



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations  
Regional Office for the Near East



World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the  
Eastern Mediterranean

# FAO / WHO Technical Consultation on National Food-based Dietary Guidelines

Cairo, Egypt  
6–9 December 2004



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations  
Regional Office for the Near East



World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the  
Eastern Mediterranean

# **FAO / WHO**

# **Technical Consultation on**

# **National Food-based Dietary**

# **Guidelines**

**Cairo, Egypt**  
**6–9 December 2004**

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization or of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United do not warrant that the information contained in this publication is complete and correct and shall not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of its use.

This publication contains the collective views of an international group of experts and does not necessarily represent the decisions or the stated policy of the World Health Organization or of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The conclusions given in this report are considered appropriate at the time of its preparation.

All rights reserved. Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holders. Applications for such permission should be addressed to the FAO Regional Office for the Near East at P.O. Box 2233, Cairo, Egypt; email [FAO-RNE@fao.org](mailto:FAO-RNE@fao.org) or to the Regional Adviser, Health and Biomedical Information, at World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, PO Box 7608, Nasr City, Cairo 11371, Egypt (fax: +202 276 5400); email [HBI@emro.who.int](mailto:HBI@emro.who.int).

# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF FOOD-BASED DIETARY GUIDELINES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Food-based dietary guidelines: overview and follow-up	9
3.2 Regional overview of diet-related health problems	11
3.3 Regional overview of food consumption patterns	13
3.4 Summary of diet, nutrition and chronic diseases: Technical Report 916 and the global debate	15
3.5 Overview of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and its regional implications	17
3.6 Process and steps in developing food-based dietary guidelines	19
3.7 Food and dietary data needed for the preparation of food-based dietary guidelines	21
3.8 Health and nutrition information needed for the preparation of food-based dietary guidelines	23
3.9 Developing food-based dietary guidelines: experiences from Thailand	24
3.10 Developing food-based dietary guidelines: Experiences from India	27
3.11 Linking food-based dietary guidelines and nutrition education	30
3.12 Developing multisectoral nutrition communication plans: regional experiences	33
<b>4. COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS</b>	<b>35</b>
4.1 Bahrain	35
4.2 Egypt	37
4.3 Islamic Republic of Iran	39
4.4 Jordan	40
4.5 Kuwait	41
4.6 Lebanon	42
4.7 Pakistan	43
<b>5. WORKING GROUP SESSIONS</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 Group Session 1	45
5.2 Group Session 2	47
5.3 Group Session 3	51
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>7. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	
<b>1. PROGRAMME</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTED DURING THE CONSULTATION</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>4. WORKING GROUP SESSIONS SUGGESTED CHECKLISTS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>5. MEDITERRANEAN DIET</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>6. LIST OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>73</b>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FAO/WHO Technical Consultation on National Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG) invited 18 experts from selected Member States of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean and FAO Near East Regions, acknowledged experts from other countries and senior technical staff from FAO and WHO Headquarters and regional offices, to review the status of food-based dietary guidelines in participating countries of the Region; identify gaps and resources involved in setting up national food-based dietary guidelines; and formulate a framework to assist Member States in developing and implementing food-based dietary guidelines.

The technical consultation was divided into plenary sessions and group work. A number of important presentations were given on the food and nutrition situation in participating countries, including their experiences in the development and use of FBDG, and steps taken in their preparation; various aspects of diet, malnutrition and chronic diseases; recent international commitments by WHO Member States (Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health); and the potential of FBDG in guiding policy formulation, nutrition education and communication strategies.

The topics for the working group sessions consisted of identifying constraints and gaps, including the availability of appropriate data and information, in the countries to complete the process of developing FBDG; identifying the role of different sectors and partners in the development and implementation of FBDG; developing national plans of action and follow up. Participants were divided into two groups based on the priority nutrition problems identified, the level of development of FBDG, regional proximity, possibility of collaboration, and similarities in food habits.

## **Conclusions**

- The countries in the Region are at different stages of nutrition transition, facing the entire spectrum of nutritional conditions.
- FBDG remains an important education and communication tool in addressing the burden of nutritional conditions. They have great potential for placing nutritional concerns on the national agenda, providing guidance for food, nutrition, food hygiene, education and agricultural policy formulation, and nutrition education activities. They can also identify policy options of food supply and demand that promote lifelong healthy eating patterns, influencing the nutrition transition towards healthier outcomes and a decrease in the economic burden of diseases.
- Physical activity should be closely integrated with food-related messages in the dietary guidelines in this Region.
- FBDG could contribute substantially to the implementation of the