



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

**Forty-first Session  
Düsseldorf, Germany  
24 - 29 November 2019**

**MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO**

*(Prepared by FAO and WHO)*

**SCIENTIFIC ADVICE REQUESTED BY CCNFSDU**

***Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU) for the establishment of nitrogen to protein conversion factors for soy-based and milk-based ingredients used in infant formula and follow-up formula***

With the request made by CCNFSDU39 in 2017, the FAO and WHO initiated the work of the joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU) to provide scientific advice for establishing nitrogen to protein conversion factor(s) to use in estimating the protein content of soy-based and milk-based ingredients used in infant formula and follow-up formula. A systematic review was commissioned to experts in the fields of protein quantification and analysis, and a call for data was issued to collect relevant, unpublished data. A meeting of JEMNU was convened at the WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16 to 17 July 2019 to review and assess the evidence and develop evidence-informed guidance on this topic. A report presenting the main outcomes of the meeting was prepared and it, along with the systematic review, was submitted to CCNFSDU41. Both the report and systematic review will be published as FAO/WHO documents and would be made available on the FAO and WHO websites.

***FAO Expert Working Group on Protein Quality Assessment in Follow-up Formula for Young Children and Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods***

As follow-up to a request submitted by CCNFSDU38, FAO organised an Expert Working Group to provide scientific advice on setting up guidelines for Codex members to determine protein quality using the Protein Digestibility–Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS) in Follow-up formula (FUF) for young children (12 – 36 months) and Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF). The working group session was held at the FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, in November 2017. A report presenting the outcomes of the meeting was published in November 2018<sup>1</sup>, providing practical guidance on the measurement of protein quality in two distinct products used to feed children in different conditions RUTF and FUF for young children.

***Updating of nutrient requirements for infants and young children aged 0-36 months (carried out jointly by FAO and WHO)***

Preparatory work for updating the nutrient requirements for infants and young children aged 0 - 36 months was completed in early 2019, which included identification of existing recommended nutrient requirements and physiological bases used in setting up those requirements in different countries through compiling an extensive list of national dietary guidelines from the countries in all regions. The recent scientific literature on both macronutrients and micronutrients was also reviewed. Based on the results of this initial scoping work, nutrients were prioritized for updating, with calcium, vitamin D and zinc identified as the first three to be updated. Scoping reviews for these three nutrients were commissioned and completed, and an expert panel is being formed through a call for experts and also with input from FAO and WHO colleagues in regions and countries. It is planned that an expert meeting will be convened in January 2020 to review the results of the scoping reviews, formulate key questions in PICO format, prioritize outcomes and provide any additional input necessary to guide the systematic reviews that will be undertaken with a view to be used to formulate recommendations on the requirements of these nutrients.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2487EN/ca2487en.pdf>

## OTHER INFORMATION

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

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) (“Nutrition Decade”),<sup>2</sup> proclaimed through UN General Assembly Resolution 70/259,<sup>3</sup> provides all stakeholders with a unique time-bound opportunity to strengthen joint efforts to implement the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) held in 2014 and to reach the global nutrition and diet-related NCD targets and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, including in particular SDG2 and SDG3. The primary objective of the Nutrition Decade is to increase nutrition investments and implementation of policies and programmes to ensure that all people, at all times and of all ages, have access to affordable, diversified, safe and healthy diets.

Acting through its joint FAO/WHO Secretariat, the Nutrition Decade encourages governments to set and achieve specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound commitments (also called SMART commitments) for urgent investment, action and collaboration at national or local level. In 2017, Brazil, Ecuador and Italy officially submitted their SMART commitments to the Nutrition Decade Secretariat.

Another modality of engagement within the Nutrition Decade are mechanisms such as Action Networks, to share experiences, exchange good practices and illustrate successes and challenges among countries. Several global and regional action networks have been convened by countries. The most recent ones are the global action network on nutrition labelling established by France/Australia/Chile in February 2019 and a global action network on traditional, healthy and sustainable diets launched by Italy during the World Health Assembly in 2019.

The UN General Assembly, having discussed the first progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Nutrition Decade, adopted Resolution 72/306 in July 2018,<sup>4</sup> recognizing the progress made in advancing the Nutrition Decade’s implementation, while also expressing concern that the world was off track to achieve the global nutrition targets, and called upon governments and their partners to intensify their efforts and scale up commitments and investments for nutrition. Resolution 72/306 also noted the “intention of convening open and inclusive dialogues at mid-term (2020/21)”.

The objective of the Mid-term Review of the Nutrition Decade will be to assess and evaluate the achievements in individual policy areas of the ICN2 Framework for Action, over the period from 2016 to 2020. The mid-term review will thus look backwards at what has been achieved in the six action areas of the Decade’s Work Programme.<sup>5</sup> This will be reflected in the second progress report to the General Assembly that is currently under preparation. The report to the General Assembly will be based on inputs from different stakeholder groups and the past progress reports to the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO. The mid-term review will also include a forward-looking background paper, which will highlight the areas for future focus where scaled up actions will be essential for achieving the global nutrition targets and related targets of the SDGs, in order to bring the world back on track.

It is envisaged that the review process will lead to a revision of the Decade’s Work Programme and identify focus areas for priority action for the second phase of the Nutrition Decade. This entire process would then culminate into a high-level meeting, which could take place during the middle of next year in New York, possibly around the time of the High-Level Political Forum in July 2020.

### ***Committee on World Food Security (CFS)***

CFS is acknowledged in the UN General Assembly Resolution 70/259 as a global coordination mechanism and is called upon to play an important role in supporting the implementation of the Nutrition Decade. The theme of the 46th Annual Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was “Accelerating Progress on SDG2 to Achieve All the SDGs”. CFS is crucial in fighting hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide and in convening dialogues among its members to make the Nutrition Decade a success. An update on the preparation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, was presented, which will be an important contribution to help countries advancing action on some of the key policy areas and in collaboration with all stakeholders. Moreover, some key points from the second progress report submitted to the CFS on the follow-up ICN2, including the implementation of the Nutrition Decade, was presented by the Nutrition Decade Secretariat.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/nutrition/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/259>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/306>.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.un.org/nutrition/sites/www.un.org.nutrition/files/general/pdf/work\\_programme\\_nutrition\\_decade.pdf](https://www.un.org/nutrition/sites/www.un.org.nutrition/files/general/pdf/work_programme_nutrition_decade.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/na753en/na753en.pdf>.

### ***FAO/WHO International Consultation on Sustainable Healthy Diets***

Acknowledging the existence of diverging views on the concepts of sustainable diets and healthy diets, countries have requested guidance from FAO and WHO on what constitutes sustainable healthy diets. The two organisations jointly held an international expert consultation on Sustainable and Healthy Diets in July 2019 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, to address these issues. The Consultation agreed on guiding principles for what constitutes “Sustainable Healthy Diets” (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca6640en/ca6640en.pdf>). These guiding principles take a holistic approach to diets; they consider international nutrition recommendations; the environmental cost of food production and consumption; and the adaptability to local social, cultural and economic contexts and aims to support the efforts of countries as they work to transform food systems to deliver on sustainable healthy diets. They also emphasize the role of food consumption and diets in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs at country level, especially Goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 13 (Climate Action).

### ***The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns (SOFI 2019)<sup>7</sup>***

This is the third year in a row that five UN partner agencies – FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO – prepared The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. After decades of steady decline, the number of people who suffer from hunger has been on the rise slowly and amounted to a little over 821 million people in 2018, which equals globally to about one in nine people who are undernourished (i.e. 10.8%). Among children under five years, in 2018, the global prevalence of stunting was 21.9% (i.e. 148.9 million), the global prevalence of overweight was 5.9% (i.e. 40.1 million) and the global prevalence of wasting was 7.3% (i.e. 49.5 million). The prevalence of overweight and obesity continues to increase in all regions, particularly among school-age children and adults. In 2016, 131 million children 5–9 years old, 207 million adolescents and 2 billion adults were overweight. This year’s theme on economic slowdowns and downturns showed that Income inequality increases the likelihood of severe food insecurity, and this effect is 20 percent higher for low-income countries compared with middle-income countries. Income and wealth inequalities are also closely associated with undernutrition, while more complex inequality patterns are associated with obesity. To safeguard food security and nutrition, it is critical to already have in place economic and social policies to counteract the effects of adverse economic cycles when they arrive, while avoiding cuts in essential services, such as health care and education, at all costs. In the longer term, however, this will only be possible through fostering pro-poor and inclusive structural transformation, particularly in countries that rely heavily on trade in primary commodities.

### ***Handbook for Parliamentarians on Nutrition and Food Systems***

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) requested FAO to support the drafting and publication for a Handbook for Parliamentarians on Nutrition and Food Systems to support parliamentarian’s strong engagement in ensuring that the necessary legislative tools on nutrition and food security are put in place and will help them to identify concrete actions towards achieving food systems which deliver good nutrition for all. Partners including WHO, UNICEF, SUN and NEPAD have supported with technical inputs and review. The publication is expected to be finalized by the end of 2019 and will be ready for the next IPU General Assembly.

### ***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. The platform is a growing data repository; in 2018, FAO/WHO GIFT received a four-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to transform the platform into a robust global tool that will contain at least 50 datasets in 2022. FAO/WHO GIFT provides sex and age-disaggregated microdata, which are needed in the field of nutrition and dietary exposure. To facilitate the use of these data by policy makers, ready-to-use food-based indicators are provided under the form of infographics for a user friendly overview of key information by population groups and by food groups. Currently, the platform contains 8 datasets available for computing indicators and microdata download, and 10 others are in the pipeline. For datasets that are not yet available as microdata in FAO/WHO GIFT, the platform provides an up-to-date inventory of individual quantitative food consumption surveys conducted and ongoing in low- and middle-income countries, with detailed survey information on identified studies. The FAO/WHO GIFT platform is available at <http://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>.

## FAO ACTIVITIES

### Future of Food Symposium

The International Symposium on the Future of Food was organised by FAO in June 2019. The symposium brought together academics, researchers, policymakers, representatives from civil society and private sector, parliamentarians and government agencies to discuss what is the future of food and to explore pathways to a sustainable future of food. The Future of Food symposium includes panel discussions on specific themes: research, knowledge gaps and needs for sustainable food systems and healthy diets; governance of food systems for healthy diets; building consumer confidence in food systems; and what it takes to transform food systems. More information can be found: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/future-of-food/en/>

### FAO's Role in supporting countries to develop and implement Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs)

1. FAO hosts an online global platform of national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs). The purpose of the platform is to collect government-endorsed guidelines from the different regions and make available technical guidance regarding the development, implementation and evaluation processes of FBDGs. The website currently features national FBDGs from more than 90 countries, and is continuously updated as guidelines are developed and revised.
  - To access the FAO website on FBDGs: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>.
2. In 2019, FAO has hosted a series of global webinars to support knowledge exchange and debate around FBDGs. So far more than 1000 people have registered for three of six webinars. All recordings can be accessed here: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/capacity-development/webinar-series/en/>
3. Direct technical assistance has been provided to the Governments of Ghana, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Maldives, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Colombia, Costa Rica and Honduras. Technical assistance for the revision of FBDGs was also provided to a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
4. Work is currently ongoing for the development of a set of resource documents to help countries implement FBDGs.

### FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Databases

FAO coordinates the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS), a worldwide network of food composition experts aiming to improve the quality, availability, reliability and use of food composition data. These data are necessary, for example, for the assessment of diet quality or the adequacy of the nutrient intake in populations, for the development and application of food based dietary guidelines and nutrition labelling or selected Codex standards. FAO/INFOODS will publish in 2020 the updated FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Table for Western Africa with many new foods, recipes and components. Moreover, work is ongoing on developing FAO/INFOODS Compilation guidelines and the FAO/INFOODS Evaluation Framework to Assess the Quality of Published Food Composition Tables and Databases (FCT/FCDBs) – (Evaluation Framework), both expected to be published in 2020 or 2021. Several training courses were carried out (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Cuba, India and Portugal) in order to assist countries to update or develop new FCT/FCDB. Additionally, FAO assisted several countries in the development of their FCT/FCDB through external and/or FAO funding in Bolivia, Caribbean, Ethiopia, South Pacific, West Africa and Zimbabwe.

The databases can be downloaded at the FAO/INFOODS website: <http://www.fao.org/infoods/infoods/en/>

### FAO activities on Food Labelling

At the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), governments affirmed that the “empowerment of consumers is necessary through improved and evidence-based health and nutrition information and education to make informed choices regarding consumption of food products for healthy dietary practices” (FAO/WHO 2014). Food labelling was included among the recommendations in the ICN2 Framework for Action (FAO/WHO, 2014). To this end, FAO has developed the following tools on food labelling for developing the capacity in countries to implement food labelling policies and programmes.

The FAO website on Food Labelling (<http://www.fao.org/food-labelling/en/>) was launched in September 2018 and provides information on Food Labelling standards and guidelines and FAO activities on food labelling.

A handbook on food labelling that provides an introduction to labelling as part of an ongoing effort to assist regulators and others working in the area of food systems who are responsible for formulating and implementing food labelling policies. Specific types of labels are explained such as ingredient lists (including allergen and food additive information), date marking, nutrition labels (back of pack panels and front of pack systems) as well as nutrient and health claims. Relevant sections of the book follow the guidance given by the Codex Alimentarius Commission on food labelling in particular the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985). The handbook can be accessed at: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/fc5f4bc2-650a-4704-9162-9eb9b3a1fdd0/>.

A policy guideline for recovery and redistribution (R&R) of safe and nutritious food for human consumption, targeting a multi-stakeholder audience, including governments, actors in the food supply chain - providing, receiving or redistributing - recovered food - and civil society in developing, transition and developed countries. The guideline provides an introduction to the global framework and recent regional developments on food waste prevention that have directly included, for the first time, R&R as one of the solutions that contribute to the prevention of safe and nutritious food from being discarded or wasted. Reference is made to globally accepted food safety guidelines as well as various best practices at national level on how to deal with liability and in particular regarding quality and safety related date marking on pre-packaged food to prevent food waste, without compromising consumers' health. The guidance is expected to be published at the end of 2019.

***Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women (MDD-W) – A global standardized food-based indicator for monitoring dietary diversity and micronutrient adequacy of women's diets***

Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not women at 15-49 years of age have consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups the previous day or night. The proportion of women at 15–49 years of age who reach this minimum in a population can be used as a proxy indicator for higher micronutrient adequacy, one important dimension of diet quality. With support from the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), FAO commenced a two-year research project in early 2018 to refine MDD-W data Collection Tool, with capacity development and data collection activities in three focus countries - Cambodia, Ethiopia and Zambia. The results of the study will be published as a supplement to the aforementioned user guide, providing new information on the optimal operationalization of MDD-W data collection, including recommendations with context-specific guidelines, useful in maximizing completeness and accuracy of reported diets of women worldwide.

***FAO's role in school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE)***

FAO recognizes schoolchildren and adolescents as a priority population for nutrition interventions and views the school as an ideal setting for developing skills and capacities in food, nutrition and health. In this regard, FAO promotes school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) as a critical strategy to foster these capacities in children and the wider school community and to support the nutrition outcomes of other school interventions and programmes.

For the past 3 years, FAO has been working to develop a toolkit for use by low and middle-income countries, in accordance with a [new vision](#), to enhance the effectiveness and scope of SFNE programmes and interventions. The toolkit consists of: a) white paper on the current state, principles of effectiveness and challenges of SFNE with recommendations for action, b) a capacity needs assessment tool, c) the results from a global survey and a scoping literature review. It will be ready for use in 2020. More information on FAO's role in schools is available at: <http://www.fao.org/school-food/en/>

***Joint FAO/WFP/IFAD/ Bioversity International (RBAs) working group on sustainable food value chains for nutrition (FVCN) and home grown school feeding (HGSF)***

FAO in collaboration with IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International identified food value chains for nutrition as a priority area to set up a working group on the topic. The Rome based agencies (RBAs) will seek to partner with governments, development agencies and others to facilitate development of sustainable food value chains for nutrition at country level. To this end, FAO is leading the development of an e-learning course to equip project designers and managers with the concepts, principles and tools they need to leverage value chain approaches to improve nutrition.

Additionally FAO with WFP and IFAD, in close collaboration with the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF), the Partnership for Child Development (PCD), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil have joined forces to publish a resource framework for the design, implementation and scale-up of country-led Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes. Currently FAO is leading the development of an e-learning course on Home Grown School Feeding for use by programme practitioners, policy-makers, development partners, governments, civil society and community-based organizations and the private sector.

## WHO ACTIVITIES

### ***WHO Essential Nutrition Actions: mainstreaming nutrition throughout the life-course***

Primary health care is the foundation of universal health coverage; it is a whole-of-society approach to health and well-being, centred on the needs and preferences of individuals, families and communities. Nutrition is a foundation for health and well-being for all, leaving no one behind, and a critical component of primary health care, through its promotion and prevention, addressing its determinants, and a people-centred approach.

Essential health packages in all settings need to contain robust nutrition components but countries will need to decide which interventions best fit their needs. Nutrition interventions addressing health through the life-course (covering women, men, infants, children, adolescents and older persons) contribute to the delivery of integrated primary health care. A life-course approach is critical to operationalize the worldwide commitment to people-centred primary health care.

The WHO updated edition of the Essential Nutrition Actions (<https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/essential-nutrition-actions-2019/en/>) provides a compilation of actions to address malnutrition in all its forms, in a concise and user-friendly format to help in decision-making processes for integration of nutrition interventions in national health policies, strategies, and plans based on country-specific needs and global priorities.

### ***WHO guideline development on efficacy, safety, and effectiveness of ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) with reduced milk-protein content***

WHO has started the process to review the efficacy, effectiveness, and safety of the new RUTF formulations (containing alternative sources of protein (non-dairy) or less than 50% of proteins coming from milk or other dairy products) for treating infants and children aged 6 months or older with severe acute malnutrition who have appetite and no medical complications. The WHO normative process also includes retrieval, assessment and summary of evidence on values and preferences (i.e. cultural, religious), inter/intra-household sharing, acceptability, adherence, equity, feasibility, accessibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness in different settings. For this purpose, WHO convened the first meeting of the WHO guideline development group – RUTF on 7 November 2019. The main objectives of this meeting were to: i) introduce members of the guideline development group to the WHO guideline development process, including Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) methodology; ii) discuss PICO questions and prioritization of the outcomes; iii) agree on the timeframe for the guideline process. The second meeting of the WHO guideline development group is scheduled to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in July 2020, with the objective to review and discuss the results of the systematic reviews and formulate recommendations for the efficacy, safety, and effectiveness of ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) with reduced or no milk-protein content.

### ***WHO guideline development on complementary feeding of infants and children***

WHO is working to provide updated global guidance on complementary feeding of infants and children to promote optimal growth and development. The importance of complementary feeding for appropriate child growth and development was reaffirmed by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2018 when Member States were called upon “to promote timely and adequate complementary feeding in accordance with the guiding principles for complementary feeding of the breastfed child, as well as guiding principles for the feeding of the non-breastfed child 6 - 24 months of age.” The new guideline will update the 2003 PAHO Guiding principles for complementary feeding of the breastfed child and the 2005 WHO Guiding principles for feeding non-breastfed children 6 - 24 months age. An initial meeting of the guideline development group is planned for 2 - 4 December 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland with the specific outcome to have consensus on a proposed outline for the guideline and the specific questions to be addressed.

### ***WHO guideline development on infant feeding in areas of Zika virus transmission***

WHO convened a guideline development group for the update of the current WHO Infant feeding in areas of Zika virus transmission. This guideline was developed, first as interim advice and then as a rapid advice guideline during the outbreak. The document states that the benefits of breast feeding for the infant and mother outweigh any potential risk of Zika infection through breast milk and recommended that mothers with possible or confirmed Zika virus infection or exposure continue to breast feed. As data about long-term outcomes associated with Zika virus infection in infants and young children is becoming available and taking into consideration that Zika virus outbreaks could occur again, this guideline is being updated and transformed into a standard WHO guideline. An initial meeting with the guideline development group took place in April 2019, in which input was given into the scope of the guideline, assisted the steering group in developing the key questions in PICO format and prioritized outcomes to guide the evidence reviews and focus the recommendations. On 24 July 2019, the WHO steering group met to discuss expanding this guideline to include infant feeding recommendations for infants presenting with congenital Zika virus syndrome (CZVS) or Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) and support required by mothers and caretakers of infants affected by this

condition. A final guideline development group meeting is planned by teleconference on 09-10 December 2019.

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

#### **Carbohydrates, polyunsaturated fatty acids, and non-sugar sweeteners:**

The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Diet and Health will be held in Qingdao, China on 16 - 19 December 2019. The NUGAG subgroup on Diet and Health will finalize evidence-informed recommendations for **carbohydrates** (including dietary fibre), **polyunsaturated fatty acids** (including EPA and DHA) and **non-sugar sweeteners**, taking into consideration updated and supplementary evidence including new and additional systematic reviews for carbohydrates and non-sugar sweeteners, an updated Cochrane review on the effect of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid intake on cardiovascular disease, and several recently published and submitted systematic reviews on the effects of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid intake on other health outcomes identified by NUGAG as important, including diabetes, cancer, neurocognitive function and depression. Finalization of the recommendations will not only take into consideration the quality of the evidence, but additional criteria including the balance of evidence on benefits and harms, values and preferences, resource implications, priority of the problems, equity and human rights, acceptability and feasibility.

#### **Saturated fatty acids, *trans*-fatty acids and total fat:**

To ensure that the recommendations are based on the most current evidence available, the systematic reviews serving as the evidence base for the recommendations on saturated fatty acids, *trans*-fatty acids and total fat are being updated. Finalization and release of the guidelines are planned for in 2020.

#### **Dietary patterns:**

The systematic review is currently being finalized and recommendations will be finalized in 2020 with a subsequent public consultation and release of the guidelines planned for later in 2020.

#### **Low-sodium salt substitutes:**

Issues related to the use of low-sodium salt substitutes to reduce sodium/salt consumption will be discussed due to increasing need and requests for WHO guidance as to whether it would be an effective public health approach for reducing sodium/salt intake in populations. NUGAG will review the results of a scoping review, formulate key questions in PICO format, prioritize outcomes and provide any additional input necessary to guide the systematic reviews that will be used to formulate recommendations on nutrient intakes.

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

To help implement the development of evidence-informed policy guidance and measures to support Member States in creating an enabling food environment to promote healthy diets and good nutrition, WHO established *the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions*, which will work alongside the NUGAG Subgroup on Diet and Health. The NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions is currently developing three guidelines on policy actions, namely nutrition labelling policies, policies to restrict food marketing to children and fiscal and pricing policies, and is initiating a guideline development process on school food and nutrition policies. Developing guidelines on policy actions to promote healthy diets and nutrition will contribute greatly to the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), which aims to increase action at the national, regional and global levels to achieve commitments of the outcome documents of the second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). It will also contribute to achieving commitments of the Political Declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, and ultimately the health- and nutrition-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The first meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 11-14 December 2018. At this 1st meeting the NUGAG Subgroup discussed and finalized the scope and PICO questions to guide the undertaking of the systematic reviews and subsequently to formulate the recommendations for the policy guidelines on nutrition labelling, restricting food marketing to children and fiscal and pricing policies. Additional reviews are underway on the balance of evidence on benefits and harms, values and preferences, resource implications, equity and human rights, acceptability and feasibility of implementing the defined policies. The second meeting of the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions is scheduled to be held in Qingdao, China on 9 - 13 December 2019, with the objective to review and discuss the results of the systematic reviews and formulate recommendations. It is also planned to discuss the outcomes of a scoping review on school food and nutrition policies, formulate key questions in PICO format,

prioritize outcomes and provide any additional inputs necessary to guide the systematic reviews that will be undertaken to serve as the background evidence for formulating recommendations on school food and nutrition policies.

## **Second Global Nutrition Policy Review (2016 – 2017)**

The report of the second Global Nutrition Policy Review (2016 – 2017) was published in November 2018 ([https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/policies/global\\_nut\\_policyreview\\_2016-2017/en/](https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/policies/global_nut_policyreview_2016-2017/en/)). Summary results were reported to the 70<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2018 as requested by WHA resolution 68.19 and also WHA decision 68(14). Results were also used in the Secretary-General's report to the 72<sup>nd</sup> UN General Assembly session on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025). Summaries of this Global Nutrition Policy review are currently being prepared in Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish, in addition to English.

## **WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action**

The WHO global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA) currently contains the information on approximately 2,300 national policies and 6,600 programme actions being implemented in countries and 500 mechanisms for either coordination or monitoring. These data come from three sources, notably WHO's regular monitoring activities (e.g. surveys, reports from WHO Regional/Country Offices, desk reviews), information from partners (that maintain databases of nutrition related policies or that support the implementation of nutrition programmes and actions in countries), and information by registered users through a wiki-approach (<https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/>).

Furthermore, as part of monitoring country progress in eliminating industrially produced *trans*-fatty acids (iTFA) from the global food supply, WHO developed a TFA Country Score Card in GINA (<https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/scorecard/TFA>). This score card dynamically draws data from GINA, and classifies countries based on whether they have adopted legislative measures that are in line with the recommended approach or that are less restrictive; if they have taken legislative or other measures to induce consumers to make healthier choices with regards to iTFA (e.g. mandatory or voluntary labelling, voluntary reformulation), or if their national policies, strategies or action plans express a commitment to reduce iTFA in the food supply.

## **Nutrition-Friendly Schools Initiative**

In 2006, WHO, in partnership with FAO, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank Group, Education Development Center (EDC), Save the Children (SC), Partnership for Child Development (PCD), University of Montreal, Durham University, and the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and other partners. Building on the FRESH framework and health-promoting school approach, the NFSI Framework outlines 26 essential criteria within five broad components: 1. school nutrition policies, 2. awareness and capacity building of the school community, 3. nutrition and health promoting curricula, 4. supportive school environment for good nutrition, and 5. supportive school nutrition and health services. WHO recently conducted an evidence review of synthesized literature to underpin the NFSI framework. This review, which included 117 reviews, identified a strong evidence base to support the specific criteria of the framework and will be published in November 2019.

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

Elimination of industrially produced *trans*-fatty acids (iTFA) from the global food supply by 2023 is a priority target of the WHO's 13<sup>th</sup> General Programme of Work (GPW13) which guides the work of WHO during 2019 – 2023.

## **REPLACE Action Package:**

In May 2018, WHO launched the REPLACE action package which provides a strategic approach to eliminating iTFA from national food supplies, with the goal of global elimination by 2023. The REPLACE action package comprises an overarching technical document that provides a rationale and framework for this integrated approach to iTFA elimination, along with six modules and additional web resources (which was launched in May 2019), to facilitate implementation (<http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/replace-transfat>).

The REPLACE modules provide technical background information and propose practical steps to support governments to achieve elimination of iTFA from their national food supply. To achieve successful elimination, governments should pass either of the two best-practice legal measures: 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) which are outlined in the L and E modules. The information and practical steps outlined in the other modules, can be used to support the process of iTFA elimination, as necessary.



**Expert Consultation on Trans-Fatty Acid Assessment:**

The Expert Consultation on *Trans-Fatty Acid Assessment* was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 11–12 October 2018. The Consultation reviewed laboratory protocols for measuring *trans*-fatty acids (TFA) exposure in humans and TFA content in food and surveillance tools for countries to use in monitoring TFA intake in the population and TFA content in food supply with a view to increasing comparability of TFA data to monitor the impact of public health interventions and to track changes over time. These protocols and surveillance tools have been made available as part of the REPLACE modules and web resources.

**Countdown to 2023: WHO report on global trans fat elimination 2019**

A progress report on country progress in taking actions to achieve the global target of eliminating iTFA by 2023 was released at the 72<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly in May 2019. The report describes the current global, regional and national situations and changes over the past year; track progress of key policy outcomes and milestones; discuss challenges and opportunities for future action; highlight enablers and challenges of country-level elimination; and recommend strategic priorities for the next 12 months to achieve the 2023 target. The report also highlights a number of countries that had undertaken assessments to develop country roadmaps for the complete and sustained elimination of iTFA from their national food supplies, building on the REPLACE action package.

**WHO Technical consultation on nutrition-related products and the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines: practical considerations and feasibility**

Nutrition-related health products are commonly used in public health and clinical settings for the prevention and treatment of undernutrition or micronutrient deficiencies. These include formulations such as ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTFs), therapeutic-formula diets (F75 & F100), iron-containing multiple micronutrient powders, vitamin and mineral supplements, ensuring access to these products by those who need them the most is critical. Access to these nutrition-related health products may be improved by including them in the *WHO Model of Essential Medicines List*, a core element of universal health coverage. Alternatively, some of these products may be registered as food for special medical purposes. WHO convened a technical consultation on 20 - 21 September 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland, to gather stakeholders' views on considerations related to, and the feasibility of, including nutrition-related health products in the *WHO Model List of Essential Medicines*. A report summarizing the discussions and presenting the commissioned papers that served for the discussions in the meeting was published in April 2019 (<https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/technicalconsultation-model-list-essential-medicines-report/en/>).

**Applications requesting the inclusion of nutrition-related health products on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 1 - 5 April 2019. The Expert Committee considered the following applications of nutrition-related health products:

- *Ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF)*

The Expert Committee considered the comprehensive report prepared by the WHO Department of Nutrition in response to the request of the previous Expert Committee for the proposal to include Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) on the *WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children*.

The Committee did not recommend the addition of RUTF to the Model List for the treatment of uncomplicated severe acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, but again acknowledged the effectiveness of this product for this condition. The Committee considered that the report prepared by the WHO Department of Nutrition, highlighted the divided opinions and ongoing uncertainty of the implications at country level of listing RUTF as a medicine on the Model List. The Committee noted that there is work currently underway to establish guidelines for RUTF under the Codex Alimentarius, regarding production, nutritional aspects and labelling in order to facilitate harmonization for the requirements of RUTF at an international level.

- *Multiple Micronutrient Powders*

The Expert Committee recommended the addition of multiple micronutrient powders to the core list of the *WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children* for the prevention of anaemia in infants and children where anaemia is a public health problem. Use should be in line with the recommendations in current WHO Guidelines for point-of-use fortification of foods., The committee noting that a standardized product monograph is to be included in the United States Pharmacopoeia.

- *Oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc sulfate (co-packaged)*

The Expert Committee recommended listing on the core list of the *WHO Model List of Essential Medicines*

for *Children* of a co-packaged presentation of oral rehydration salts and zinc sulfate tablets, noting the recommendations for co-administration of the two components in the management of diarrhoea in children. The co-packaged product was considered practical, and likely to support better adherence to treatment.

### ***Risk of Excessive Intake of Vitamins and Minerals***

With a view of providing policymakers with the best available evidence to inform policies and programs simultaneously providing micronutrients across the population or specific population groups, the WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development convened the technical consultation “Risk of Excessive Intake of Vitamins and Minerals Delivered Through Public Health Interventions—Current Practices and Case Studies” held in Panamá City, Panamá on 4 – 6 October, 2017.

The manuscripts presented at the technical consultation were published as a special issue of *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (<https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17496632/2019/1446/1>) in June 2019.

### ***WHO guideline development on use and interpretation of haemoglobin concentrations for assessing anaemia status in individuals and populations***

Based on the normative needs identified at various technical meetings organized by WHO, the available evidence was summarised and presented to a WHO guideline development group after input from the steering committee, to obtain the priority questions and develop the global recommendations on haemoglobin thresholds to diagnose and manage anaemia in both clinical and public health practice. For this purpose, WHO established a WHO guideline development group – anaemia to advise and support this normative work.

WHO convened the first meeting of the WHO guideline development group – anaemia in Barcelona, Spain on 6 - 8 November 2019. The main objectives of this meeting was to: i) formally launch the WHO guideline development group – anaemia; ii) introduce members of the guideline development group to the WHO guideline development process, including Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) methodology; iii) agree on the consensus decision-making process and decision rules; iv) develop and prioritise PICO questions; v) identify topics for further discussions, technical meetings or research. The second meeting of the WHO guideline development group is scheduled to be held in 2020 with the objective to review and discuss the results of the systematic reviews and formulate recommendations for the use and interpretation of haemoglobin concentrations for assessing anaemia status in individuals and populations.

### ***Haemoglobin Concentration for Assessing Anaemia***

The WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development, in collaboration with the Services Organization and Clinical Interventions unit of the WHO Department of Service Delivery and Safety convened a technical meeting on Use and interpretation of haemoglobin concentrations for assessing anaemia status in individuals and populations, in Geneva, Switzerland in 2017. The manuscripts presented at the technical meeting were published as a special issue of *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (<https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17496632/2019/1450/1>) in August 2019.