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Progress Report on the Preparation of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Executive Summary

Progress made in preparing for the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) is reported in this document. After recalling the guidance provided by the FAO and WHO Governing Bodies, the report covers preparatory activities undertaken over the recent months, including: development of the ICN2 draft political outcome document; arrangements for, and work of, the ICN2 Joint Working Group; informal meetings and consultations held, including a web-based public consultation; and other arrangements being made for the Conference by the ICN2 Joint Secretariat.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to note the progress made in preparing for the Conference, providing comments as deemed appropriate. The Council may also wish to give guidance on the way forward with a view to ensuring a successful outcome of the Conference in November 2014.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Background

1. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), to be held in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014, is being jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the UN Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP) and World Trade Organization (WTO). ICN2 will bring key international political figures, together with high level national policymakers from agriculture, health and other relevant ministries and agencies, with leaders of UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, researchers, the private sector and consumers.

2. The ICN2 outcome is expected to include a political outcome document and a technical framework for action to guide its implementation. Since nutrition is an outcome of multiple factors, comprehensive solutions are needed as well as further political and policy coherence, alignment, coordination and cooperation among food, agriculture, health and other sectors if global nutrition is to be improved. There is also increased demand from countries for practical tools, guidelines, and sharing of experiences as well as lessons learned on how to align sectoral policies to improve nutritional outcomes.

3. ICN2 will address issues related to all forms of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and diet-related non-communicable diseases often associated with obesity), and explore how governments and others can better work together to address the multiple burdens of malnutrition. The Conference will help identify policy priorities and reforms throughout all sectors that can improve nutritional outcomes. It will also help mainstream nutrition by ensuring that nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations are incorporated into national, regional and international policies and programmes.

Guidance by FAO Conference and Council

4. The FAO Conference, at its 38th session¹, fully supported FAO's and WHO's joint initiative to organize ICN2. It considered the focus on nutrition challenges faced by the poorest and most nutritionally vulnerable households as most appropriate and called for ICN2 to further engage with relevant international organizations, build upon international initiatives and processes, and develop partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector. The Conference agreed to hold the Preparatory Technical Meeting from 13 to 15 November 2013 with a view to identifying themes around which ICN2 would be organized, and encouraged all countries to ensure effective national level preparations.

5. The FAO Council, at its 148th session², requested the Joint Secretariat to develop a roadmap that would allow for an intergovernmental process and for consultations with civil society and private sector organizations. It requested the Independent Chairperson of the Council to facilitate this intergovernmental process and encouraged the ICN2 Secretariat to prepare a zero draft outcome document based on the Preparatory Technical Meeting and consultations at regional and international levels.

Guidance by WHO Executive Board

6. The WHO Executive Board, at its 134th session³, noting the decision of the FAO Council, requested the Joint Secretariat to develop a roadmap that would allow for both an intergovernmental process as well as consultations with civil society and private sector organizations in order to develop

¹ C 2013/REP, paragraphs 80-81 (www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/028/mh093e.pdf).

² CL 148/REP, paragraph 11 (www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/MJ275E.pdf).

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

an outcome document for ICN2, taking into account the WHO rules and regulations concerning engagement with non-state actors.

7. The Executive Board further requested the Directors-General of WHO and FAO to jointly: i) set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) and develop modalities for its work, so as to prepare, by the end of September 2014, a draft outcome document on the basis of a zero draft prepared by the Joint Secretariat; ii) explore the possibility of convening, within available resources, one meeting of an open-ended working group of Member States for the finalization of the outcome document; and iii) ensure consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including other UN organizations working in the field of nutrition, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector, as appropriate, before the draft outcome document is submitted to the open-ended working group. The Executive Board also requested the Director-General to report, for further guidance, to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly on WHO's role and the progress made in the preparation for ICN2.

II. Progress made

Informal meetings and consultations

8. FAO: informal meetings among Members were held on 16 January, 17 February, 19 March, 24 March and 10 April 2014 to discuss preparations for ICN2, including arrangements for ICN2, the draft indicative roadmap, tentative programme of ICN2, mandate and arrangements of the JWG, and draft political outcome document.

9. WHO: a briefing of Member States was held on 18 February 2014. Informal meetings were held on 18 and 27 March 2014 to discuss the arrangements for ICN2.

10. Video conferences between FAO and WHO:

- i) *Ad hoc* intersessional consultations were held under the leadership of the Co-Chairs of the JWG to discuss the mandate and arrangements of the JWG, the draft political outcome document and other issues raised by Members.
- ii) There has been regular coordination among the ICN2 Joint Secretariat, with frequent video conferences, conference calls and communication by e-mail and *ad hoc* face to face meetings.

Joint Working Group activities

11. The ICN2 Joint Working Group (JWG), composed of up to two members representing each of the seven FAO Regional Groups and each of the six WHO Regions, has two Co-Chairs and two Co-Vice-Chairs. It is tasked to prepare, in cooperation with the ICN2 Joint Secretariat, the draft political outcome document and a draft framework for action. The ICN2 Joint Secretariat is regularly informing the JWG on substantial aspects of the preparation of the Conference. JWG meetings are held in the six UN languages. Observers from the other FAO Members and WHO Member States are allowed to attend the JWG meetings without speaking rights.

12. JWG meetings are held in a cost-effective way by video conference. For the development of the draft political outcome document, formal meetings of the JWG have been held on 4 March, 14 April, 30 April and 12 May 2014 and a further meeting is planned in late June to complete its preparation. The JWG shall also meet in September to review the draft framework for action. In addition, the JWG shall advise on convening an open-ended working group meeting, providing speaking rights to the entire membership of both Organizations, for the completion of the draft political outcome document and the draft technical framework for action.

Conference Outcome Document

13. A zero draft of the political outcome document, prepared by the ICN2 Joint Secretariat, was sent to the Membership for review on 7 February 2014. Inputs on the zero draft political outcome document were provided by JWG members, as well as through a public web-consultation involving civil society, research community, academia, private sector and international organizations, including UN agencies, and by members of the ICN2 Steering Committee.

14. A zero+1 draft of the political outcome document has been prepared by the ICN2 Joint Secretariat, incorporating inputs of the FAO and WHO Regional Groups, under the guidance of the JWG Co-Chairs and Co-Vice-Chairs. The ICN2 Joint Secretariat is proactively and collaboratively supporting the JWG in the performance of its work.

Arrangements for the Conference

15. The Conference is scheduled to start with an Inaugural Ceremony followed by the Opening of the Conference. After the adoption of the Conference Outcome Document there will be a General Debate with statements from Heads of Delegations during the first and second days of the Conference. The third day of the Conference will be dedicated to the presentation of the outcomes of the Pre-Conference Events, Chairs' Summaries of the Roundtables and then closure. It is envisaged that three thematic Roundtables will be held in parallel to the Plenary session, one in the afternoon of the first day (19 November) and the remaining two on the second day (20 November), one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

16. It is envisaged that nine side events will be arranged during the Conference. To avoid overlaps with the main meeting, time slots for side events would be mainly during lunch breaks and possibly in the evening. To ensure good attendance by delegates, no more than three side events would be held in parallel. A call for side events has been issued, for submission of proposals by 30 April 2014.

17. It is envisaged that pre-ICN2 events for Parliamentarians, CSOs/NGOs and the private sector will be arranged in connection with the main Conference. SUN⁴ has also planned to hold its annual meeting on 17-18 November 2014, immediately before ICN2. Such events would be self-funded and would take place outside of FAO premises. They would enable consultations with civil society and private sector organizations, as mandated by the FAO Council and the WHO Executive Board, with due consideration to WHO's policy of not engaging directly with non-state actors on policy matters.

Regional Conferences

18. An information note on ICN2 has been prepared for the FAO Regional Conferences, namely: the 32nd Regional Conference for the Near East, 32nd Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, 28th Regional Conference for Africa, 29th Regional Conference for Europe and 33rd Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. The information note brought the attention of governments and stakeholders to ICN2 and encouraged the consideration of regional perspectives in the outcome document. Promotional material to further promote the Conference within the Regions and the countries has been shared.

Web-based public consultation

19. UN partners, other international organizations, civil society, research community, academia and private sector organizations have been being consulted on the ICN2 political outcome document. A web-based consultation was conducted from 21 February to 21 March 2014 on the zero draft of the political outcome document, in such a way that all inputs are publically accessible and available for consideration by the Membership. The consultation was hosted by the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Forum at: <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/ICN2-political-outcome>. The comments received were compiled by the ICN2 Joint Secretariat to inform the work of the Joint Working Group. About 100 submissions were received.

20. Upon request by the Joint Working Group, similar web-consultations could be arranged to seek further comments on the Conference outcome from a broad range of stakeholders.

Communication strategy

21. A communication strategy and plan is being prepared by the ICN2 Joint Secretariat. Advocacy, web, media and press activities are currently under preparation with the aim to promote the Conference among a wide audience.

⁴ Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative

III. Guidance Sought

22. The Council is invited to note the progress made in preparing for the Conference, providing comments as deemed appropriate. The Council may also wish to give guidance on the way forward with a view to ensuring a successful outcome of the Conference in November 2014.