

Ideas for CFS Intersessional Events on Nutrition

Following the last OEWG on nutrition, the CFS Secretariat received several comments on the intersessional events on nutrition. The OEWG might want to consider the possibility of holding one or more to inform the ongoing policy convergence process. Specific additional resources would be required to hold one or more events. Below is the complete list of the suggested themes as received from Member States and members of the Nutrition TTT and a brief description for each:

1. Merge nutrition-sensitive agriculture with nutrition and soils

Nutrition sensitive agriculture links positive nutritional outcomes with agriculture. One of the preconditions for agriculture to have positive nutritional outcomes is to include nutrition specifically in the objectives of agricultural programs and policies. Agricultural production depends on the good conditions of its environments: soil, air and water. Agricultural products, crops derive their nutritional value from the content and condition of these elements. A soil low in nutrients will not produce crops high in nutrients. Nutrition sensitive agriculture, apart from what is being produced in what quantity and diversity, is therefore also closely linked to the conditions of the soil and how to maintain soil quality and prevent degradation of the soil.

2. Merge food transformation and nutrient profiling

Product reformulation is one recommended approach to improve the quality of processed/transformed food for healthier options. Food transformation represents an opportunity to enhance healthier food choices along the food value chain. Reformulation strategies (mandatory and voluntary) need to be part of the wider food supply chain embedded in an overall food system approach, to ensure the availability of food ingredients as well as consumer education. Nutrient profiling is an integral important part of such a holistic approach as the science of classifying or ranking foods according to their nutritional composition for health purposes. Nutrient profiling can in fact be used as a basis for various interventions within a food system, including marketing of foods to children, product labelling logos or symbols, information and education and provision of food to public institutions.

3. Adolescent Girls and Nutrition

Adolescent girls are virtually invisible in many areas of the world. Their needs are often neglected and their nutritional status has not been well studied. Yet optimal nutrition during adolescence is crucial. Urgent action is needed to improve adolescent nutrition and wellbeing.

4. HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems

HLPE could be invited to present selected segments of the report and this would be followed by questions and discussion. This would allow the report to be better socialized within CFS constituencies, while at the same time allowing proper opportunities for different analysis and perspectives to emerge.

5. School Feeding and Nutrition

School feeding programmes are a powerful intervention that can contribute to alleviate chronic hunger but also improve nutrition and cognition of children. School feeding can also make a significant contribution to gender equity in education while tackling social vulnerability of girls.

6. Nutrition and NCDs

NCDs are the leading global cause of mortality, and are responsible for 70% of deaths worldwide – equivalent to 40 million people. Poor dietary quality and insufficient physical activity are key risk factors for NCD development and mortality worldwide and are considered focus areas. The progress in national policy development and implementation needs to be scaled up to face this global epidemic.

In addition, two topics were also suggested for consideration by OEWG members: obesity prevention and control and nutrition education.