Nutrition mainstreamed in FAO's Strategic Objectives

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Strategy and vision for FAO's work in nutrition

FAO's Strategy and vision for Nutrition seeks to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition of low-income, resource poor, food insecure, socially excluded and economically marginalized, most nutritionally vulnerable households in gender-sensitive and sustainable ways.

The purpose of the Strategy is to reposition and prioritize FAO's work in nutrition and to assert its leadership role in bringing stakeholders together, in generating and communicating knowledge to build political commitment and guide actions, and in strengthening capacities of governments and other implementing partners to act effectively.

The Strategy sets out FAO's vision and role in nutrition, taking a people-centred approach and contributes to three outcomes designed to be linked to FAO's Strategic Objectives:

  i. Increased knowledge and evidence to maximize the impact of food and agricultural systems on nutrition

  ii. Improved food and agricultural systems' governance for nutrition

  iii. Strengthened national, regional and local capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status

Key considerations for implementation concern building meaningful partnerships, mobilizing resources and applying them where FAO can have greatest impact.

Strategic Objective 1: **Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition**

Through this Strategic Objective, FAO supports efforts to eliminate hunger and malnutrition by mainstreaming nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations into food and agriculture policies and programmes. FAO works in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies and development partners across sectors to build political and financial commitment for improving nutrition through high-level fora such as the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and the Committee for World Food Security (CFS), as well as to strengthen capacities at country level to scale up policies and interventions that improve nutrition.

FAO provides scientific advice and policy analysis as well as support to Members for building technical capacity for the design and implementation of nutrition-enhancing food and agriculture policies and programmes, planning and implementing effective nutrition education programmes, harmonizing methods for dietary and nutrition assessment at household and individual level, integrating nutrition indicators in food security information systems, and by documenting the nutritional impact of food and agriculture interventions thereby building the evidence base for effective strategies.

Strategic Objective 2: **Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable**

To meet the energy and nutrient needs of the increasing world population, food production must increase in a sustainable manner. Policies encouraging nutrition-enhancing agriculture are one part of the paradigm shift that is needed in redesigning food production policies and programmes in the wake of resource efficiency challenges.

FAO develops and updates guidelines, databases and capacity development tools on food composition and biodiversity, with the overall aim to build evidence basis and inform national policy makers. Nutrition is also included in two global initiatives: "Sustainable Agricultural Production Intensification" and "Common Vision on Sustainability"; with the former focussing on sustainable practices in the field and the latter operating at policy level.

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Strategic Objective 3:
Reduce Rural Poverty

Nutrition and rural poverty are closely linked. Reducing malnutrition is vital to tackling the key determinants of poverty, and reducing poverty is a necessary condition for improving nutrition. With a focus on livelihoods, FAO aims to provide economic and social support to vulnerable populations to enhance their resilience and to protect and promote nutrition.

FAO recognizes the importance of using innovative poverty reduction measures such as social protection schemes to address food security and nutrition. FAO strives to narrow identified knowledge and research gaps by developing data collection and impact assessment tools to better assess and enhance the effectiveness of social protection programmes in addressing malnutrition. In acknowledging the impact social protection schemes have in improving the quantity and quality of diets among vulnerable groups, ICN2 highlights the need to make social protection programmes increasingly nutrition-enhancing.

Strategic Objective 4: **Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems**

Increasing efficiency of food systems to ensure high food safety and quality standards is important for maintaining the nutrient density of foods. FAO works to reduce food losses and waste and to ensure the safety of food throughout the food chain.
FAO also works on the development, harmonization and revision of international food safety and quality standards. In addition to providing advice and technical assistance on the nutritional quality of foods, through the Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO works on the harmonization of food standards, including on nutrition labelling.

Strategic Objective 5: **Increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters**

FAO contributes to the global policy dialogue on nutrition and resilience while supporting activities in crisis-prone countries, in protracted crises and level 3 emergencies. FAO works to improve the effectiveness and quality of interventions that build resilience and protect and promote good nutrition in crisis and in recovery, facilitates cross-sector dialogue and integrated programming including between food security and nutrition clusters, and in collaboration with partners, identifies and disseminates good practices and successful case studies to build the evidence base for nutrition-enhancing programming for nutrition.

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