibitors along with an analysis of possible food safety implications from their use. Regulatory frameworks relevant for environmental inhibitors in selected countries will also be presented as examples of current approaches being taken at national or regional level. Finally, food safety-related knowledge gaps will be discussed together with some perspectives on how to move forward.

4.15.4 The report is currently being finalized and should be ready in the coming months.

### **5. Matters arising from WHO**

#### **5.1 World Health Assembly Resolution and The Update of WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety**

5.1.1 The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030 was adopted by the WHO World Health Assembly 75 in May 2022 (Resolution WHA 75(22)).<sup>22</sup> It updates the last strategy in order to address current and emerging challenges, incorporate new technologies, and include innovative approaches for strengthening national food safety systems. This request was made by Member States in recognition that food safety remains a public health priority with a critical role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5.1.2 In developing this strategy WHO has had the support from the Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety: Safer Food for Better Health, consulted widely with scientific experts, with WHO Regional Advisors for food safety, international partners such as FAO and WAHO, Member States and public consultation. Existing regional food safety frameworks and food safety strategies were also considered, as well as the recommendations and guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius and the FAO food safety priorities.

5.1.3 The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety has been developed to guide and support Member States in their efforts to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate actions towards the reduction of the burden of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety systems and promoting global cooperation.

5.1.4 For the first time there are indicators proposed to measure the impact and the implementation of the activities to strengthen food control systems. The impact indicator is calculated by the Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) refers to the global estimated number of cases from the five

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<sup>22</sup> [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA75/A75\(22\)-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75(22)-en.pdf)

foodborne pathogens: *Campylobacter* spp., Enteropathogenic *E. coli* - EPEC, Enterotoxigenic *E. coli* - ETEC, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* - STEC, and Non-typhoidal *Salmonella* Enterica. This indicator was collected from FERG and refers to data from 2010 that was published in 2015. FERG 2021-2024 is updating this data.<sup>23</sup> It takes into consideration the five most frequent bacterial causes of diarrheal foodborne diseases. The progress indicator aims to measure the implementation of the strategy. They are extracted from the International Health Regulation (IHR, 2005) assessment. The indicator on Multisectoral collaboration mechanism for food safety events is extracted from the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) report.<sup>24</sup> The other progress indicator also comes from the IHR but is extracted from the State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR).<sup>25</sup>

5.2.5 WHO is preparing a roadmap and technical papers to support Member States in the implementation of the Strategy, WHO Regional Offices are working with their Member States to assess food control systems and prepare national roadmaps and workplans to guide the implementation of the strategy.

## 5.2 **Healthy Diets guidelines**

5.2.1 The following WHO guidelines related to healthy diets were released in 2023:

- Saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid intake for adults and children (July 2023)<sup>26</sup>
- Total fat intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain in adults and children (July 2023)<sup>27</sup>
- Carbohydrate intake for adults and children (July 2023)<sup>28</sup>
- Use of non-sugar sweeteners (May 2023)<sup>29</sup>

5.2.2 The WHO guideline on polyunsaturated fatty acid intake for adults and children and the WHO guideline on use of low-sodium salt substitutes are currently being finalized and are planned for release in early 2024.

## 5.3 **Food environment policy guidelines**

5.3.1 Following the WHO guideline development process, the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions is working on developing guidelines on priority food environment policies. The guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of **food marketing** was published in July 2023.<sup>30</sup> Following the peer review and public consultation on the final draft guideline on **fiscal policies** to promote healthy diets in early 2023<sup>31</sup> the guideline is now being finalized for publication. The guidelines on **school food and nutrition policies** and **nutrition labelling policies** are now being prepared for peer review and public consultation.

## 5.4 **WHO update to the recommendation on the quantity and duration of ready-to-use therapeutic food for treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema**

5.4.1 WHO updated the recommendation on the quantity and duration of RUTF which now gives the following two options: i) RUTF should be given at a quantity that will provide 150-185 kcal/kg per day until anthropometric recovery (WHZ  $\geq$  -2 SD and MUAC  $\geq$ 125mm) and resolution of nutritional oedema, or ii) RUTF should be given at a quantity that will provide 150-185 kcal/kg per day until the child is no longer severely wasted and does not have nutritional oedema, thereafter the quantity can be reduced to provide 100-130 kcal/kg per day, until anthropometric recovery.

5.4.2 The decision to reduce the quantity of RUTF must be made by program managers considering the capacity of the health workers to follow the protocol safely and efficiently, and other factors such as food insecurity, intrahousehold sharing, etc.

5.4.3 The updated recommendation, and all other 2023 WHO recommendations on the management of wasting and nutritional oedema can be accessed here (<https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/7330>).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.foodbornediseaseburden.org/ferg/estimates>

<sup>24</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/sph/jee>

<sup>25</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/e-spar>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073630>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073654>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073593>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073616>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240075412>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/public-consultation-on-the-draft-guideline-fiscal-policies-to-promote-healthy-diets>

## **5.5 Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is now on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML)**

5.5.1 WHO and UNICEF submitted an application for the inclusion of RUTF in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) for the treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema in children older than 6 months.

5.5.2 On 28 April 2023, the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines approved to include RUTF on the Model List in a new category of Therapeutic Foods. The 2023 WHO Model List can be accessed here (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-MHP-HPS-EML-2023.02>).

5.5.3 The inclusion of RUTF on the WHO Model List will help to facilitate adoption of RUTF within national health systems and increase the potential for countries to procure RUTF as part of national health system planning, budgeting, and integration into the national health supply chains.

## **5.6 WHO guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and children 6-23 months of age**

5.6.1 WHO guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and young children are in final stages of WHO clearance. The guidelines will cover topics on the continuation of breastfeeding, the timing of introduction of complementary foods, milk options when breast milk is not adequate, dietary diversity, unhealthy foods and beverages, vitamin and mineral supplementation and fortification, and responsive feeding. The evidence behind the guidelines has been summarized in 12 systematic literature reviews and was supplemented by dietary pattern modelling to examine nutrient gaps under various eating patterns. The Developing and Evaluating Communication Strategies to support Informed Decisions and Practice based on Evidence (DECIDE) framework, an evidence-to-decision tool that includes intervention effects, values, resources, equity, acceptability, and feasibility criteria, was used to guide the formulation of the recommendations by the guideline development group (GDG). Publication is expected in the fall of 2023.

## **5.7 WHO technical support on the Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes**

5.7.1 In 2022, at the request of the World Health Assembly, WHO published a report on the scope and impact of digital marketing strategies for the promotion of breast-milk substitutes. Based on the findings of the report, the Assembly has now asked for guidance for Member States on regulatory measures aimed at restricting the digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes, so as to ensure that existing and new regulations designed to implement the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions adequately address digital marketing practices. WHO is currently preparing this guidance for presentation to the Assembly in 2024.

5.7.2 The 2022 Code Status Report analysed the provisions of the Code covered in national legislation for all 194 WHO Member States. The report documented that between 2016 and 2021, 25 countries plus the European Union updated their legal measures on the Code or enacted new ones. Compared to older laws and regulations, the countries with newer legal instruments were much more likely to be substantially aligned with Code and were much more likely to cover breast-milk substitutes for children up to 36 months of age.

5.7.3 To advance national implementation of the Code, WHO and UNICEF co-hosted a Global Congress on Implementation of the Code in June 2023. The Congress brought together national delegations from 120 countries with representatives from government, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and academics. The Congress resulted in increased knowledge and skills on strategies to implement the code, development of national roadmaps/workplans of action, and creation of regional networks for country-to-country sharing.

## **5.8 Elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids**

5.8.1 In May 2018, WHO called for the global elimination of industrially produced of *trans*-fatty acids (TFA) by 2023, highlighting as a priority target of WHO. WHO has been providing technical guidance and practical steps to help governments take relevant actions to achieve elimination of industrially produced TFA from their national food supply. To track and document progress achieved by countries in eliminating industrially produced TFA, the fourth annual progress report was published in 2023.<sup>32</sup> The fifth progress report is currently under preparation to further encourage countries and stakeholders to accelerate their actions towards achieving the 2023 TFA elimination target. The TFA Country Score Card tracks countries' performance on a continuous basis.<sup>33</sup>

5.8.2 Earlier this year, WHO has launched its Validation Programme for Trans Fat Elimination,<sup>34</sup> which aims to accelerate progress towards the 2023 global goal by providing recognition to countries that have a normative framework in place to eliminate industrially produced TFA from their national food supplies. To qualify for

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240067233>

<sup>33</sup> <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/scorecard/TFA>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/replace-trans-fat/validation-programme-for-trans-fat-elimination>

validation, countries must demonstrate that a best practice TFA policy has been implemented, and that effective monitoring and enforcement systems are in place. The WHO Trans Fat Elimination Technical Advisory Group (TFATAG) was established to review and evaluate the applications submitted by Member States for the granting of the WHO Validation certificate.<sup>35</sup> Later this year, the first set of countries to receive the validation certificate will be announced.

5.8.3 In April 2023, the WHO simplified protocol for measuring TFA content was released.<sup>36</sup> This fit-for-purpose protocol can be implemented by all laboratories including those with limited budgets and provides the data that are required for governments' surveillance and monitoring activities to check the trend of TFA content in food products on the market and ensure that food products comply with regulations for TFA elimination. Later this year, WHO will revise the current WHO reference protocol<sup>37</sup> based on new data and information obtained, and this revised protocol will serve as the "gold standard method" for conducting full FAME analysis by incorporating relevant and appropriate procedures.

## **5.9 Population sodium/salt intake reduction**

5.9.1 WHO has released the global report on sodium intake reduction<sup>38</sup> to monitor progress and identify areas for action in the implementation of sodium reduction policies and other measures within Member States and across WHO regions and World Bank income groups. All 194 Member States have committed to reducing population sodium intake by 30 percent by 2030, demonstrating strong consensus on sodium reduction as a lifesaving strategy, this report, however, shows that only nine countries have fully established the recommended policies to reduce sodium intake. Globally we are off track to achieve the target. WHO calls for the rapid implementation of government-led and comprehensive mandatory sodium reduction policies and other measures, to improve health and reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases. The Sodium Country Score Card monitors a country's progress in making national commitments and taking a multifaceted approach to implementing policies to reduce sodium intake and is accessible here: <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/scorecard/sodium> .

## **5.10 Alcohol**

5.10.1 The 75th World Health Assembly adopted the action plan (2022-2030) to effectively implement the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a public health priority. The action plan, inter alia, propose actions for Member States and the WHO Secretariat as well as measures for economic operators in alcohol production and trade. The action plan proposes for Member States to ensure "appropriate consumer protection measures through the development and implementation of labelling requirements for alcoholic beverages that display essential information for health protection on alcohol content in a way that is understood by consumers and also provides information on other ingredients with potential impact on the health of consumers, caloric value and health warnings". The proposed actions for WHO Secretariat include development of "technical guidance on the labelling of alcoholic beverages to inform consumers about the content of products and health risks associated with their consumption.

5.10.2 WHO is currently validating data of the global survey regarding progress attained with SDG 2030 health target 3.5 with a substantial alcohol policy section that included the questions about the labelling of alcoholic beverages with a focus on practices of displaying consumer information and health warnings. In addition, WHO EURO undertook in-depth analysis of the situation with alcohol beverage labelling in the European region that highlights the need for specific labelling policies to be developed as a part of a larger policy package.<sup>39</sup>

5.10.3 During the CCFL47 WHO highlighted that alcoholic beverage labelling increases awareness of health risks and product composition and that it is also the primary source of information for consumers at the point of purchase and consumption. It was further noted that alcohol remains outside the scope of obligations in international conventions to control psychoactive substances and alcoholic beverages are also typically exempted from many requirements of national legislation governing food labelling, thereby creating a considerable regulatory divergence among countries. Following discussions at CCFL44, CCFL45 and CCFL46, WHO noted that the Committee had agreed to prepare a discussion paper for consideration by CCFL47 but that COVID-19 hindered the development of the discussion paper. The Committee agreed this matter to be maintained on the CCFL agenda and, in the absence of a country to lead the work, proposed that WHO prepare a discussion paper to be presented at CCFL48.

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.who.int/groups/trans-fat-elimination-technical-advisory-group-\(tfatag\)](https://www.who.int/groups/trans-fat-elimination-technical-advisory-group-(tfatag))

<sup>36</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/366690>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018044>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240069985>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/alcohol-use/news/news/2020/06/alcohol-labelling-policies-most-countries-lagging-behind-in-promoting-healthier-choices>

5.10.4 WHO provided a statement about alcohol labelling and health in the context of the agenda on Ireland alcohol warnings during the WTO TBT Committee, held in Geneva 21-23 June 2023. The statement recall the Appendix 3 of the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, adopted by the World Health Assembly, also includes the policy option to provide consumers with information, including labels and health warnings, about contents of alcoholic beverages and the harms associated with alcohol consumption as a public health intervention to reduce modifiable risk factors for noncommunicable disease and underlying social determinants through creation of health-promoting environments.

#### **5.11 World Health Assembly Decision on Traditional Food Markets**

5.11.1 The WHO World Health Assembly 75, in May 2022,<sup>40</sup> requested the WHO Director-General to update the interim guidance on reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals of mammalian species in traditional food markets in order to answer questions on the scope of the guidance, including the species that the guidance covers (mammalian species or mammalian species plus other species) and farmed or wild live animals.

5.11.2 Member States are requested to develop plans to support country implementation of the interim guidance on reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals of mammalian species in traditional food markets – infection prevention and control and to report on progress made in updating the interim guidance on reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals of mammalian species in traditional food markets – infection prevention and control and the country support plans every two years until 2030.

5.11.3 WHO called for experts and selected 19 experts on the topics related to food markets to form the Guidelines Development Group that will support the update of the document. The first meeting is planned for November 2023.

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<sup>40</sup> [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA75/A75\(23\)-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75(23)-en.pdf)