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**Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and
implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition**

Summary

- After the adoption of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition by the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), in April 2016 the General Assembly of the United Nations declared the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) with the aim of creating a favourable political environment to turn national commitments into firm actions.
- A Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Eating and 12 National Consultations were held in 2017 with the aim of identifying possible public policy actions in order to promote sustainable food systems to improve nutrition. The symposium was held in El Salvador (September 2017) within the framework of its Pro-tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and was organized by FAO and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/OMS).
- FAO also continued to support countries in the region in the implementation of measures recommended in the ICN2 Framework for Action.
- The United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition is an opportunity to speed up the design and implementation of broad-ranging national and regional policies and programmes to facilitate the achievement of malnutrition-related goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Background to the Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Eating

1. In April 2016, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the Rome Declaration and its Framework for Action and proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) by means of Resolution 70/259¹, calling on FAO and WHO to jointly manage activities for the Decade, in conjunction with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
2. The purpose of the Decade is to provide a clearly-defined, cohesive, fixed-term framework that acts within existing structures and subject to available resources to implement the broad commitments assumed in ICN2 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. In December 2016, FAO and WHO jointly organized the International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition in Rome. This explored policy and programme options for shaping existing food systems in ways that contribute to eradication of hunger and malnutrition in all forms (undernourishment, lack of micronutrients, overweight and obesity). Given the success of the international symposium, the regions were called on to organize regional symposia to allow discussion and reflection on challenges and opportunities in local contexts.
4. The Regional Symposium on sustainable food systems for healthy eating was held in San Salvador, El Salvador, from 5 to 7 September 2017². The event was attended by 190 delegates from governments, civil society, producers, the private sector, academia and United Nations Agencies, among others. It allowed reflection on the challenges and opportunities of achieving food systems that ensure everyone a human right to enough healthy food in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The Symposium also provided a multisectoral space for the exchange of practical solutions, experience and lessons learned in the process of re-imagining sustainable, equitable and inclusive systems in the region.
5. The Symposium focused on the discussion of solutions offered on public policies and initiatives to face up to challenges and opportunities posed by hunger and malnutrition in all its forms over the next few decades, via three central themes: a) policies and initiatives that guarantee the availability of diversified and healthy foods; b) policies and initiatives associated with access to and consumption of diversified and healthy foods – and c) policies and initiatives that improve intersectoral governance for sustainable, equitable and inclusive food systems.
6. To ensure a thorough debate and collective reflection, the Symposium was preceded by a call for positive experiences in the region, the setting up of an external technical advisory committee and 12 National Consultations on sustainable food systems. The national consultations were coordinated by FAO, PAHO/WHO and national institutions. National consultancies were held in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. A virtual session was also held with approximately 80 key stakeholders from the Caribbean and a specific consultation was held with regional representatives of consumer organizations. In total, the number of participants at the consultations amounted to nearly 700 people, including representatives of different government bodies and society as a whole.
7. A call was also put out to gather innovative experiences in order to provide the Symposium with stimulating experiences on new advances in the various aspects of food systems contributing to

¹ A/RES/70/259- https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259.

² For more information on the *Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Eating* see <http://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/es/c/897040/>

sustainability. Approximately 90 national experiences were received. The Technical Advisory Committee was in charge of selecting the 27 experiences presented during the Symposium.

II. Conclusions and follow-up actions to the Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Eating

8. The experiences and working sessions covered by the Symposium made it possible to process a set of conclusions aimed at moving toward more sustainable, inclusive, efficient and nutrition-sensitive systems. Among these, participants agreed on the importance of developing or implementing fiscal measures that regulate the food system and make it possible to control production, supply, demand and consumption of processed and ultra-processed products.

9. Another fundamental pillar emphasized was the importance of having laws and regulations designed to protect the public, particularly children and adolescents, because such rules can be used to inform the public about specific aspects such as the harmful effects of consuming foods with a high content of sugars, salt and fats and also help regulate the advertising of such foods.

10. A need was also reaffirmed to make the issue of food and nutrition security central to policies, adopting a rights-based approach and encompassing everything related to nutrition. Participants also mentioned the importance of fostering political willingness to resolve these issues by ensuring a budget and inter-institutional and human resource coordination.

11. It was acknowledged that significant progress had been made in setting up multisectoral coordination mechanisms. Aspects were identified for improvement in order to ensure effective, participatory and fair governance of the food system and to ensure that the latter is truly sustainable.

12. The principle of participation by different sectors, key stakeholders and citizens in general was highlighted. A need was thus expressed for decision-making mechanisms to allow the participation of all sectors involved in and affected by the food system, with special emphasis on those in a state of greatest exclusion from decision-making processes, such as indigenous peoples and rural women.

13. With regard to follow-up actions to the Symposium, FAO will work with PAHO/WHO to support the various countries that expressed an interest in actively helping to implement the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition.

14. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) participated in the Symposium and, in conjunction with FAO, agreed to promote an initiative in the form of a Partnership to encourage the shaping of food systems with the aim of reducing overweight and obesity in the region. Symposium participants with relevant experience and other experts from the region will be invited to form part of the Partnership. Priority working topics are being identified.

III. Other activities supported in the framework of the follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition

15. LAC countries are developing a broad agenda of public policy initiatives related to ICN2. FAO, in particular, is supporting several of these measures, highlighting those related to the creation of an environment conducive to effective action, particularly through South–South Cooperation, nutritional education and information measures, social protection measures through support for school feeding programmes and the measures on sustainable food systems to promote healthy diets mentioned above.

16. In particular, work has been done to support the implementation of the Law on healthy eating in Chile, which includes organizing a process to help roll the measure out to other countries in the region with similar interests, promoting school feeding programmes with cooperative support from Brazil and Mexico in 13 countries of the region or providing technical assistance for the design of new Food-Based Dietary Guidelines in Ecuador, Guiana, Peru and Uruguay. Support is also being given to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to train its member countries in policies and programmes relating to Pillar 3 on Nutritional Wellbeing of its Plan For Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025.