

CONCEPT NOTE
Nutrition and its Challenges –
Briefing
on
THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUTRITION (ICN2)

29 October 2014 (09:30-12:00)
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Background

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) will be convened in Rome, 19-21 November 2014. The overall goal of ICN2 is to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition through policies that more effectively address today's major nutrition challenges. It also aims to enhance international cooperation on these challenges. The event, co-convened by FAO and WHO, will attract a large number of high level delegates including Heads of State and Heads of Government. The Vatican has confirmed the Pope's attendance.

The combined effects of prolonged underinvestment in nutrition and in food and agriculture, together with the recent price instability and the economic downturn and exacerbated by the steady increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters have led to increased hunger and poverty in developing countries, jeopardizing the progress achieved so far in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The latest FAO estimates that about 805 million people are to be chronically undernourished in 2012-14. The prevalence of undernourishment has fallen from 18.7 to 11.3 percent globally and from 23.4 to 13.5 percent for developing countries. The figures demonstrate that the hunger target of the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of undernourished people in developing countries by 2015 is within reach.

WHO estimates that 10 million children die before their fifth birthday every year, and that a third of these deaths are associated with undernutrition. One in three developing country children under the age of five (178 million children) are stunted due to chronic undernutrition and 148 million children are underweight. Micronutrient malnutrition or "hidden hunger" affects around 2 billion people (over 30 percent of the world population) with serious public health consequences.

At the same time 43 million children under five years of age are overweight, and 1.4 billion people are overweight, increasingly in low and middle income countries, with consequences ranging from increased risk of premature death to serious chronic health conditions including an increase in the prevalence in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) all of which that reduce the overall quality of life. The change in diets made possible over the last twenty years or so by rising incomes and increased availability of energy dense convenience foods together with reductions in physical activity levels are believed to be associated with such a transition.

This co-existence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overnutrition exemplified by obesity and non-communicable and chronic disease is termed the double or multiple burden of malnutrition. Malnutrition, in all its forms, is an intolerable burden not only on national health systems but on the entire cultural, social and economic fabric of nations, and is the greatest impediment to development and to the fulfilment of human potential. While the

cost of treating and dealing with the effects of malnutrition, whether in fiscal, economic or human terms is high, the cost of prevention is much less. Investing in nutrition, therefore, not only is a moral imperative, but also makes economic sense as it improves productivity and economic growth, reduces health care costs and promotes education, intellectual capacity and social development.

Several political developments have taken place to address global food and nutrition security. Initiatives and instruments aimed at improving food and nutrition security include the Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) developed by the United Nations High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) and the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) with its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN).

The Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement launched in 2010 with the support of multiple partners including governments from countries with high burden of malnutrition, UN Agencies, donors, NGOs, academia and the private sector, together with advocacy initiatives such as the 1000 days campaign, are calling for high level international attention to the need to scale up nutrition programmes.

UN collaboration such as REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) and the UNSCN (United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition) are committed to strengthen governance for nutrition and to revitalize the role of nutrition at the international level.

Objective

The briefing on ICN2 is aimed to brief Bangkok based Ambassadors and Senior Embassy officials of FAO member countries as well as media representatives and partner organizations on the details of the ICN2 (which will be held on 19-21 November 2014 in Rome, Italy) and raise the awareness about the importance of the meeting towards food and nutrition security. (attached are the details of the ICN2 for your information)

Date and Place

This briefing will be held on 29 October 2014, at the conference hall of FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Participants

The members of diplomatic corps, development partners, and media representatives are be invited to the morning event.