**Invitation to an open discussion**

**on the political outcome document of the ICN**

**Comment Form**

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1. **Do you have any general comments on the draft political declaration and its vision (paragraphs 1-3 of the zero draft)?**

There is a need to better define what is malnutrition and what are its different forms (i.e. multiple burdens of malnutrition). In the document, malnutrition refers to undernourishment, micronutrient deficiencies and unbalanced diets, but there is a distinction to be made: undernourishment and balanced diets refer to the diet, so to the ways of eating or feeding, whereas malnutrition is a physiological status resulting from the diet.

In other words, diet and dietary practices (e.g. undernourishment, unbalanced diets, suboptimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices) should be clearly differentiated from malnutrition, that is undernutrition (i.e. stunting, wasting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies) and overweight and obesity.

That being said, the document should make a strong argument on the need to improve diets and dietary practices to prevent the different forms of malnutrition.

1. **Do you have any comments on the background and analysis provided in the political declaration (paragraphs 4-20 of the zero draft)?**

Paragraph 4:

* *Malnutrition is still responsible for about half of child deaths and obesity for over three million deaths every year*.

It is not clear in this sentence if “malnutrition” means “undernutrition” or if “obesity” is counted on the half of child deaths as a form of malnutrition.

In paragraph 7, the commitments listed refer objectives in relation to malnutrition (i.e. reduce stunting, reduce anaemia, reduce low birth weight, stop the increase of prevalence of overweight in children under 5, reduce prevalence of wasting and reverse the rise of obesity and diabetes) but not to ways of reaching them (i.e. diet, improved dietary practices), except for the commitment to “increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding”.

Paragraph 14:

* *Recognize that empowering the consumer to make healthy food choices is also essential*.

Although choosing or selecting foods is the first step to adopt a healthy diet, this is not enough. Consumers should also be empowered on how to use this food, that is how to prepare it and consume it.

* *Reliable and relevant nutrition information, sensitive to cultural norms and preferences, needs to be effectively disseminated to improve behaviour and practice*.

There is a need to define “nutrition information”: the nutritional value of food on labels, information on nutrition-related problems, recommendations to improve dietary practices, practical information through provided through participatory methods (i.e. cooking sessions) or other?

If “providing information” means “increasing knowledge and awareness”, this will not be enough to enable consumers to adopt healthy dietary practices. There will be a need to increase populations’ perception on the severity of local nutrition-related problems and their susceptibility towards them and to empower them with practical abilities and skills to address these through food-based approaches.

* “*Governments should facilitate the establishment of healthy foods practices, based on local food cultures*.”

More thought is needed on the ways to reach this.

1. **Do you have any comments on the commitments proposed in the political declaration? In this connection, do you have any suggestions to contribute to a more technical elaboration to guide action and implementation on these commitments (paragraphs 21-23 of the zero draft)?**

Please provide your comments in the appropriate fields relating to these commitments:

21.

* “Health needs” should be defined.
* There is no mention about how the governments can empower their population in adopting a healthy diet; for that reason, I suggest adding the following commitment:
  + Promoting dietary practices that prevent malnutrition in all its forms by a) increasing awareness on healthy diets and on nutrition-related issues affecting our country; and b) empowering consumers to adopt optimal dietary and feeding practices.
* In general, the document emphasizes the importance of ensuring nutritious food is produced, accessible, affordable and acceptable, but no mention is made about its use by individuals or populations.