IUNS INFOODS TASK FORCE

INFOODS' goal is to stimulate and coordinate efforts to improve the quality and worldwide availability of food analysis data and to ensure that anyone anywhere would be able to obtain adequate and reliable food composition data (see INFOODS website at http://www.fao.org/infoods/index_en.stm). A lot has been achieved in terms of harmonization within the last 30 years through INFOODS, FAO and others: many guidelines, standards, tools and databases exist to guide professional to correctly generate, compile and use food composition data.

There is the FAO/INFOODS distance-learning tool (the *Food Composition Study Guide*) and the simple food composition database management tool in Excel (the *FAO/INFOODS Compilation Tool*) allowing any professional to learn all important aspects on food composition and to compile a food composition database according to INFOODS standards. Because of the distance learning tool, it is felt that less emphasis needs to be given to face-to-face training courses but more on a communication strategy, i.e. how to assure that professionals in need of these guidelines, tools and databases are aware of the products INFOODS is offering.

However, there are still some areas which need to be strengthened and these are the areas on which INFOODS and FAO, in collaboration with other partners such as IUNS and INF-NS, intend to concentrate their future activities:

- Publish food composition databases:
    - Develop and publish more regional food composition databases following the model of the West African Food Composition Table (FAO, 2012) which is the product of a collaboration between national consultants and FAO. The national consultants collect and compile nationally available food composition data, and FAO, in collaboration with the consultants, collates them into a single database while completing missing values through calculation, estimation and imputation.
    - Continue to populate and publish new versions of the FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Database for Biodiversity which contains analytical data on foods which count toward biodiversity.
    - Develop and publish an Analytical Food Composition Database which contains solely analytical data.
- Develop more guidelines on:
    - Conversion of units, denominators and expressions
    - Checking food composition data prior to their publication in a user database
    - Publication in the scientific literature of analytical data for food composition purposes
    - Analytical determination of nutrient retention factors
    - Collection of recipe information and ingredients for the purpose of calculating their nutrient composition
    - Sampling
    - Selecting the most appropriate source for food composition data
- Continue publishing new component identifiers, harmonize them with EuroFIR, and publish a comprehensive compendium of all existing INFOODS component identifiers.
- Improve relevant information on the INFOODS website for analyzing nutrients and phyto-chemicals in foods
- Assist countries to generate and compile food composition data, including on the national food biodiversity, mainly either though assistance on writing grant proposals or through technical assistance during the project implementation

- Include more food composition aspects into the curricula of universities and schools for future nutritionists, dieticians, food scientists etc

It seems that in the last few years, food composition has again attracted more attention and increased funding, probably due to a rising awareness of the necessity of high-quality food composition data for nutrition research, programmes and policies; and also due to the possibility of having mandatory nutrition labeling in the near future. It is hoped that INFOODS efforts will contribute to increasing the quality and availability of relevant food composition data in countries throughout the world.