



Preparatory events towards the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition

Thematic session: Parliamentary action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all



Session summary

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) have organized the thematic session “Parliamentary action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all”, in the context of preparations for the Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition to be held in 2023. This session aims to improve knowledge and facilitate political dialogue around the role of parliamentarians in promoting improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all.

Background

We are now only eight years away from 2030, but the distance to reach many of the SDG 2 targets is growing wider each year. There are indeed efforts to make progress towards SDG 2, yet they are proving insufficient in the face of a more challenging and uncertain context. The intensification of the major drivers behind recent food insecurity and malnutrition trends (i.e. conflict, climate extremes and economic shocks) combined with the high cost of nutritious foods and growing inequalities will continue to challenge food security and nutrition. The most recent evidence available suggests that the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet around the world rose by 112 million to almost 3.1 billion, reflecting the impacts of rising consumer food prices during the pandemic. This number could even be greater once data are available to account for income losses in 2022. This will be the case until agrifood systems are transformed, become more

Thematic session

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When: 28 September 2022, 13:00 - 15:00 (CEST)

Where: Online (through the Zoom platform); a link will be provided upon registration

resilient and are delivering lower cost nutritious foods and affordable healthy diets for all, sustainably and inclusively.ⁱ

Globally, malnutrition remains a huge challenge to achieve sustainable development goals. Every country in the world is affected by malnutrition in at least one of its forms, while most are affected by multiple forms. Child malnutrition is a particular challenge. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 (SOFI 2022) estimated that 22 percent (149 million) of children under 5 were affected by stunting, 6.7 percent (45 million) suffered from wasting and 5.7 percent (39 million) were overweight.ⁱⁱ Overweight and obesity are increasingly prevalent among children, youth, and adults, and increasing in every region. Malnutrition particularly affects those living in poor and marginalised communities and those who have less control over their dietary choices. This includes children, women, the elderly, the disabled, indigenous peoples, informal workers, subsistence farmers, the poor, migrants, refugees, and displaced people.ⁱⁱⁱ

Progress on tackling all forms of malnutrition (e.g. indicators around stunting, breastfeeding, and low birthweight) is insufficient and needs to be accelerated. For other forms of malnutrition (e.g. overweight and obesity, wasting, anaemia in women of reproductive age) progress has stalled or the situation is worsening. Efforts to eradicate malnutrition have been affected by disruptions in nutrition interventions and negative impacts on diets brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has likely impacted the prevalence of multiple forms of malnutrition and could have lasting effects. It is estimated that nearly 670 million people will still be undernourished in 2030 – 8 percent of the world population, which is the same percentage as in 2015 when the 2030 Agenda was launched. This is 78 million more undernourished people in 2030 compared to a scenario in which the pandemic had not occurred.^{iv} Malnutrition has many interrelated and underlying causes.^v Poverty, low socio-economic status and gender inequality affect access to sufficient, adequate, safe and nutritious food and healthy diets. Crises, including epidemics and pandemics, conflicts, natural disasters and extreme weather-related events, also have adverse impacts on the nutritional status of affected populations. Finally, changes in diets and physical activity brought about by socioeconomic changes can lead to higher risk of obesity and NCDs.

Eradicating malnutrition is one aspect of SDG 2, which entails specific targets of ensuring “access by all people... to safe, nutritious and sufficient food...” (SDG2.1) and ending “all forms of malnutrition” by 2030, including achieving the internationally agreed nutrition targets by 2025 (SDG2.2). The importance of eradicating malnutrition has also been recognised and endorsed in other fora. In 2016, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025). In 2021, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, which provide guidance to governments on aligning policies, laws, programmes and investment plans to address hunger and malnutrition in all its forms. Also in 2021, the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) reaffirmed the importance of ensuring all people can access a nutritious and healthy diet.^{vi}

All stakeholders have a role to play. Many implement policies and practices that directly and indirectly influence the availability, accessibility, affordability and appeal of healthy diets, and how they are produced. A broad coalition is thus vital to align, coordinate and strengthen actions

across different sectors of food systems at all levels to achieve collective impact on healthy diets from sustainable food systems.^{vii} Parliamentarians recognise the need to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all.

The *Final Declaration of the Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition* (2018) acknowledges the need for legislative and policy measures to ensure everyone can enjoy the right to adequate, safe, sufficient, healthy and nutritious food and calls on legislators to support the production and consumption of healthy food, as well as food and nutrition education and information. It also signals parliamentarians' commitment to advocate for legislation, policies and programmes to improve and ensure access to healthy diets. During dialogues organised to feed into the UNFSS, parliamentarians stressed the need to encourage the consumption of healthy and sustainable diets, including through education, information, and legislation and programmes to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods and disincentivise the consumption of unhealthy foods.

Between March and September 2021, FAO and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) organised seven *Virtual Parliamentary Dialogues on 'Food Security and Nutrition in the time of COVID-19'* as a follow-up to the first Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition. During these dialogues, parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to advocating for the right to adequate food, including access to healthy diets. They also signalled their intention to continue to use their legislative and budgetary allocation and oversight roles to improve and ensure access to healthy diets and to exchange and discuss best practices and legislative initiatives towards affordable healthy diets. Several examples of parliamentary action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets were highlighted during the dialogues, including legislative action on school feeding programmes, food safety, food labelling, breastfeeding as a right for infants and mothers, water and sanitation systems and the prohibition of sugary drinks in schools.

Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play

Parliamentarians and their sub-national, national and regional alliances have an important role to play to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. This includes supporting the adoption of policies that promote nutrition and healthy diets, establishing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks to ensure access to affordable nutritious food for all, raising awareness and promoting dialogue among relevant stakeholders, allocating resources for the implementation of policies and programmes to achieve improved nutrition and healthy diets and fostering policy coordination and coherence across sector and agencies in the fight against malnutrition.^{viii}

With parliamentary action to tackle hunger and malnutrition more necessary than ever, AECID and FAO will convene a second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition in 2023. To inform discussion and debate in the lead-up to the forthcoming Summit, as well as follow-up action, FAO and IISD have organised this session to promote dialogue and lesson-sharing on how parliamentarians can promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all.

Objectives of this thematic session

The general objectives of the session are to emphasise the importance of tackling malnutrition in all its forms and identify opportunities for parliamentary action to promote healthy diets and improved nutrition for all. The insights from this session will feed into a strategic document being prepared by FAO and IISD to inform discussion at the forthcoming Summit and inspire and guide follow-up commitments and action by parliamentarians at the regional and national levels.

Specifically, the session seeks to raise awareness among parliamentarians regarding opportunities to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all, through:

- **Promoting political dialogue** around nutrition and healthy diets in the context of the right to adequate food
- **Identifying and sharing experiences** of policies, legislation, good practices, and lessons learned in the fight against malnutrition
- **Compiling key takeaways** and main conclusions to position improved nutrition and healthy diets high on the Second Global Parliamentary Summit agenda.

General methodology

The thematic session, "Parliamentary action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all", will be held through the Zoom platform. This activity will take place in a single videoconference, lasting 2 hours. The activity will be from 13:00 to 15:00 Rome time. The thematic session will have interpretation in English, French and Spanish.

The thematic session will be composed of three different spaces:

- **Thematic Panels:** Focus on technical presentations as well as relevant cases/experiences in the domain of public action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. The panels will feature three presentations each. The purpose of the presentations is to provide fundamental elements to inform the discussion on public policies and legislation.
- **Discussion:** Round of Q&As that will be opened after each presentation (Thematic Panels). Each space for discussion will last 10 minutes, and parliamentarians will have the opportunity to succinctly share reflections and/or comments.
- **Informative Session:** Presentation of various FAO tools. The presentation will last 20 minutes and will be delivered by FAO and IISD staff.

<p style="text-align: center;">Thematic session: “Parliamentary action to promote improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all” 28 September 2022, 13:00 – 15:00 (CEST)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderator: <i>Mr Jean-Leonard Touadi</i>, FAO Special Coordinator for Parliamentary Networks (PSU)</p>	
Time	Activity
13.00 – 13.10	<p>Welcome remarks, <i>Ms Marcela Villarreal</i>, Ph.D., Director, Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU), FAO</p>
13.10 – 13.30	<p>Keynote address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and the key role of parliamentarians in promoting their application at country level <i>H.E. Gabriel Ferrero</i>, Chair of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) • Challenges and opportunities for food security and nutrition: the role of regional parliamentary networks <i>Hon. Senator. Chief Fortune Charumbira</i>, President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
13.30 – 13.50	<p>Thematic Panel 1: Legislative action aimed at enabling an environment for improved nutrition from a regional perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hon. Silvia Giacoppo</i>, President of PARLATINO and Senator of Argentina • <i>Hon. Didier Molisho Sadi</i>, Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture (PAP) • <i>Hon. Martin Hlaváček</i>, Member of the European Parliament and member of the European Parliamentary Alliance against hunger and malnutrition
13.50 – 14.00	Discussion
14.00 – 14.20	<p>Thematic Panel 2: Legislative action aimed at enabling an environment for improved nutrition from a national perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hon. Dr. Jihad Al-Fathel</i>, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Networks for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) and Member of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain • <i>Hon. Jairo Flores</i>, General Coordinator of the Parliamentary Front of Latin America and the Caribbean and Member of the Parliament of Guatemala • <i>Hon. Neema Lugangira</i>, Member of the Parliament of Tanzania • <i>Hon. Kraisid Tontisirin</i>, Member of the Parliament of Thailand
14.20 – 14.30	Discussion
14.30 – 14.50	<p>Presentation of FAO e-learning material and tools for parliamentarians on nutrition, <i>Ms Diana Carter</i>, Nutrition and Food Systems Officer, FAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Systems and Nutrition: Handbook for Parliamentarians, IPU and FAO, (2021). • FAO e-learning on legislating in Nutrition <p>Presentation of a Survey to inform the second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, <i>Mr Sean Woolfrey</i>, Senior Policy Advisor, Agriculture, Trade and Investment, IISD</p>
14:50 – 15.00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Nancy Aburto</i>, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Food and Nutrition Division (ESN), FAO

Notes

ⁱ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable. Rome, FAO. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0639en>.

ⁱⁱ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ CFS (Committee on World Food Security). 2021. CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/Documents/CFS_VGs_Food_Systems_and_Nutrition_Strategy_EN.pdf

^{iv} FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022.

^v FAO and WHO. 2014. Second International Conference on Nutrition. Rome Declaration on Nutrition. Rome, FAO. <https://www.fao.org/3/ml542e/ml542e.pdf>

^{vi} UN (United Nations). 2021. Food Systems Summit 2021. New York. <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/making-food-systems-work-people-planet-and-prosperity>.

^{vii} UN Nutrition. 2022. [Launch event of the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All](#)

^{viii} FAO and WHO. 2014.