

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 3

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES

Forty-third Session
Duesseldorf, Germany

7 – 10 March with report adoption by virtual mode on 15 March 2023

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

SCIENTIFIC ADVICE WORK CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORK OF CCNFSDU

Joint FAO/WHO update of nutrient intake values for infants and young children from birth through 3 years of age

FAO and WHO last updated vitamin and mineral requirements for all age groups in 2004. Since then, new data have emerged suggesting that requirements for some micronutrients may need to be updated, particularly for infants and young children. Therefore, in part to inform the planned updating of WHO guidance on complementary feeding and also to contribute to the ongoing work of CCNFSDU in establishing nutrient reference values (NRVs-R) for children aged 6-36 months, FAO and WHO established an expert group to initiate the updating of nutrient intake values for infants and young children from birth through 3 years of age. Nutrient intake values include requirements (e.g. average nutrient requirement [ANR], adequate intake [AI], individual nutrient level [INL_x]) and safe upper levels of intake. The expert group is aiming to derive average nutrient requirements where possible, along with INL₉₈ (daily intake reference value that is estimated to meet the nutrient requirement of 98 percent of the apparently healthy individuals in a specified population), and ULs.

Prior to initiating the process for updating the requirements, WHO conducted an initial review of the recent scientific literature on nutrient requirements, and compilation of national dietary guidelines from all regions, containing detailed information about nutrient requirements in the age group of interest. Using the data obtained from this preparatory work done by WHO, FAO and WHO were able to prioritize the nutrients to be updated (i.e. calcium, vitamin D and zinc as the first three nutrients to be updated). A series of systematic reviews have been completed and discussed by the expert group over a series of meetings beginning in January 2021.

Since the last report to CCNFSDU, the FAO/WHO expert group has met five more times (i.e. meetings 3-7) with the 8th meeting planned for late January through mid-February 2023. Progress on calcium, vitamin D and zinc is summarized below:

- **Calcium:** requirements and no observed adverse effect level (NOAEL) completed (ULs unable to be identified due to insufficient evidence. A UL represents the highest intake of a nutrient that is likely to pose no risk of adverse effects to most individuals in a specified population, while a NOAEL represents the highest level of intake at which no adverse effect is observed. NOAELs can be used to derive ULs, but in the case of calcium – and likely for zinc as well – the number of studies reporting NOAELs was too limited for the expert group to derive ULs with confidence.)
- **Vitamin D:** requirements and ULs/NOAELs to be completed at 8th meeting of the FAO/WHO expert group in January/February 2023
- **Zinc:** requirements completed; NOAELs (ULs unable to be identified) to be completed at the 9th meeting of the FAO/WHO expert group in March/April of 2023

Scoping reviews have been completed for iron, vitamin A, folate, and magnesium and are currently being reviewed by FAO and WHO for next steps.

Scientific advice to develop general principles for the establishment of NRVs-R for older infants and young children

FAO commissioned a report to provide scientific advice to CCNFSDU on the details of Dietary Intake Reference Values (DIRVs)¹ for protein and 24 micronutrients for older infants (6-12 months) and young children (12-36 months) in the publications of six Recognized Authoritative Scientific Bodies (RASB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization (FAO/WHO). The report assessed, categorized and ranked the methods used to derive these DIRVs and advised which categories are suitable for inclusion in the general principles to establish Codex Nutrient Reference Values-R (NRVs-R)² for older infants and young children. The draft report was shared with Codex to progress the e Working Group work on NRVs-R for Older Infants and Young Children.

OTHER INFORMATION

UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2016, aims to accelerate implementation of the ICN2 commitments, achieve the global nutrition and diet-related noncommunicable disease (NCD) targets by 2025, and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. The third progress report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), compiled by the joint FAO/WHO Secretariat of the Nutrition Decade, was submitted to the General Assembly in April 2022, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/306. This report provides an overview on key developments for the period 2020-2021 towards achieving the global nutrition and related Sustainable Development Goals targets. These include advances in nutrition-related activities within the six action areas of the Nutrition Decade's Work Programme, advances in the science-base for improved nutrition, as well as other nutrition-related global processes. It also documents stakeholders' engagement in nutrition, induced by the Nutrition Decade and relevant global dialogues, notably the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in 2021.

The Nutrition Decade's Mid-term review (MTR) identified as thematic focus for priority action from 2021 to 2025: (i) access to and affordability of healthy diets; (ii) healthy food environments including regulating the reformulation and marketing of highly-processed energy-dense foods high in fats, sugars and/or salt; and (iii) the interconnection of nutrition with environment and climate change. Based on the MTR and other global processes, the areas identified requiring intensified action include among others: - addressing nutrition challenges within the context of food systems and climate change at the upcoming COP28 ; - strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure the commitments made at the UNFSS and the N4G Summit in 2021 bring about real and sustained change; - aligning the UNFSS commitments and Coalitions and N4G commitments with the Decade's modalities of engagement (i.e. SMART commitments and Action Networks) to advance the global nutrition agenda in a coherent way across multiple sectors and maintain political momentum to scale up nutrition action in the context of UNFSS follow-up and the UNFSS Coordination Hub ; - strengthening UN interagency coordination mechanisms to support delivery of nutrition goals including in the context of the implementation of national food systems pathways.

The Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative, a joint initiative of FAO/WHO/UNICEF was formed in 2022 to bring together experts and initiate a process to reach consensus on the core principles of what constitutes a healthy diet, and implications for metrics to monitoring progress towards healthy diets at national and global levels. A consensus statement will be released in early 2023, in addition to a workplan to accelerate progress in the development, validation, and implementation of metrics to measure progress.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable (SOFI 2022)

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO partnered to produce the joint report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. The present report provides latest trends and analysis on the global food security and nutrition situation, including updated estimates on the cost and affordability of healthy diets. Furthermore, a stocktaking of the most predominant food and agricultural policy support currently in place around the world is presented to better understand the amount of support, the activities and actors mostly supported (or, on the contrary, penalized), and the pathways through which this support is pushing up the relative cost of nutritious foods and promoting unhealthy diets. A key recommendation of the report is that governments must start rethinking how they can reallocate their existing public budgets to make them more cost-effective and efficient

¹ Dietary Intake Reference Values: defined as reference nutrient intake values provided by FAO/WHO or recognized authoritative scientific bodies that may be considered in establishing an NRV. These values may be expressed in different ways (e.g. as a single value or a range), and are applicable to the general population or to a segment of the population (e.g. recommendations for a specified age range).

² Nutrient Reference Values–Requirement: refers to NRVs that are based on levels of nutrients associated with nutrient requirements for the general population

in reducing the cost of nutritious foods and increasing the availability and affordability of healthy diets, sustainably and leaving no one behind.

CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and good nutrition for all. The Committee reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to FAO Conference. During its 47th plenary session in February 2021, CFS endorsed the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN). The CFS, in October 2021, reiterated the role of all CFS stakeholders to translate the VGFSyN into specific actions at regional, national and local levels. Furthermore, FAO developed an evidence platform providing evidence and tools to support governments and stakeholders in the uptake of the VGFSyN. It gives easy access to specialized science and evidence-based standards, normative guidelines and recommendations from FAO, WHO and other UN Nutrition member agencies including those developed by Codex, for each of the 105 recommendations of the VGFSyN. WHO actively supported the dissemination and use of the CFS VGFSyN with a focus on a package of seven actions for improving the nutritional quality of food along the food supply chain and food environments, and collaborated with CFS during the WHO Food Systems Health talks week in a partner event on the 'CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) - Promoting healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

FAO ACTIVITIES

Ad hoc Joint IAEA–FAO Technical Meeting on the Way Forward for the Assessment of Protein Requirements and Protein Quality and for the Development of a Protein Digestibility and Quality Database

A meeting was held at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna from 10-13 October 2022 to review and update evidence and related methods on protein requirements and protein quality assessment and to design a framework for the development of a Protein Digestibility Database to aid dialogue on the evaluation of protein quality and protein sufficiency in different populations. The meeting agreed that there are mounting concerns on how to sustainably feed the world's population, and on how to shift to more sustainable protein sources with less environmental impact and what that means in terms of protein quality. There was a general consensus that in vitro methods of protein quality is the way forward; however, optimization and standardization of in vitro methods are needed. The meeting also acknowledged that not enough new data are available to justify updating amino acid requirements and reference patterns and that there is an urgent need for (new) data in particular for the elderly and infants and that technical capacity and expertise on protein quality assessments need to be built in low- and middle- income countries. Finally, the meeting agreed that future work need to focus on functional indicators (e.g. faltering growth, wasting, etc.) that can be linked to low protein quality and amino acid deficiencies.

Reference to the Protein Digestibility Database, there was consensus that the database is urgently needed, and that enough data exist to populate it. The objective of the database would be: to develop, populate and maintain a fully accessible, robust database on ileal digestibility of protein and individual amino acids in foods consumed by humans, and provide up-to-date information on the protein quality from different food sources. Next steps include exploring funding possibilities and establishing Terms of Reference for setting up a scientific advisory group of experts to assist with validation of existing data and future management of the database.

Development of the Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition

After a thorough two-year consultative process, the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition (Nutrition Strategy) was adopted at the 166th Session of the FAO Council. This corporate document aims to guide and support the Organization in its mission to raise levels of nutrition.

FAO has embarked on action planning to move from strategy to concrete, context-specific action. At global level, the action focuses on the Organization's normative function. The regional action planning, developed collaboratively by headquarters and decentralized offices, focuses on operationalizing its work in nutrition to the context, conditions, and priorities of each region. To this end, FAO has convened the Organization's Technical Network on Nutrition, consisting of experts from all technical areas of FAO at headquarters and decentralized offices, to guide its work in nutrition and improve access to expertise, knowledge, and resources across the Organization.

Leading by example, FAO announced ambitious and measurable pledges at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit that reflect the Organization's commitment to better policy and to global- and country-level action. The next steps will include communications, normative work, and global engagement, by which FAO is maintaining attention on the critical role of MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition, while leveraging opportunities offered by the four betters under its Strategic Framework 2022-31 to enhance this work. FAO will hold itself accountable to its efforts to fulfil its mission in

nutrition by monitoring the indicators of the Accountability Framework and the Implementation Plan of FAO's work in nutrition.

Global Food Consumption Databases

The FAO/WHO Global Individual Food consumption data Tool (FAO/WHO GIFT) is an open-access online platform, hosted by FAO and supported by WHO, providing access to harmonised individual quantitative food consumption data, especially in low- and middle-income countries. This comprehensive database is a multipurpose tool and provides simple and accurate food-based indicators, derived from sex and age disaggregated data on individual food consumption that are needed in the fields of nutrition and food safety, in particular on assessing dietary exposure. The food classification and description system used is called FoodEx2. It has been developed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and was enhanced for use at a global level. The tool is freely accessible online through an interactive web platform: <http://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>. FAO/WHO GIFT is currently being populated with microdata from surveys that the end user can download for secondary analysis. To date, the platform contains microdata from 36 surveys (11 national and 25 sub-national). The platform also contains an inventory map with detailed information on 320 surveys (152 are national and 168 are sub-national), mainly from low and middle-income countries. The FAO/WHO GIFT platform is available at <http://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>.

Food Systems-Based Dietary Guidelines (FSBDGs)

FAO in collaboration with world-renowned experts have elaborated a new methodology for the development and implementation of second-generation dietary guidelines that are food systems based. The new methodology will allow countries not only to address health and nutritional challenges and priorities but also to anchor them onto targeted food systems analysis for increasing their usability, relevance and contribution to the transformation of food systems towards socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability leveraging the potential of dietary guidelines to inform and guide policies and actions throughout the food system. The guidelines resulting from this new methodology are context-specific multilevel recommendations that enable governments to outline what constitutes a healthy diet from sustainable food systems, align food-related policies and programmes and support the population to adopt healthier and more sustainable dietary patterns and practices. Their effectiveness resides in that they are developed through an evidence-informed, multidisciplinary and multisectoral engagement process and with a food system approach. They result in a package of outputs and resources that can be adopted and used for food system transformation towards better diet-related practices and, subsequently, better health, better nutrition, and other sustainability outcomes.

FAO continues providing technical support to countries for the development and implementation of dietary guidelines. In the last four years, FAO provided technical support to 14 countries in the Africa region, 9 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 countries in Europe and Central Asia and 1 country in Asia and the Pacific. The FAO website on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines which was launched in November 2014, continues to be updated and serves as the only global repository and platform for information exchange on dietary guidelines from across the world. At present the repository contains information from almost 100 countries. To access the FAO website on FBDGs: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>.

School-based Food and Nutrition

FAO recognizes schoolchildren as a priority population for nutrition interventions and views schools as ideal settings to support the nutrition and development of children and adolescents. Based on FAO's School Food and Nutrition Framework³ and the white paper on school-based food and nutrition education⁴, FAO has been collaborating since 2021 with UNICEF for strengthening school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) in low and middle-income countries, with the ultimate goal of fostering food competences in schoolchildren and adolescents for better food choices and for adopting healthier and more sustainable diets. In 2022 the two organizations designed a joint global initiative for developing the capacities of education officials and curriculum developers to integrate action-oriented food and nutrition education curricula into their school systems. The initiative will be launched in 2023.

In June 2022, FAO launched the [School Food Global Hub](#)⁵, developed by FAO in collaboration with WFP and supported by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The Hub supports the Peer-to-Peer Initiative of the School Meals Coalition that was launched at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and is part of a project that aims to create a global methodology to help countries develop robust nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals and school food. One of the main objectives of the Hub is to stimulate global dialogue on the

³ FAO School Food and Nutrition Framework, 2019, <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA4091EN/>

⁴ FAO. 2020. School-based food and nutrition education – A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low- and middle-income countries. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2064en>

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/platforms/school-food/en>

importance of school food to support healthy eating habits among children and adolescents. It also showcases the complementary measures that contribute to this, such as the school food environment, policy and legal frameworks, the integration of school food and nutrition education within the curriculum, home-grown school feeding initiatives, etc. In this respect, the Hub strives to bring together all possible content in these areas; from scientific articles and publications to news and events to many other useful resources. The Hub has a number of innovative features that can be of interest to different audiences: the section on [“Around the world”](#) serves as a ‘one-stop’ resource to collate country-specific information on school food and school-based food and nutrition education with 20 country profiles to date, while the [“Countries corner”](#) facilitates peer-to-peer exchange of good practices and lessons learned on school food. The [“Youth Corner”](#) provides a platform for sharing interactive materials in social media and organizing campaigns to document youth experiences of school food and education in an audiovisual format (videos, photos, stories).

WHO ACTIVITIES

WHO/UNICEF consultation on improving the availability and cost of RUTF for treating children with severe wasting

Following the publication of the WHO guideline on the dairy protein content in ready-to-use therapeutic foods for treatment of uncomplicated severe acute malnutrition⁶, WHO and UNICEF convened a 2-days technical consultation in November 2021. The objectives were i) to discuss the barriers and solutions to improve the availability of RUTF; and ii) to discuss the way forward for the generation of evidence for the development of new RUTF formulations, including, providing clarity on the WHO process for assessing emerging evidence for global guidelines.

The technical consultation was attended by over 70 global experts in RUTF product development, research, and management of wasting and nutritional oedema. One of the key barriers identified was the high costs of treatment of wasting and nutritional oedema. After lengthy deliberations, the experts concluded that RUTF is an important, but not the major driver of cost in the treatment of wasting and nutritional oedema. Currently it is difficult to estimate the total costs of treatment, therefore, it is still uncertain about the extent to which the efforts to reduce the cost of RUTF would improve overall access to treatment. The experts still agreed that development of new and alternative formulations to improve the availability of RUTF for treating wasting and/or nutritional oedema should be encouraged, as stipulated in the guideline.

WHO update to the recommendation on the quantity and duration of ready-to-use therapeutic food for treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema

WHO is in the process of updating the recommendation on the quantity and duration of RUTF. Previously WHO recommended that infants and children with severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema should be given RUTF at the quantity of 150–220 kcal/kg/day until anthropometric recovery. This quantity assumed a consistently high rate of weight gain which has not been reported in treatment programs. Instead, the rate of weight gain often declines over the course of treatment with RUTF, as energy requirements decrease over time. There are also questions as to the appropriate rate of weight gain that correlates with functional recovery, as well as other critical outcomes that need to be considered when RUTF is provided. To address these issues, WHO constituted a guideline development group to establish the optimal amount of RUTF to be given to these children. The updated recommendation will be published as part of the wasting guidelines to be released mid-2023.

Application for inclusion of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML)

WHO and UNICEF have submitted an application for the inclusion of RUTF in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) for the treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema in children older than 6 months. This application is aimed at improving the procurement and access of RUTF by national authorities in countries where severe wasting and nutritional oedema are prevalent. Currently RUTF is mainly procured by donors, and to ensure sustainability and availability of RUTF within national health systems, national authorities need to be involved in the procurement of RUTF. The inclusion of RUTF on the WHO Model List will likely facilitate its adoption at within national health systems and increase the potential for national health authorities to procure RUTF as part of national health system planning, budgeting and integration into the health supply chains.

The application will be evaluated at the meeting of the 24th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines which will take place from 24 to 28 April 2023 at WHO Headquarters in Geneva.

⁶ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022270>

WHO guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and children 6-23 months of age

WHO is finalizing guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and young children. The guidelines will cover topics on the continuation of breastfeeding, the timing of introduction of complementary foods, milk options when breast milk is not adequate, dietary diversity, unhealthy foods and beverages, vitamin and mineral supplementation and fortification, and responsive feeding. The evidence behind the guidelines has been summarized in 12 systematic literature reviews and was supplemented by dietary pattern modelling to examine nutrient gaps under various eating patterns. The Developing and Evaluating Communication Strategies to support Informed Decisions and Practice based on Evidence (DECIDE) framework, an evidence-to-decision tool that includes intervention effects, values, resources, equity, acceptability, and feasibility criteria, was used to guide the formulation of the recommendations by the guideline development group (GDG). The guidelines are currently undergoing final review by the GDG members and then will be sent out for peer review. Publication is expected in the summer of 2023.

WHO technical support on the Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes

In 2022, at the request of the World Health Assembly, WHO published a report on the scope and impact of digital marketing strategies for the promotion of breast-milk substitutes. Based on the findings of the report, the Assembly has now asked for guidance for Member States on regulatory measures aimed at restricting the digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes, so as to ensure that existing and new regulations designed to implement the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions adequately address digital marketing practices. WHO is currently preparing this guidance for presentation to the Assembly in 2024.

WHO collaborated with a global marketing firm to study the reach and influence of marketing on infant feeding attitudes in Bangladesh, China, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam. The study demonstrated the pervasiveness of marketing of formula milk and showed that exposure to marketing was significantly related to more positive attitudes towards formula feeding and a perceived need for formula milks. Marketing of breast-milk substitutes undermined women's confidence in their ability to breastfeed and capitalizes on mothers' expectations and anxieties around feeding.

The 2022 Code Status Report analyzed the provisions of the Code covered in national legislation for all 194 WHO Member States. The report documented that between 2016 and 2021, 25 countries plus the European Union updated their legal measures on the Code or enacted new ones. Compared to older laws and regulations, the countries with newer legal instruments were much more likely to be substantially aligned with Code and were much more likely to cover breast-milk substitutes for children up to 36 months of age.

To advance national implementation of the Code, WHO and UNICEF are co-hosting a Global Congress on the Code in June 2023. The Congress will bring together national delegations from governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and academics to 1) increase knowledge and skills on strategies to end the unethical marketing of breast-milk substitutes, bottles, and teats; 2) develop national roadmaps/workplans to strengthen legislation, monitoring and enforcement of the Code; and 3) build regional networks to share information and support of national action on the Code.

WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Diet and Health

The NUGAG Subgroup on Diet and Health continued to work on a series of guidelines related to healthy diets since the last report to CCNFSDU.

- Total fat:** The public consultation has been completed and the guideline approved by the WHO guidelines review committee (GRC). The guideline is currently being prepared for release in Spring of 2023
- Saturated fatty acids and trans-fatty acids:** The public consultation has been completed and the guideline approved by the WHO guidelines review committee (GRC). The guideline is currently being prepared for release in Spring of 2023
- Carbohydrates:** The public consultation has been completed and the guideline approved by the WHO guidelines review committee (GRC). The guideline is currently being prepared for release in Spring of 2023
- Non-sugar sweeteners:** The systematic review informing the guideline was published as a WHO document (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240046429>) and the 18th meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Diet and Health was held to finalize the recommendations. The public consultation was subsequently completed, and the guideline approved by the WHO guidelines review committee (GRC). The guideline is currently being prepared for release in Spring of 2023
- Polyunsaturated fatty acids:** The 19th meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Diet and Health was held in 2022 to review the updated evidence and finalize the recommendations. A public consultation is planned for spring 2023 followed by review of the draft guideline by the WHO GRC. Release of the guideline is anticipated in mid- to late 2023.

- **Dietary patterns:** The systematic review has been finalized. Next steps are currently being discussed.
- **Use of low-sodium salt substitutes:** In response to requests for guidance on the use of low-sodium salt substitute as an intervention to reduce sodium/salt intake in populations, WHO initiated the guideline development process in 2019. A four-day meeting of the NUGAG was held at the end of November/early December 2021 to review the evidence review and formulate the recommendations. The systematic review has been published ([Full report⁷](#) and [summary⁸](#)). A guideline document is currently under preparation. A Call for comments is planned for early 2023.

WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions

Following the WHO guideline development process, the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions is working on developing guidelines on priority food environment policies. The guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of **food marketing** is now being finalized following peer review and a public call for comments⁹. The final draft guideline on **fiscal policies** to promote healthy diets is currently being peer reviewed and a public call for comments is open until 03 February 2023¹⁰. The guideline on **school food and nutrition policies** is being prepared for peer review and public consultation. The NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions met virtually in December 2022 and January 2023 to review the updated evidence and formulate draft recommendations on **nutrition labelling policies** taking into consideration the certainty of the evidence, and additional criteria including the balance of evidence on benefits and harms, resource implications, acceptability and feasibility of implementing the policy and implications policy implementation may have on equity and human rights. Work on a fifth food environment policy has been initiated on **menu labelling and portion size control** to improve the out of home food environment. A scoping review has been commissioned and a review of contextual factors is being conducted, including on values; resource implications; equity and human rights; acceptability and feasibility of menu labelling and portion size control. A NUGAG meeting is being planned to discuss and finalize the scope, PICO questions and priority outcomes to guide the undertaking of the systematic review and subsequently to formulate recommendations for a guideline on menu labelling and portion size control to improve the out of home food environment.

Elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids

In May 2018, WHO called for the global elimination of industrially produced of *trans*-fatty acids (TFA) by 2023. To achieve successful TFA elimination, WHO recommends governments to adopt either of the two best-practice policies: 1) Mandatory limit of 2 grams of TFA per 100 grams of total fats and oils in all foods; and 2) Mandatory ban on the production or use of partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) as an ingredient in all foods.

In January 2023, WHO released its fourth annual progress report “Countdown to 2023: WHO report on global trans fat elimination 2022”¹¹ at a high-level virtual event¹². The report shows that 43 countries have implemented best-practice policies for tackling TFA in food, with 2.8 billion people protected globally. Despite substantial progress, however, this still leaves 5 billion people worldwide at risk from TFA’s negative health impacts. While most TFA elimination policies to date have been implemented in higher-income countries (largely in the Americas and in Europe), an increasing number of middle-income countries are implementing or adopting these policies, including Argentina, Bangladesh, India, Paraguay, Philippines and Ukraine. Best-practice policies are also being considered in Mexico, Nigeria and Sri Lanka in 2023. No low-income countries have yet adopted a best-practice policy to eliminate TFA.

In 2023, WHO recommends that countries focus on these four areas: adopting best-practice policy, monitoring and surveillance, healthy oil replacements and advocacy. WHO’s REPLACE modules¹³ provide practical step-by-step guidance to help countries make rapid advances in these areas. WHO also encourages food manufacturers to eliminate industrially produced TFA from their products, aligning to the commitment made by the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA). Major suppliers of oils and fats are asked to remove industrially produced TFA from the products sold to food manufacturers globally.

⁷ <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD015207/full>

⁸ https://www.cochrane.org/CD015207/PUBHLTH_does-using-low-sodium-salt-substitutes-lsss-instead-regular-salt-reduce-blood-pressure-and-heart

⁹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/Online-public-consultation-on-draft-guideline-on-policies-to-protect-children-from-the-harmful-impact-of-food-marketing>

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/public-consultation-on-the-draft-guideline-fiscal-policies-to-promote-healthy-diets>

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240067233>

¹² <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/01/23/default-calendar/virtual-high-level-event--fourth-progress-report-on-global-trans-fat-elimination>

¹³ <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/replace-trans-fat>

Population sodium/salt intake reduction

In 2011 Member States committed to reducing exposure to unhealthy diets. The commitment was made through a Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases.

In 2013 Member States adopted the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 to take coordinated action at all levels to attain nine voluntary global targets, including - a 30% relative reduction in mean population sodium intake by 2025, with a goal of achieving an intake of < 2 000 mg/day sodium; and a 25% relative reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure by 2025, so as to contain the prevalence of raised blood pressure.

In 2015 Member States committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 3, Good Health and Well-being of which target 3.4 stipulates: by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

In 2017 Member States endorsed the updated WHO Best Buys as a set of affordable, feasible, impact-driven, and highly cost-effective measures for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. For sodium, these aim to reduce intake through: reducing sodium content in the food supply (reformulation of processed/manufactured food), reducing sodium in meals or snacks consumed outside of the home (public food procurement and service policies), encouraging consumers to make healthier choices related to sodium through information (media campaigns, front-of-pack or other interpretative nutrition labelling, menu labelling or removal of saltshakers in food service areas) and absence of negative influence (restricting marketing of food high in sodium).

WHO has published several tools and technical documents to support Member States, industry and communities in reducing population sodium intake including: The SHAKE Technical Package for Salt Reduction, which is currently being updated and will be re-released in 2023, the Action Framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies to promote healthy diets (2021), the Global Sodium Benchmarks for different food categories (2022) and the Sodium Country Score Card which depicts standardized information on sodium reduction policies and actions on an interactive platform in the WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA) (<https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/scorecard/sodium>). This single platform for sharing standardized information on sodium reduction policies and action will enable monitoring of global progress in implementing legislative and other measures to reduce sodium intake and increased accountability towards political commitments (2022). The first Global Report on Sodium Reduction will be launched in March 2023.

Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2021

At the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo on 7 – 8 December 2021, WHO has announced six new commitments to accelerate progress on the 2025 nutrition targets which have been pushed even further off course during the pandemic. These include:

- Expand initiatives to prevent and manage overweight and obesity;
- Step up activities to create food environments that promote safe and healthy diets;
- Support countries in addressing acute malnutrition;
- Accelerate actions on anaemia reduction;
- Scale up quality breastfeeding promotion and support; and
- Strengthen nutrition data systems, data use and capacity.