



Food and Agriculture Organization



World Health Organization

**JOINT FAO/WHO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUTRITION
TWENTY-ONE YEARS LATER (ICN+21)**

**CALL FOR EXPERTS FOR THE FAO EXPERT MEETING
'NUTRITION-SENSITIVE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS'**

Deadline: 15 November 2012

Introduction

The 1992 International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), jointly sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) unanimously adopted a World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition. Delegates from 159 countries and the European Community pledged to eliminate or substantially reduce starvation and famine; widespread chronic hunger; undernutrition, particularly among children, women and the aged; micronutrient deficiencies, especially iron, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies; diet related communicable and non-communicable diseases; impediments to optimal breast-feeding; and inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and unsafe drinking water.

In the two decades following the ICN, notwithstanding great improvements in a number of individual countries, progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition has been unacceptably slow. The combined effects of prolonged underinvestment in nutrition and in food and agriculture, together with the recent price instability and the economic downturn and exacerbated by the steady increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters have led to increased hunger and poverty in developing countries, jeopardizing the progress achieved so far in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Malnutrition, in all its forms, is an intolerable burden not only on national health systems but on the entire cultural, social and economic fabric of nations, and is the greatest impediment to development and to the fulfillment of human potential. While the cost of treating and dealing with the effects of malnutrition, whether in fiscal, economic or human terms is high, the cost of prevention is much less. Investing in nutrition, therefore, not only is a moral imperative, but also makes economic sense as it improves productivity and economic growth, reduces health care costs and promotes education, intellectual capacity and social development.

Better political and policy coherence, alignment, coordination and cooperation between food, agriculture, health and other sector policies is needed to improve global nutrition. For this purpose FAO and WHO, in collaboration with several UN and non UN partners are to convene an International Conference on Nutrition 21 years after the 1992 ICN (ICN+21). The ICN+21 will be a high-level political event and the first global intergovernmental conference devoted solely to addressing the world's nutrition problems in the 21st century. The Conference will bring food, agriculture, health and other sectors together to mobilize the political will and resources necessary for improving nutrition to support effective and consistent actions in the medium to longer term. The Conference will review progress made since 1992, reflect on the existing and the new challenges and opportunities presented by the changes in the global economy, in the food system, and by advances in science and technologies and analyze policy options for improving nutrition. Since nutrition is an outcome of multiple causative factors, comprehensive multisector solutions are needed. The ICN+21 will address issues related to both under as well as over nutrition and will explore how agriculture, health and other sectors can work together to address this multiple burden of malnutrition. As part of the preparatory activities leading up to the Conference, expert meetings will be held to assemble state-of-the-art scientific knowledge drawing upon the experience of relevant networks.

The expert meeting on nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture systems will determine how food and agriculture systems can better provide the food and livelihoods that lead to improved diets and raised levels of nutrition, including reductions in under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and over nutrition, including NCDs. This may be achieved *inter alia* through improved production and distribution systems as well as policies which lead to increased availability, access to and consumption of foods of adequate quantity (calories) and quality (in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety). Best practices for how food and agriculture systems can address both under and over nutrition will be considered for developed and developing countries as well as how to promote better eating habits and positive health and dietary behaviours. While recognizing the important contribution made to nutrition by medical approaches and public health interventions, these will not be prioritized in this expert meeting.

We are seeking 15-20 experts who will participate in this expert meeting to be held early 2013. Participants will be asked to prepare, present and discuss papers on topics relevant to their area of expertise. A report of the meeting with all the papers will be published and disseminated and a synthesis paper will be prepared drawing on information provided by the papers and on findings from the meeting to help inform debate at the ICN+21 itself. Internet fora to support technical discussions are envisaged.

Outputs of experts meeting

The meeting will discuss policy, strategic, methodological, technical and programmatic challenges and present evidence, knowledge and tools which can mitigate and respond to these challenges. Areas of focus will include food-based approaches for improving diets and raising levels of nutrition, evidence-based recommendations for programme design, management and implementation, strategies to promote the adoption of healthy diets and innovation in methodologies for evaluation of impact and cost-effectiveness. The expert meeting outputs are expected to feed into the ICN+21 process thereby contributing to informing the post-2015 UN development agenda by helping to identify priority areas and sustainable development goals for nutrition, as well as the policies that are required to achieve them. Policy recommendations to increase the nutrition-sensitivity of food and agriculture systems will be a major main output which will contribute to the UN SG's call for a high degree of policy coherence at global, regional, national and sub-national levels and a global partnership for development.

It is important to note that nutrition-sensitive actions in the food and agriculture system will likely not succeed unless their outcomes are compatible with market signals that reflect the behaviour of consumers, producers, processors, and traders. Consequently, recommendations for interventions should include consideration of the political and economic context in which they are made.

Essential qualifications of experts

Great value is placed on the technical qualification and independence of the participating experts as well as on the transparency of its selection process. FAO has developed well-defined procedures for selecting experts that promote the excellence and independence of assessments provided. Candidates should fulfill the following basic and essential qualifications:

- Advanced University degree or relevant experience in nutrition; food security; agricultural sciences (horticulture, agronomy, animal science or food marketing); public health; nutrition information, education and communication; food technology (preservation, processing and fortification); economics (agricultural economics, food economics); food policy; social sciences including behavioural change; development or related fields
- Scientific publications in peer reviewed journals, in particular, relevant publications within the last ten years

- At least ten years experience in linking nutrition to food and agriculture at policy, strategy, programme or methodological level or proven experience in evaluating impact or delivering scientific opinions on linking nutrition to food and agriculture at national, regional or international level
- Participation in national or international scientific bodies, committees, and other expert advisory bodies pertinent to the scope of this meeting

Applicants must also have a good working knowledge of English as the meetings and correspondence will be in English and interpretation will not be provided.

Topics of the expert papers

Papers will be invited from selected experts that review the literature and available knowledge, evidence and experience (lessons learned and best practices), identify main challenges and propose ways for overcoming them as well as opportunities arising will be presented and discussed. Papers may be provided on policy, strategic, methodological, technical and programmatic issues associated with nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture systems including:

- case studies of food and agriculture-based policies, programmes or approaches for increasing productivity and year-round availability, access, and/or consumption of food throughout the food value chain (production, processing, preservation, storage at household, community, national and regional levels), including fortified and biofortified foods and their impact on nutrition;
- impact of globalization, international price volatility and financial uncertainty, and agriculture and trade policies (and their reform/liberalization) on nutrition;
- effect of agricultural subsidies on nutrition and implications for food system subsidies in both high- and low-income countries;
- how to empower the resource poor, socially excluded, economically marginalized, nutritionally vulnerable and disadvantaged to improve their food and nutrition security including through social mobilization and community action as well as using a rights-based approach;
- strategies to promote healthy diets, provide knowledge and skills, motivate individual change and create opportunities for changes in the food environment;
- gender issues including how women as managers of limited household resources influence nutrition;
- case studies of capacity building within national government and regional organizations to improve nutrition security
- nutrition impact of technological change in food and agriculture systems;
- how climate change and the management of land and water has and may be expected to affect nutrition;
- the link between diversity in agricultural production (different foods as well as food versus non-foods or cash crops) and dietary diversity of smallholder farm families;
- successful integration of food and non-food interventions to improve nutrition;
- the role of governments and of the private sector including producer organizations and farmers' cooperatives in improving diets and raising levels of nutrition
- consumption of processed food by low-income families in developing countries, the role of government interventions and of the private sector including of national and international processing industries; and
- policy incentives to make nutrition a higher priority in agricultural development initiatives.

Criteria and process for selection of experts

Criteria for the selection of experts includes the meeting of the essential qualifications and proven competence and expertise in one or more topics listed above related to nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture systems. The *curriculum vitae* of applicants will be reviewed by a selection panel consisting of three or more individuals appointed by FAO. In selecting experts consideration will be given, in addition to scientific and technical excellence, to diversity and complementarities of scientific backgrounds, gender, and balanced representation from geographic regions, including developing and developed countries.

Appointment of experts

The experts will be invited to participate only in their individual scientific capacity. No expert shall represent the position of the government of which he or she is a citizen, or of the institution with which he or she is associated. Except in special cases, the experts designated to participate in the expert meeting will not receive any remuneration, however, travel costs, subsistence allowance and other related expenses will be provided.

Applications

Interested applicants should submit their *curriculum vitae* including a description of their education, work experience and a list of peer reviewed publications relevant to the required fields of expertise. Please do not include reprints in your submission. Together with their *curriculum vitae*, applicants should submit a two page abstract (including keywords) on one or more of the above listed topics.

Before participating in the expert meeting, experts will be asked to indicate in writing any interest (financial and intellectual) on their part or that of their spouse which may affect their scientific independence as experts including one or more of the following conditions: employment (past or present) by any commercial enterprise or private or civil sector association; a recipient of research or other study grants from such enterprises or associations; or shareholdings in commercial enterprises active in fields related to nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture systems. In addition, a confidentiality undertaking is to be signed to ensure proper handling of dossiers and proprietary information. These declarations will be evaluated and retained. Names of selected individuals will be posted on the ICN+21 website, including their affiliation.

Deadline

In order to be considered for the expert roster for the nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture systems expert meeting in preparation to the ICN+21, applications should be sent to FAO by 15 November, 2012 to ICN-21@fao.org. Please note that electronic applications are preferred. Applications received after that date will be evaluated following the same procedure as described above and added to the roster on an individual basis.

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