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Outcome of the Joint FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Executive Summary

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), jointly organized by FAO and the WHO, was successfully held in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014, with over 2200 participants in attendance. The Conference adopted its two outcome documents, the *Rome Declaration on Nutrition* and the *Framework for Action*.

This paper briefly outlines: (i) the ICN2 preparatory process; (ii) the conduct of the event itself; and (iii) the immediate lines of follow-up action by the Secretariat, which mainly include: (a) a request that the UN General Assembly endorse the ICN2 outcome documents, and consider declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025; (b) establishment by FAO of an *Action for Nutrition Trust Fund* to support governments in transforming the ICN2 commitments into concrete actions; (c) efforts by the Secretariat to further mainstream nutrition in the reviewed Strategic Framework of FAO; (d) initiatives to improve UN system coordination on nutrition; (e) modalities for joint reporting by FAO and WHO on implementation of the Rome Declaration commitments; (f) tabling reports on ICN2 follow-up on the agendas of FAO and WHO Governing Body sessions; and (g) take advantage of Expo Milan 2015 to shed light on the ICN2 outcomes and focus the world's attention on the importance of food security and nutrition.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to note the outcomes of the Conference, and ICN2 follow-up actions by the Secretariat, providing comments as deemed appropriate.

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I. Introduction

1. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), jointly organized by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), took place from 19 to 21 November 2014 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The objective of this inclusive, high-level inter-governmental meeting was: (i) to review progress made in improving nutrition since the first ICN in 1992; (ii) to reflect on problems that remain, as well as on new challenges and opportunities presented by global changes; and (iii) to identify policy and institutional options for enhancing nutrition worldwide.
2. A total of 167 Members of FAO and WHO, including 165 Member States, one Associate Member and the European Union, as well as three observers, were in attendance at ICN2. Besides eminent Special Guests, over 2200 persons participated in the Conference, including 85 Ministers, 23 Vice-Ministers, 82 Ambassadors and 114 other high-level government officials. Accredited observers included 27 UN and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as 166 civil society and private sector organizations.
3. At its first session on Wednesday, 19 November, the Conference adopted the two outcome documents, namely the Rome Declaration on Nutrition¹ and its companion Framework for Action².
4. This paper briefly outlines: (i) the ICN2 preparatory process; (ii) the conduct of the event itself; and (iii) the immediate lines of follow-up action by the Secretariat.

II. Preparations for the Conference

5. The FAO Conference, at its 38th session in June 2013³, supported the initiative to organize ICN2.
6. Following the Preparatory Technical Meeting (13-15 November 2013), the FAO Council, at its 148th session in December 2013⁴, requested the ICN2 Joint Secretariat to develop a roadmap for an intergovernmental process and for consultations with civil society and private sector organizations. It also requested the Independent Chairperson of Council to facilitate the process and encouraged the Joint Secretariat to prepare a zero draft of the Conference outcome document.
7. The WHO Executive Board, at its 134th session in January 2014⁵, besides reiterating the request to develop such a roadmap, further requested the Directors-General of WHO and FAO to jointly: (i) set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) to prepare the draft outcome documents; and (ii) explore the possibility of convening a meeting of an open-ended working group (OEWG) for the finalization of the outcome documents.
8. The JWG, composed of up to two members representing each of the seven FAO Regional Groups and each of the six WHO Regions, had two Co-Chairs and two Co-Vice-Chairs. It was tasked to prepare, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat, a draft political outcome document and a draft framework for action. From March to September 2014, monthly meetings of the JWG were held, in a cost-effective way, through video conferencing between Geneva and Rome.
9. A face-to-face meeting of the OEWG, providing speaking rights to all FAO and WHO Members, was held in two parts: in Geneva on 22-23 September 2014, then in Rome from 10 to 12 October 2014. Over the course of this 5-day long meeting, negotiation of the Conference outcome documents was completed, and consensus was reached on the entire text of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and of the Framework for Action⁶.

¹ *Conference Outcome Document: Rome Declaration on Nutrition*, ICN2 2014/2 (www.fao.org/3/a-ml542e.pdf).

² *Conference Outcome Document: Framework for Action*, ICN2 2014/3 Corr.1 (www.fao.org/3/a-mm215e.pdf).

³ C 2013/REP, paragraphs 80-81 (www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/028/mh093e.pdf).

⁴ CL 148/REP, paragraph 11 (www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/MJ275E.pdf).

⁵ Decision EB 134(2), EB 134/DIV./3 (http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB134/B134_DIV3-en.pdf).

⁶ *Co-Chairs' Cover Note of the Conference Outcome Documents*, ICN2 2014/INF/5 Coord.1 (www.fao.org/3/a-mm222e.pdf).

10. UN partners, other international organizations, civil society, research community, academia and private sector organizations were consulted on the Conference outcome documents through three web-based public consultations and participated in the OEWG held in September-October 2014.

III. Conduct of the Conference

11. After the inaugural ceremony, the Conference included five plenary sessions, three thematic roundtables⁷ and nine side events⁸, as per the approved timetable⁹. The adoption of the Conference outcome documents at the opening session was followed by the general debate, which involved 19 statements by special guests and other eminent personalities; 134 statements by heads of country delegations; and 21 statements from observer organizations. All the statements have been posted on the ICN2 website. Chairs' summaries of the roundtable deliberations were presented at the closing session of the Conference, and posted on the ICN2 website¹⁰.

12. In addition, the Conference was preceded by three special events which took place in Rome, outside FAO premises, namely: (i) a meeting of civil society organizations on 17-18 November 2014; (ii) a meeting of private sector representatives on 18 November 2014; and (iii) a meeting of parliamentarians on 18 November 2014. The outcomes of these three special events were reported to the Conference at the closing session, and posted on the ICN2 website¹¹. Prior to ICN2, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement also held its annual Global Gathering at the World Food Programme in Rome on 16-18 November 2014 and reported its outcome at an ICN2 side event.

13. Special guests in attendance at the Conference included His Holiness Pope Francis, who stated that the hungry need dignity and not charity; His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho, who highlighted the cost of hunger in Africa; Her Majesty Queen Letizia of Spain, who recalled that hunger was the main cause of disease in the world; and Her Royal Highness Princess Haya bint Al Hussein, who warned that inaction transforms us into instrument of hunger.

IV. Immediate follow-up action by the Secretariat

14. Paragraph 17 of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition states: *"We recommend to the United Nations General Assembly to endorse the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, as well as the Framework for Action which provides a set of voluntary policy options and strategies for use by governments, as appropriate, and to consider declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025 within existing structures and available resources."* Acting on this recommendation, on 26 November 2014 the Directors-General of FAO and WHO sent a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations requesting him to arrange for the 70th Session of the General Assembly: (i) to endorse the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action; and (ii) to consider declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025.

15. Under paragraph 15 of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, Members committed to raise the profile of nutrition within relevant national programmes and to *"align national resources accordingly"*, as well as to *"increase investments for effective interventions and actions to improve people's diets and nutrition"*. Likewise, recommendation 4 of the Framework for Action calls for increasing responsible and sustainable investment in nutrition, and generating additional resources through innovative financing tools.

16. In this context, FAO is in the process of establishing the *Action for Nutrition Trust Fund* to support governments in transforming the ICN2 commitments into concrete actions. This multi-donor trust fund will be the preferred means for strategically aligning un-earmarked or lightly earmarked contributions. It will mobilize resources for country programmes and projects that: (i) foster enabling

⁷ The roundtable programmes are on the ICN2 website at: www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/roundtables/en.

⁸ The side event programmes are on the ICN2 website at: www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/side-events/en.

⁹ ICN2 2014/INF/1 Rev.1 (www.fao.org/3/a-ml067e.pdf).

¹⁰ At: www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/friday-21-november/en.

¹¹ At: www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/friday-21-november/en.

environments for nutrition; (ii) promote sustainable food systems for healthy diets; (iii) support nutrition-enhancing investment and trade; (iv) strengthen nutrition education and information; (v) improve food safety, water supply, sanitation and hygiene; (vi) enhance social protection for improved nutrition; and (vii) ensure accountability for ICN2 follow-up through enhanced monitoring mechanisms.

17. The Nutrition Division will support implementation of the resource mobilization, management and communication action plan of the Fund, ensuring in particular adequate planning and operation of projects and programmes.

18. In this connection, greater efforts are being made by the Secretariat to mainstream nutrition as a cross cutting theme in the reviewed Strategic Framework. This will involve, *inter alia*, deployment of nutrition staff to cover all regional offices as well as select sub-regional offices of FAO.

19. Other immediate follow-up actions stemming from the ICN2 outcome documents include ongoing discussions on efforts to improve UN system coordination on nutrition, especially for normative, policy and operational coordination for effective support to countries, by strengthening the existing mechanisms. Moreover, in response to paragraph 14-o of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, further steps are being considered to enable the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to serve as the premier intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder global forum on nutrition, concomitant with requisite refinement vis-à-vis membership of the WHO.

20. Consideration also needs to be given to efficient ways in which recommendations 59 and 60 of the Framework for Action could be operationalized in terms of: (i) joint reporting by FAO and WHO on implementation of the commitments set out in the Rome Declaration on Nutrition; and (ii) tabling reports on ICN2 follow-up on the agendas of FAO and WHO Governing Body sessions.

21. As highlighted in paragraph 14-p of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, Expo Milan 2015, being dedicated to “*feeding the planet, energy for life*”, will provide a unique opportunity to give high visibility to the ICN2 outcomes and to focus the world’s attention on the importance of food security and nutrition. Hence, the need for FAO to be actively involved in that global platform where innovative ideas on how to end hunger and malnutrition will be explored.

V. Guidance Sought

22. The Council is invited to note the outcomes of the Conference, and on ICN2 follow-up action by the Secretariat, providing comments as deemed appropriate.