



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

#### Forty-ninth Session

#### Ottawa, Canada

11 – 15 May 2026

### MATTERS OF INTEREST FROM FAO AND WHO

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

#### ***Ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens***

1. In response to the requests by CCFL and the Codex Committees on Food Hygiene (CCFH) for scientific advice on food allergens, FAO and WHO convened a series of expert meetings on the risk assessment of food allergens since 2020. Some of the background information on the expert meetings can be found in the document for CCFL48 (CX/FL 24/48/3 Rev)<sup>1</sup>. To deal with the requests from CCFL48, FAO and WHO conducted the following activities.

2. In June 2025, an ad hoc joint FAO/WHO expert consultation on risk assessment of food allergens – guidance for risk assessment was convened in Rome, Italy, which emphasized that food allergens were a unique category of food safety hazards, requiring distinct risk assessment and management approaches. A framework was developed to guide evidence-based decision-making on labelling, process control, and risk communication throughout the supply chain. This process is applicable to all food business operators, regardless of size, and is essential for justifying precautionary allergen labelling (PAL)<sup>2</sup>.

3. Another ad hoc joint FAO/WHO expert consultation was held in November 2025 in Rome, Italy, to discuss reference doses (RfDs) for cereals containing gluten. The meeting addressed coeliac disease, reference doses for gluten and gluten- containing cereals, analytical considerations, and risk assessment and communication for the unintended presence of gluten.

4. The experts recommended that a 4 mg gluten RfD in a risk-based PAL framework will enhance safety and labelling clarity, reduce unnecessary PAL statements, and expand safe food options for people with coeliac disease and IgE-mediated wheat allergy. This will support better quality of life and consumer confidence<sup>3</sup>.

5. FAO and WHO organized a capacity building workshop on PAL and risk assessment of food allergens in Nanning, Guangxi, China, in September 2025, scheduled just before CCASIA23 at the same location. Over 60 participants from 11 nations across Asia, Africa, and Latin America participated in the workshop. The primary purpose of this workshop was to enhance the capacity of Member Countries in conducting risk assessments for food allergens, ensuring alignment with the latest international standards. Through expert-led sessions, interactive discussions, and practical exercises, participants gained the necessary knowledge and tools to identify, evaluate, and manage food allergen-related risks in food supply chains. Additionally, the workshop served as a platform to facilitate the implementation of updated international regulations and policies on food allergens. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the event managed to strengthen national food safety frameworks to better address food allergen risks, improve compliance with global allergen labelling and control requirements, support harmonization of regulatory approaches across Member Countries. The

1 [https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-714-48%252FWorking%2Bdocuments%252Ffl48\\_03e\\_rev.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-714-48%252FWorking%2Bdocuments%252Ffl48_03e_rev.pdf)

2 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd6046en> and <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ad-hoc-joint-fao-who-expert-consultation-on-risk-assessment-of-food-allergens-guidance-for-risk-assessment>

3 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd7703en> and [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ad-hoc-joint-fao-who-expert-consultation-on-risk-assessment-of-food-allergens-reference-dose\(s\)-for-cereals-containing-gluten-or-gluten](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ad-hoc-joint-fao-who-expert-consultation-on-risk-assessment-of-food-allergens-reference-dose(s)-for-cereals-containing-gluten-or-gluten)

participants appreciated the opportunities to participate the workshop and recommended similar events should be convened in different regions to strengthen the capacity on managing food allergens risk. This initiative underscores the FAO and WHO's commitment to safeguarding food safety while ensuring fair trade practices in the food industry<sup>4</sup>.

### ***Joint FAO/WHO update of nutrient requirements for infants and young children from birth through 3 years of age***

6. 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 updating of WHO guidance on complementary feeding and also to contribute to the ongoing work of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) in establishing nutrient reference values (NRVs-R) for children aged 6-36 months, FAO and WHO conducted 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<sub>x</sub>]) and safe upper levels of intake (ULs). Using data obtained from preparatory work done by WHO, FAO and WHO identified calcium, vitamin D and zinc as the first three priority nutrients to be updated.

7. The work of updating the FAO/WHO nutrient requirements for calcium, vitamin D and zinc for children 0-3 years of age has been completed. Nine virtual expert meetings were held, and more than 15 systematic reviews and reports were generated, many of which have been published in peer-reviewed journals. The guidance document is planned for release in 2026.

### ***Other information***

#### ***UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025***

8. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed in April 2016 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition ("Nutrition Decade") with the aim to accelerate the implementation of the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014, achieve the global nutrition and diet-related noncommunicable disease (NCD) targets and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and called upon FAO and WHO to co-convene the Nutrition Decade. The foresight of Member States sponsoring the UN General Assembly resolution 70/259 in 2016 to proclaim the Nutrition Decade for the period 2016–2025 has proven to be indispensable in guiding global efforts towards improved nutrition outcomes and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration to address the complex challenges of all forms of malnutrition. Since the proclamation, the nutrition narrative has shifted towards a more holistic approach linking it with food systems, climate, biodiversity, social protection, water sanitation and hygiene, and health. Healthy diets have come to the fore. Despite the increased global attention to nutrition, healthy diets, agrifood systems transformation and the relation with human and planetary health, however, the world is not on track to meet its commitments to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030. Hence, in March 2025, the UN General Assembly decided to extend the Nutrition Decade to 2030 to align it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Health Assembly global nutrition targets, ensuring continued efforts and a renewed commitment to end all forms of malnutrition and to maintain the political momentum on nutrition at the global, regional and national levels towards 2030 and beyond.

#### ***Joint Statement on the Principles of a Healthy Diet***

9. In October 2024, FAO and WHO published "[What are healthy diets?](#) Joint statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization". The statement describes the four core principles of what makes a healthy diet: adequacy, diversity, balance, and moderation. The Joint Statement also emphasizes that many dietary patterns – or the combinations of foods that people consume over time and in context – can be healthy, when meeting these four principles. Dietary patterns are highly contextual, depending on local food access, preferences, culture and traditions.

#### ***The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025***

10. Addressing high food price inflation for food security and nutrition (SOFI 2025) FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO partnered to produce the joint report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025 (SOFI 2025), which provides latest trends and analysis on the global food security and nutrition situation, including updated estimates on the cost and affordability of healthy diets. For the first time, it also presents a new SDG indicator on minimum dietary diversity. While some progress and recovery have been made in recent years, the world is still above pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels and far from eradicating hunger and food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 (SDG Target 2.1)

<sup>4</sup>Detailed programme of the workshop is available [here](#). The report is under development.

## FAO ACTIVITIES

### ***FAO activities on Food Labelling***

11. At the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), governments recognized the importance of empowering consumers through improved, evidence-based nutrition information to enable informed food choices and support healthy diets. Food labelling was identified as a key action area in the ICN2 Framework for Action (FAO/WHO, 2014).

12. To support countries in developing and implementing food labelling policies and programmes, FAO has undertaken a range of technical and capacity-development activities.

13. FAO maintains a dedicated website on Food Labelling (<http://www.fao.org/food-labelling/en/>) that provides information on Food Labelling standards and guidelines, FAO activities, and technical resources. These include a handbook on food labelling that introduces key concepts and supports regulators and other stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of food labelling policies<sup>5</sup>.

14. At the regional level, FAO has supported work in Latin America and the Caribbean through the FAO Regional Office. A joint FAO/PAHO/UNICEF guidance note<sup>6</sup> reviews available evidence on front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) systems in the region and outlines key considerations for policy implementation. Additional studies have been undertaken, including a comprehensive study in Panama<sup>7</sup>; a multicentric study across Latin America conducted with the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) of Mexico<sup>8</sup>; and a regional review with the Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama (INCAP)<sup>9</sup> addressing challenges related to the implementation of nutritional warning labels in Central America.

15. Food labelling and consumer food choice were also addressed during the 2024 FAO Science and Innovation Forum through a session titled *"Mindful Bites: A Shared Pathway for Inclusive Food Choices through Behavioural Science"*<sup>10</sup>.

16. In addition, FAO, with support from the Governments of Japan and Ireland, has implemented capacity-development initiatives in Ghana, Kenya, Vietnam and Malawi to strengthen nutrition-sensitive food systems and improve SMEs' capacity to implement food labelling. Activities include mentoring and coaching programmes for SMEs, integration of nutrition topics into university curricula, delivery of e-learning courses on SMEs and nutrition<sup>11</sup> through the FAO eLearning Academy, development of training materials on upgrading business models for nutritious foods<sup>12</sup>, and national multi-stakeholder workshops to identify policy and capacity-development priorities.

### ***FAO's Role on supporting countries in their development of labels contributing to sustainable food system***

17. FAO is supporting the development of quality linked to geographical origin products that will contribute to rural development. Geographical Indications (GIs) refer to products with specific characteristics, qualities or reputation resulting essentially from their geographical origin. GIs are legal tools for protection of intellectual property rights according to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon agreement of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). GIs are also tools for sustainable food system development as they could facilitate direct management by the local community of producers and the preservation of local natural resources. Origin-based labels preserve and add value to traditional quality food products, for the benefit of producers, especially family farmers and smallholders, but also for consumers, promoting better access to nutritious local food. FAO has set up a thematic website to provide information on its vision and activities in this area ([www.fao.org/geographical-indications](http://www.fao.org/geographical-indications))

### ***FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Activities***

18. FAO coordinates the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS), a global network of experts working to improve the quality, availability, reliability, and use of food composition data. These data

5 Handbook on Food Labelling: <https://doi.org/10.4060/i6575fr>

6 [Front-of-pack nutrition labelling in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

7 [Effects of front-of-package nutrition labelling systems on objective understanding and purchase intention in Panama: results from a multi-arm parallel-group randomised controlled trial](#) | Public Health Nutrition | Cambridge Core

8 [Impact of front-of-package nutrition labels on acceptability and objective understanding: A randomized experiment in Latin American adults](#) - ScienceDirect

9 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019566632400494X?via%3Dihub>

10 Details about SIF and Mindful Bites: <https://www.fao.org/science-technology-and-innovation/science-innovation-forum-2024/programme-sif-2024/mindful-bites-a-shared-pathway-of-inclusive-food-choices-and-behavioural-science/en>

11 [Course: Small and Medium Enterprises and Nutrition – making the business case](#) | FAO eLearning Academy

12 [openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/eedf6b25-485b-4e15-a66b-f1a49ef795af/content](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/eedf6b25-485b-4e15-a66b-f1a49ef795af/content)

are essential for assessing dietary intake, evaluating diet quality, and supporting the development of food-based dietary guidelines, nutrition labelling, and selected Codex standards. FAO is currently updating and expanding the FAO/INFOODS Global Food Composition Database for Fish and Shellfish (uFiSh)<sup>13</sup>, first developed in 2016, to include updated nutrient composition data for various fish species and aquatic plants, with the revised version expected by the end of 2026. FAO also provided technical support for the 2025 updates of the Ethiopian Food Composition Table<sup>14</sup> and the Ethiopian Foods Recipe Book<sup>15</sup>, and is supporting the development of the Asian Food Composition Database with 11 participating countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) to better represent regional food cultures.

19. In 2024, FAO published the Global Nutrient Conversion Table (NCT) for use in the Supply Utilization Accounts (SUA)<sup>16</sup>, which provide country-level food supply statistics for nearly all countries and territories worldwide since 1961. The NCT was developed using high-quality national and regional food composition databases and has also been released in French and Spanish. SUA statistics based on the Global NCT are available through the FAOSTAT Food and Diet domain<sup>17</sup>, with the most recent update in October 2025. Additionally, in September 2025 FAO hosted the 14th International Food Data Conference<sup>18</sup>, bringing together over 140 experts from more than 40 countries to discuss the role of food composition databases in promoting healthy diets and sustainable agrifood systems, with selected peer-reviewed articles from the conference to be published in the Journal of Food Composition and Analysis in 2026.

***Alternative animal source foods (A-ASFs): "A comprehensive review of the evidence on their benefits and risks for nutrition, environment, livelihoods, and food safety"***

20. FAO will produce a comprehensive review with related recommendations for the current state of evidence on this topic. To do so, FAO has commissioned a series of robust scoping/narrative reviews of the current state of evidence on the benefits and risks of alternative animal source foods (A-ASFs) for nutrition, environment, socio-economic considerations, and food safety. FAO work will include defining A-ASFs and their sub-categories and developing a glossary of relevant terminology and synonyms. In addition to the FAO document, the reviews are being published in a *Special Issue in Lancet Planetary Health* and key findings were presented at key scientific events including at the International Congress of Nutrition in August 2025.

***Ad hoc FAO work on the Nutritional Composition of Foods and Beverages made from Plant-based and other Alternative Protein Sources***

21. Following a request submitted at the 43rd session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU), FAO has prepared a literature review to guide the future development of *Guidelines* including *General Principles for the Nutritional Composition of Foods and Beverages made from Plant-based and other Alternative Protein Sources*. The review, which is expected to be published by the end of 2026, identified literature with data on the nutrient profiles of foods and beverages made from plant-based and other alternative protein sources, which are intended to replace animal-based products, currently in the marketplace, and comparison with their animal-based counterparts. Key outcomes were presented at the 14th International Food Data Conference in September 2025.

***Joint IAEA–FAO–IAEA Protein Quality Database Technical Advisory Group and relevant meetings***

22. Defining accurately the amount and quality required to meet human nutritional needs and describing appropriately the protein supplied by foods and diets is critical in meeting global nutrition targets. Scientific advice on protein quality evaluation is also relevant for the development of Codex Alimentarius food standards and guidelines. Standardized protein quality of foods data in humans has a potential to inform dialogue on recommendations for protein requirements for all age groups, especially in first 3 years of life. Two recent expert consultations held in 2022<sup>19</sup> and 2024<sup>20</sup> agreed on the development of a Joint FAO/IAEA database on ileal digestibility of protein and individual amino acids in foods consumed by humans. Data are being compiled through a systematic review process focusing on in-vivo data completion, aiming to publish the database in early 2026. The Database has been presented in key scientific events including at the 14th International Food Data Conference in September 2025.

***Joint IAEA/FAO/WHO meetings to review Human Energy Requirements***

13 (<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i6655en>)

14 <https://ephi.gov.et/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Ethiopian-Food-Composition-Table-2025.pdf>)

15 <https://ephi.gov.et/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Ethiopian-Foods-Recipe-Book-2025.pdf>

16 <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9678en>

17 <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SUA>)

18 <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/assessment/14th-international-food-data-conference/en/>

19 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd1021en>

20 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd7053en>



23. Twenty years on since the publication of the Joint FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Consultation Report on Human Energy Requirements in 2004, FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are in the process of updating human energy requirements for global use. The update will draw on the growing body of literature from population groups around the world and the wealth of energy expenditure data from different age groups now available in the IAEA Doubly Labelled Water (DLW) Database. The update of energy requirements will utilize this state-of-the art data to derive new energy requirement prediction equations for various age and sex groups. Two recent consultancy meetings held in 2024 and 2025 brought together leading experts to assess the current state of scientific evidence to underpin an update of energy requirements using DLW data and potential implications for a variety of user groups. The experts also addressed the data gaps, especially under-represented population groups and environmental contexts that might modulate energy expenditures and agreed to move forward to update the existing human energy requirements.

#### **Update on the Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition**

24. At its 139th Session, the FAO Programme Committee<sup>21</sup> approved an update to the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition,<sup>37</sup> in response to the evolving global context of hunger and malnutrition since the Strategy's adoption in 2021. This update aims to strengthen FAO's capacity to contribute meaningfully to improved nutrition outcomes. Aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031, the updated document is titled the Vision and Approach for FAO's Work in Nutrition (VAN), it highlights priority areas of work and provides a clear overview of expected results and pathways to their achievement for FAO's work in Nutrition. VAN draws on the results from several existing and ongoing external reviews of aspects of FAO's work on nutrition, ongoing review of the FAO Strategic Framework and planned strategic reflection activities.

#### **High Level Report on Healthy Diets 2026**

25. Scheduled for publication in Q3 2026, the FAO High Level Report on Healthy Diets aims to provide a pivotal contribution to the global nutrition agenda. The report will provide an in-depth review of the evidence for actions to promote and enable access to and consumption of healthy diets and aligned with the updated Vision and Approach to Nutrition, will focus on areas most critical for FAO Members and partners. It will consolidate current knowledge and evidence to address key opportunities, persistent gaps, and critical challenges — spanning from the definition of healthy diets to data, and from evidence to actionable strategies. The report is intended to inform technical non-experts across a variety of fields, including governments, FAO and UN agencies, academic and implementing organizations.

#### **Global Food Consumption Databases**

26. 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, that enables the dissemination of individual-level quantitative food consumption data, especially from low- and middle-income countries. This comprehensive database is a multipurpose tool that allows users to download available data for free in a format following a standardised data structure and codebook. In addition, the platform provides data visualisations related to food consumption, nutrient intakes, dietary diversity, food safety, and the environmental impacts of diet. The platform uses a food classification and description system called FoodEx2 which allows for harmonisation of food names and food codes across diverse datasets. FoodEx2 has been developed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and was enhanced for use at a global level by FAO. FAO/WHO GIFT is continually being populated with additional data. To date, the platform contains data from 67 surveys (23 national and 44 sub-national) from 37 countries. The platform also contains a global inventory map with detailed information on 354 surveys (184 are national and 170 are sub-national). The FAO/WHO GIFT platform is available at <http://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>.

27. In 2025 and beginning of 2026, FAO advanced associated communication activities on global food consumption databases through guidelines and peer reviewed publications <sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> [CL 176/9 - Report of the 139th Session of the Programme Committee \(Rome, 11-15 November 2024\)](#)

- <sup>22</sup> Balcerzak, A., Gie, S.M., Padula de Quadros, V., Allemand, P., Tereza da Silva, J., Hanley-Cook, G., Holmes, B.A. 2026. *Food groupings applied in the FAO/WHO Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7985en>
- de Quadros VP, Tereza da Silva J, Balcerzak A, Allemand P, Leclercq C, Ferrari M, Schmidt Rivera X, Reynolds C and Holmes BA (2025) Estimating the environmental impact of diets based on individual-level dietary intake data: infographics on the FAO/WHO GIFT platform. *Front. Sustain. Food Syst.* 9:1662566. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2025.1662566>
- Tereza da Silva, J., Padula de Quadros, V., Fellegger Garzillo, J. M., Takacs, B., Balcerzak, A., Frankowska, A., Kluczkovsk, A., Rose, D., Schmidt Rivera, X., Holmes, B. A., Reynolds, C. A method to rapidly match environmental impact data to > 60 dietary datasets. *Environmental Research: Food Systems* 2 045009. [doi: 10.1088/2976-601X/ae08b](https://doi.org/10.1088/2976-601X/ae08b)

28. In February 2024, FAO launched a new domain on FAOSTAT, the corporate statistical database for food and agriculture. The new domain, known as “food and diet”, was developed to share statistics on different types of dietary related data in an effort to help close data gaps and contribute to better guidance for nutrition-sensitive agrifood systems policies. Statistics for four types of data are presented in four subdomains: availability, based on supply utilization accounts; apparent intake, based on Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys; intake, based on nationally representative individual quantitative dietary intake surveys; and diversity, based on the minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) indicator. A total of 24 nutrients are presented for the first three subdomains and statistics by food groups available for all four subdomains are based on a nutrition-sensitive food grouping classification. The Food and Diet Domain on FAOSTAT is available at <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

29. In October 2025, FAO expanded the quantity of data made available through the FAOSTAT Food and Diet Domain by increasing the number of surveys and/or years shared as statistics on the platform in 2024. Communication activities supported these updates <sup>23</sup>.

### ***Food Systems-Based Dietary Guidelines (FSBDGs)***

30. 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. This approach enables countries to address health and nutritional priorities while anchoring recommendations in targeted food systems analysis, thereby increasing their relevance and supporting the transformation of food systems towards socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. The resulting guidelines provide context-specific, multilevel recommendations that help governments define healthy diets from sustainable food systems, align food-related policies and programmes, and encourage populations to adopt healthier and more sustainable dietary patterns. Developed through an evidence-informed, multidisciplinary and multisectoral process, the methodology produces a package of outputs and resources to support improved diet-related practices, better health and nutrition outcomes, and broader sustainability benefits. An overview of the methodology is available <sup>24</sup>, and FAO has begun releasing it in modular format, with additional modules to be published during 2026.

31. At the 33rd session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO33), FAO presented the Food Systems-Based Dietary Guidelines (FSBDG) methodology, and members encouraged the development and implementation of dietary guidelines using a food systems approach that integrates sustainability considerations. An electronic working group (EWG), supported by FAO and WHO and chaired by Germany with Kazakhstan, Türkiye and Spain as co-chairs, was established in 2024 to assess Members’ needs, review existing tools, and propose follow-up actions, with a report to be presented at CCEURO34 <sup>25</sup>.

32. FAO continues to provide technical support to countries developing dietary guidelines and, over the past four years, has supported 14 countries in Africa, 9 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 in Europe and Central Asia, and 1 in Asia and the Pacific. The FAO website on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, launched in 2014 and currently containing information from 100 countries, will be overhauled and updated in 2026 to further. To access the FAO website on FBDGs: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>.

### ***School-based Food and Nutrition***

33. In 2025, FAO, together with WFP and SchoolFood4Change, organized a global webinar series to promote integrated approaches to school food and nutrition, focusing on youth participation, whole-school approaches, and aligning school meal programmes with environmental and social sustainability through public food procurement. FAO also co-organized a side event at the Nutrition for Growth Summit presenting evidence on how strong nutrition standards for school meals can improve children’s diets and support sustainability, while introducing a new global methodology and guidance package to be released in 2026. FAO remains an active member of the School Meals Coalition and contributes technical expertise to initiatives on monitoring, research, nutrition guidelines for school meal programmes, policy frameworks and public food procurement.

34. 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. Building on FAO’s

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- <sup>23</sup> FAO. 2025. Food and diet – Statistics on dietary data – October 2025 update. FAOSTAT Analytical Briefs, No. 113. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7164en>
  - FAO. 2025. Food and diet – Statistics on dietary data – October 2025 update. FAOSTAT Analytical Briefs, No. 113. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd7164en>

<sup>24</sup> Food systems-based dietary guidelines: An overview

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/pl/?Ink=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-706-33%252FREPORT%252FREPO24\\_EUROe.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/pl/?Ink=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-706-33%252FREPORT%252FREPO24_EUROe.pdf)

School Food and Nutrition Framework<sup>26</sup> and the white paper on school-based food and nutrition education<sup>27</sup>, FAO has been collaborating with UNICEF since 2021 to strengthen school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) in low- and middle-income countries, aiming to build food competencies that support healthier and more sustainable diets. Under this initiative, FAO and UNICEF are supporting Ghana to integrate action-oriented food and nutrition education into national curricula, and a comprehensive capacity development package is expected to be published by June 2026. The [School Food Global Hub](#)<sup>28</sup> continues to promote global dialogue on school food, currently featuring 48 country profiles and a repository of technical resources, case studies and guidance materials.

35. In 2025, FAO, together with WFP and SchoolFood4Change, organized a global webinar series to promote integrated approaches to school food and nutrition, focusing on youth participation, whole-school approaches, and aligning school meal programmes with environmental and social sustainability through public food procurement. FAO also co-organized a side event at the Nutrition for Growth Summit presenting evidence on how strong nutrition standards for school meals can improve children's diets and support sustainability, while introducing a new global methodology and guidance package to be released in 2026. FAO remains an active member of the School Meals Coalition and contributes technical expertise to initiatives on monitoring, research, nutrition guidelines for school meal programmes, policy frameworks and public food procurement.

## WHO ACTIVITIES

### *Alcohol*

36. The requirements for labelling of alcoholic beverages vary significantly by country, indicating that national laws on alcoholic beverages do not benefit from the same degree of conformity with Codex texts compared to other food products. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2019, only [42 countries](#) required consumer information such as calories, additives, vitamins and micronutrients, [55 countries](#) mandated at least one health warning, and [104 countries](#) required alcohol content labelling. These inconsistencies about when and how information is provided across countries inflict direct compliance costs, create logistical complexity—a non-tariff barrier, disadvantage small and medium producers in cross-border trade, reducing competitive access to foreign markets, increase disputes and may prevent governments from adopting stronger consumer protection measures.

37. The challenge is evidenced by the 2.6 million deaths in 2019 and the 4.7% contribution of alcohol use to the global burden of disease. A causal relationship has been scientifically established between alcohol consumption and several health conditions, including seven types of cancer. In addition, alcohol consumption also contributes substantially to harm experienced by both the individual and those around them, including increased risks of violence against women and children, as well as higher incidence of injuries and criminal offenses. For these reasons, countries unanimously adopted the [WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022-2030](#) in May 2022.

38. Alcoholic beverages contain ethanol, which is an intoxicating and dependence-producing substance. Currently, eliminating ethanol completely remains a challenge. Therefore, the development of common international guidance and standards to protect public health and promote fair practices in trade is needed to address this challenge.

39. From August 2024 to July 2025, WHO provided technical assistance to countries designing or developing labelling standards for alcoholic beverages. In parallel, several research initiatives have been taking place to collect and analyse first-hand data in the European region. Training and capacity-building activities on alcoholic beverage labelling and high-impact policies were delivered in 15 countries of the WHO African region. Finally, WHO has provided technical and secretarial support to a group of countries gathered in 2025 to develop a proposal for adapting the Codex standards to alcoholic beverages. The result of this work was submitted to the Codex Secretariat submitted to the Codex secretariat for inclusion in the CCFL49 agenda item.

40. In 2025, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published the [Handbooks of Cancer Prevention Volume 20B](#). Produced by an independent working group of international experts through a rigorous and transparent process, free from conflicts of interest, this new IARC Handbooks provide comprehensive reviews and consensus evaluations of cancer preventive actions, which can be used by governments worldwide to develop recommendations and policies. The outcomes of the Handbook leave no

<sup>26</sup> School Food and Nutrition Framework, 2019, <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA4091EN/>

<sup>27</sup> 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>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.fao.org/platforms/school-food/en>

doubt: alcohol taxation, restricting availability, and strong marketing bans reduce alcohol consumption at the population level, and, in turn, will reduce the cancer burden.

**Food classification, including nutrient profiling, to support food environment policies**

41. As part of its normative mandate, WHO has been working on establishing nutrient profile models (NPMs) for over a decade.<sup>29</sup> WHO initially focused on providing overall evidence-based guiding principles for the development and implementation of NPMs, which led to the development of region-specific models in all six WHO regions to support governments in implementing policies to protect children from the harmful impact of marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages.<sup>30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35</sup>

42. Such guidance has evolved. For example, the NPM for the WHO European Region published in 2015 has just been updated.<sup>36</sup> The guidance has also expanded to cover other policies targeting the food environment. For example, the NPM developed for the region of the Americas in 2016 was designed for multiple applications, including front-of-package labelling, regulation for school environments, fiscal policies on foods and non-alcoholic beverages, among other policies. Models developed in WHO South-East Asia (SEARO) and Africa (AFRO) included definitions for food and non-alcoholic beverages excessive in total fats, saturated fats, free sugars and sodium that have the potential to be used in other policies requiring such definition.

43. The adoption of WHO regional NPMs by countries have strengthened their policies to promote and protect healthy diets and public health, and have reduced the time they take to deliver such benefits to their populations.<sup>37</sup> Following Member States' requests, WHO continued to work on NPMs, including for applications other than marketing restrictions.<sup>38, 39</sup> This will also complement forthcoming WHO guidelines on nutrition labelling policies,<sup>40</sup> and published guidelines on fiscal policies to promote healthy diets,<sup>41</sup> and policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing,<sup>42</sup> and is of particular importance for those regions that initially focused their NPMs on policies to restrict the marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages.

44. Work is underway to develop guidance for establishing profiling models for front-of-package labelling in regions where WHO regional models focused primarily only on marketing regulations. WHO will continue to provide guidance and technical support to its Member States on advancing implementation of food environment policies to promote healthy diets, including guidance on profiling models that underpin such measures.

45. As countries increasingly adopt a suite of complementary regulatory measures to reduce dietary risks, there is an opportunity to consider how foods are identified for regulatory purposes in a more coherent and consistent manner. While nutrient profiling remains central to many policies, emerging evidence and policy experience suggest that nutrient composition alone may not fully capture all characteristics relevant to dietary

<sup>29</sup> WHO. Nutrient profiling: Report of a WHO/IASO technical meeting. (2010):

[https://apps.who.int/nutrition/publications/profiling/WHO\\_IASO\\_report2010/en/index.html](https://apps.who.int/nutrition/publications/profiling/WHO_IASO_report2010/en/index.html)

<sup>30</sup> WHO/EURO Nutrient profiling model (2015): [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/270716/Nutrient-children\\_web-new.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/270716/Nutrient-children_web-new.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> WHO/WPRO Nutrient profiling model (2016): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789290617853>

<sup>32</sup> WHO/PAHO Nutrient profiling model (2016): [https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/18621/9789275118733\\_eng.pdf](https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/18621/9789275118733_eng.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> WHO/SEARO Nutrient profiling model (2017): <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/253459>

<sup>34</sup> WHO/EMRO Nutrient profiling model (2017): [https://applications.emro.who.int/dsaf/EMROPUB\\_2017\\_en\\_19632.pdf](https://applications.emro.who.int/dsaf/EMROPUB_2017_en_19632.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> WHO/AFRO Nutrient profiling model (2019): <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329956>

<sup>36</sup> WHO/EURO Nutrient profiling model. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2023): <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2023-6894-46660-68492>

<sup>37</sup> Crosbie E, et al. A policy study on front-of-pack nutrition labeling in the Americas: emerging developments and outcomes. *Lancet Reg Health Am.* 2022;18:100400. doi: 10.1016/j.lana.2022.100400.

<sup>38</sup> Use of nutrient profile models for nutrition and health policies: meeting report on the use of nutrient profile models in the WHO European Region, September 2021. (2022): <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2022-6201-45966-66383>

<sup>39</sup> The Global RECAP: Global Regulatory and Fiscal Capacity Building Programme (2023):

<https://www.who.int/initiatives/global-regulatory-and-fiscal-policy-capacity-buidling-programme>

<sup>40</sup> Sixth meeting of the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions (2022): [https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2022/12/14/default-calendar/sixth-meeting-of-the-who-nutrition-guidance-expert-advisory-group-\(nugag\)-subgroup-on-policy-actions](https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2022/12/14/default-calendar/sixth-meeting-of-the-who-nutrition-guidance-expert-advisory-group-(nugag)-subgroup-on-policy-actions)

<sup>41</sup> Public consultation on the draft WHO guideline on fiscal policies to promote healthy diets (2022):

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

<sup>42</sup> Public consultation on the draft WHO guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing (2022): <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>



risk. WHO is therefore developing an **Information brief on food profiling for regulatory measures**. The brief outlines a public health approach that integrates nutrient-based criteria with regulatory parameters to identify foods currently known as ultra-processed food products intended to provide regulators and policy-makers with a practical and streamlined tool that can assess individual food products and support multiple regulatory applications.

### **WHO Healthy Diet Fact Sheet 2026**

46. In January 2026, WHO updated its healthy diet factsheet with the latest evidence-based advice and guidance.<sup>43</sup> It's available in all UN languages. The fact sheet outlines key points such as why a healthy diet matters, an overview of global dietary patterns and challenges, and core principles of a healthy diet. It also covers WHO's guidance on different nutrients (e.g., carbohydrates, sugars, fats, proteins, micronutrients, salt/sodium and potassium) and considerations for infants and young children, followed by sections on how to promote healthy diets at the policy and population level.

### **WHO guideline development on food environment policies (WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions)**

47. Following the WHO guideline development process, the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions is working on develops evidence-based guidelines on priority food environment policies to reduce diet-related NCDs and support Member States in implementing effective regulatory measures. The **WHO guideline on fiscal policies to promote healthy diets**<sup>44</sup>, developed by NUGAG, was launched in June 2024. It provides recommendations on taxation and subsidies, including sugar-sweetened beverage taxation, to reduce consumption of products high in nutrients of concern and generate revenue for health promotion. WHO continues to support countries in the design, implementation and evaluation of fiscal measures, including through technical assistance and country learning exchanges. The guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of **food marketing**<sup>45</sup>, developed by NUGAG, was launched in July 2023. It provides recommendations on mandatory approaches to restrict marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars and/or sodium to children.

48. WHO is supporting Member States in strengthening regulatory frameworks and implementation mechanisms in line with the guideline. The **WHO guideline on policies and interventions to create healthy school food environments**, developed by NUGAG, was launched in January 2026 following peer review.<sup>46</sup> The guideline provides two strong recommendations on setting and using nutrition standards, and school food provision and a conditional recommendation on nudging interventions. WHO is working with countries to adapt and implement the recommendations in national school food and nutrition programmes. The guideline on **nutrition labelling policies** is being finalized for launch in mid-2026. It includes recommendations and good practice statements on the list of ingredients on nutrient declarations, front-of-pack labelling, and the use of claims.<sup>47</sup>

### **WHO Guideline Development on Diet and Health**

49. In 2023, WHO released a series of guidelines related to healthy diets, including the guideline on **saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid** intake for adults and children<sup>48</sup>, the guideline on **total fat** intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain in adults and children<sup>49</sup>, the guideline on **carbohydrate** intake for adults and children<sup>50</sup>, and the guideline on the use of **non-sugar sweeteners**.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the WHO guideline on the use of **lower-sodium salt substitutes** was published in January 2025.<sup>52</sup>

50. WHO has initiated work on developing guidelines on the optimal intake of animal source foods, which will include guidance on commonly consumed animal source foods and plant alternatives. In addition to health effects of consuming these foods, this work will address food safety considerations as well as socioeconomic factors and environmental impacts enabling a comprehensive assessment of the risks and benefits associated

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240091016>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240075412>

<sup>46</sup> <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/6989e26c-c181-4ec8-bb99-104415a2e142/content>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/online-public-consultation-draft-guideline-on-nutrition-labelling-policies>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073630>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073654>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073593>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073616>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240105591>

with different consumption and substitution patterns. The first expert meeting was held in 2024 at which the scopes of the guideline and the framework of the risk-benefit assessment were established.<sup>53,54</sup>

51. Furthermore, WHO will develop a guideline on the consumption of ultra-processed foods.

#### **WHO Activities to promote healthy diets and reduce NCD risk factors**

52. Member States committed to reducing exposure to unhealthy diets through the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) (2011). The Fourth High-level Meeting, held in 2025, adopted an updated political declaration to accelerate progress toward achieving the voluntary global NCD targets and Sustainable Development Goal 3.4. Efforts continue to be scaled up to achieve the nine voluntary global NCD targets adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2013, including targets to reduce sodium intake and halt the rise in obesity. Progress in these areas contributes to achieving SDG target 3.4.

53. Decision WHA75(11) (2022) adopted recommendations for the prevention and management of obesity over the life course, accompanied by an Acceleration Plan clarifying WHO's support to Member States. WHO has been operationalizing the Acceleration Plan through intensified country support, policy implementation tools and coordinated technical assistance. As part of the Acceleration Plan, WHO has worked with "frontrunner countries" through focused 100-day challenges to advance implementation in priority policy areas, including: sugar-sweetened beverage taxation, early food environments, food marketing restrictions, physical activity policies. Additional 100-day challenges on nutrition labelling and school food and nutrition policies are under preparation. The WHO technical package "*A step-by-step approach to design and implement the obesity response*" has been finalized and is being prepared for launch. The package provides practical guidance to support countries in prioritizing, sequencing and implementing obesity prevention policies.

54. Resolution WHA76(9) (2023) endorsed the updated menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of NCDs<sup>55</sup>, which includes a number of interventions to promote healthy diets, such as reformulation of processed/manufactured food, public food procurement and service, encouraging consumers to make healthier choices (media campaigns, front-of-pack or other interpretative nutrition labelling, menu labelling), food marketing restrictions, the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, and taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages.<sup>56</sup> Global database on the Implementation of Food and Nutrition Action (GIFNA)<sup>57</sup> numerous food and nutrition policies and interventions, which enables monitoring of global progress in implementing legislative and other measures and increased accountability towards political commitments.

#### **Extension of Global Nutrition Targets to 2030**

55. The World Health Assembly 78 extended the comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and child nutrition to 2030.<sup>58</sup> The targets are:

- 40% reduction in the number of children under 5 years of age who are stunted, compared to the 2012 baseline;
- 50% reduction in anaemia in women of reproductive age, compared to the 2012 baseline; 30% reduction in low birth weight, compared to the 2012 baseline;
- reduce and maintain overweight in children under 5 years of age to less than 5%;
- increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 60%; and
- reduce and maintain wasting in children under 5 years of age to less than 5%.

56. The Assembly also adopted process targets to accelerate the achievement of these nutrition goals, including improving dietary diversity in women and children, increasing early initiation of breastfeeding, delivering infant and young child feeding counselling, increasing consumption of iron-containing supplements during pregnancy, and reducing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.who.int/groups/guideline-development-group-on-optimal-intake-of-animal-source-foods>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.who.int/groups/technical-advisory-group-on-risk-benefit-assessment-of-optimal-intake-of-animal-source-foods>

<sup>55</sup> [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA76/A76\(9\)-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA76/A76(9)-en.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Update of Appendix 3 of the WHO Global Action Plan on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (2013–2030): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240091078>

<sup>57</sup> <https://gifna.who.int/>

<sup>58</sup> [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA78/A78\\_R24-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA78/A78_R24-en.pdf)

### ***Population sodium/salt intake reduction***

57. WHO continues to support Member States to reduce population sodium intake, and achievement of the nine global voluntary targets, including a 30% relative reduction in mean population sodium intake, achieving an intake of < 2,000 mg/day sodium; and a 25% relative reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure by 2030. WHO has published several tools and technical documents: the updated SHAKE Technical Package for Salt Reduction, which will be re-released in 2026, the Action Framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies to promote healthy diets<sup>59</sup>, the Global Sodium Benchmarks for different food categories<sup>60</sup> and the Sodium Country Score Card, hosted within the GIFNA database.<sup>61</sup> WHO is also working on a “step-by-step” guidance on national adaptation of the WHO sodium targets, either the WHO global sodium benchmarks or regional sodium targets.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids***

58. In May 2018, WHO called for the global elimination of industrially produced of trans-fatty acids (iTFA) by 2025, followed by the release of the REPLACE action package and other tools to support country efforts.<sup>63</sup> To achieve successful iTFA elimination, WHO recommends governments to adopt either of the two best-practice policies: 1) Mandatory limit of 2 grams of iTFA 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. Global efforts to eliminate iTFA from the food supply continue to advance, with 65 countries adopting best-practice policies to date.

59. Since 2024, six countries (Colombia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, and Qatar) have adopted best-practice policies.<sup>64</sup> In May 2025, WHO awarded validation certificates to four countries (Austria, Norway, Oman, and Singapore) in recognition of implementing best-practice policies alongside effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. These achievements underscore the growing momentum to eliminate iTFA and reduce diet-related noncommunicable diseases.<sup>65</sup>

60. WHO continues to provide technical support, policy guidance, and tools to help countries implement effective iTFA elimination measures. Governments are urged to take decisive action, and food manufacturers and oil suppliers are encouraged to reformulate products and transition to healthier alternatives.<sup>66</sup> To provide countries with further guidance on healthier alternatives, WHO is currently developing a guideline on tropical oils consumption.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018341>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240092013>

<sup>61</sup> <https://gifna.who.int/summary/sodium>

<sup>62</sup> <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375596/9789290210818-eng.pdf> and [https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/54658/PAHONMHRF210016\\_eng.pdf](https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/54658/PAHONMHRF210016_eng.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/replace-trans-fat>

<sup>64</sup> <https://gifna.who.int/summary/TFA>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-05-2025-who-recognizes-four-countries-with-life-saving-trans-fat-elimination-policies>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/trans-fat>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.who.int/groups/guideline-development-group-on-consumption-of-tropical-oils>