



Nutrition News - December 2018

In an effort to present nutrition related news at the global and country level, UNSCN and the UNN Secretariats are teaming up to produce a comprehensive overview of recent developments supported and/or coordinated by the UN system.

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Season's greetings! *It has been a challenging year to all those working on eliminating malnutrition in all its forms. Modest progress was made to reduce overall stunting rates but the numbers of those overweight and obese is still on the rise. To build the support base needed to turn the tide, much greater efforts are being catalyzed across all sectors, with all stakeholders, across all disciplines. This integrated approach is creating stronger linkages between global, regional & local level actions and enables us, as part of the UN family, to be better equipped to respond to country needs. To all of members, partners, and readers, we thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to working with you in the New Year.*

UNSCN/UNN holds joint meeting with members to plot the way forward

In November 2018, members of the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the UN Network (UNN) met in Rome, Italy for a joint face-to-face meeting as part of the greater effort to have the UNSCN and UNN Secretariats working more closely together. Amir Abdulla, WFP Deputy Executive Director, set the stage for important discussions by reminding the participants of the need for increased effectiveness and efficiency, especially in the light of the UN Reform. Cornelia Richter, UNSCN Chair and Vice President of IFAD, chaired the two-day discussion, successfully leading the group through on-going and planned activities.

As part of a knowledge sharing session, FAO and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) made presentations to help increase the understanding of food systems. FAO highlighted the rapidly transforming nature of food systems as a result of economic growth, urbanization, globalization, technology, and in some places, political uncertainty; and how food system impacts the enabling environment and vice versa. Working to support countries to develop strategies, policies and regulatory frameworks that promote efficient and inclusive food systems is one concrete action that FAO is taking to help. UN Environment complemented this work by presenting the efforts of the [10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme](#) to ensure

that food systems are also sustainable; and the recent development of the UNEP-led *Transformative Sustainable Food Systems Framework*.

Strategic thinking focused as well on the need for the UN to provide timely and strategic input into upcoming nutrition events, as well on how to leverage additional support for the [UN Decade of Action on Nutrition](#). During the meeting, preliminary findings from 2017 UNN Annual Report were presented highlighting how the UNN is changing mindsets and behaviour in terms of fostering increased knowledge-sharing (including data) across UN agencies and sectors. UNN makes use of the [UNSCN Guidance Note on Integrating Nutrition in the UNDAFs](#), making them more nutrition-sensitive and catalyzing increased UN Joint Programming on nutrition. The emerging findings of the on-going SUN Movement mid-term review were also discussed.

UNICEF's Food Systems for Children Consultation

In many parts of the world, most children are not fed the diets they need – in quantity, frequency and quality – to survive, grow, and develop to their full potential. In parallel, processed, less nutritious foods are skillfully marketed and widely attainable and affordable, while nutritious, fresher foods are more expensive and unaffordable to many. The issue of poor quality diets not only cuts across age groups from infancy through the school-age years and adolescence, but also across regions and countries with consequences for underweight and overweight as well as non-communicable diseases.

To this end, UNICEF and GAIN co-hosted a global consultation on [Food Systems for Children and Adolescents](#) in partnership with the Government of the Netherlands, at the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti on 5-7 November 2018. The consultation brought together 60 participants from government, development partners, business and academia from low-, middle- and high-income settings. It aimed to develop a common narrative on food systems and safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable diets for children and adolescents; validate a common approach to elucidate priority actions within the food system to improve the diets of children and adolescents; and develop an action plan using a food systems approach. The consultation also reviewed the state of children's diets, and explored how challenges can be overcome in food supply chains, external and personal food environments, and food provider behaviors. During the consultation, participants validated a Framework on Food Systems for Children and Adolescents, aiming to support efforts to advocate for and identify opportunities to align food systems to meet children's dietary needs. A summary report and meeting presentations will be available [online](#) by 30 December 2018. Additional dissemination of findings, such as through the peer-reviewed literature, is planned for 2019.

Bangkok event to fast-track efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition

The IFPRI-FAO event [Accelerating the end of hunger and malnutrition](#) took place from 28–30 November 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Members were actively involved as panellists during plenary sessions and side events, covering themes including overweight, urbanisation, investment and good governance.

The UNSCN and the [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) capitalized on the Bangkok event to provide the latest updates about the development of *CFS Voluntary Guidelines (VGs)*

on *Food Systems and Nutrition* and to solicit ideas to take the work forward. At their joint [side event](#), Liliane Ortega, Alternate Permanent Representative of Switzerland to FAO, IFAD and WFP, and Chair of the CFS Open Ended Working Group on Nutrition explained that “the development of the *CFS Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition* is an opportunity to promote healthy diets through addressing challenges in the food environment, food production and consumer behaviour at the same time”. In response, participants called for a contextualization of recommendations at local level, challenging the CFS to make global guidelines relevant at local level. The right to adequate food and nutrition was also raised, as well as the need to ensure that the guidelines are founded in a solid appreciation of the specific needs of marginalized groups. While recommendations were shared on how best to shape sustainable food systems for healthy diets, attention must also be given to the fact that the VGs are being developed as the world continues to face increasing and unpredictable climate changes and the impact that increasing population growth has on food production and the environment. The sense of urgency was echoed during the launch of the 2018 Global Nutrition Report [Shining a Light to Spur Action on Nutrition](#) - see Publications section for further information.

To better guide country efforts to scale-up nutrition, the Knowledge for Implementation and Impact Initiative (KI3) organized a [side event](#) to share practical ways to broker knowledge and enhance uptake of implementation knowledge. The UNN Secretariat teamed up with colleagues from IFPRI and the Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN) to facilitate round table discussions, including on national implementation knowledge networks and the tools/measures that can be drawn upon to create and improve them. Among other outcomes, the event highlighted that greater attention is needed to develop capacity to coordinate and curate nutrition knowledge at all levels, including in SUN countries. Participants also gained practical insights about how to leverage existing knowledge to avoid duplication and achieve greater impact.

Learn more about the highlights from the conference on the event website, including [videos](#) of all plenary and parallel sessions and [presentations](#).

UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025

Country commitments to the Nutrition Decade are included in an [online repository](#) and being tracked on a regular basis by country self-assessments. We welcome you to follow progress from [Brazil](#), [Ecuador](#) and [Italy](#). Additional countries are currently developing their commitments with guidance from the recently released FAO/WHO resource guide [Strengthening Nutrition Action](#).

On 8 November 2018, the Ministry of Health of Brazil announced the launch of two new Action Networks in the Region of the Americas, in partnerships with the Ministries of Health of other countries, under the umbrella of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition: the Action Network on Strategies for Reducing Salt Consumption for the Prevention and Control of Cardiovascular Disease and the Action Network on Food Guidelines. The first Action Network has the goal to work towards meeting the World Health Assembly global targets from reducing risk factors for NCDs while the second Action Network aims to support countries in the development, implementation, monitoring and assessment of guidelines that deal with the level of food

processing. (More information available [here](#).) Meanwhile, an Action Network on nutrition labelling is being established, led by France and Australia, with the purpose to accelerate action, share technical expertise among countries in implementing nutrition labelling and review and generate more evidence on the effectiveness and limitations of different front-of-pack labelling systems.



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Nutrition Capacity Assessment helping Chad achieve focus to better combat malnutrition

According to the [2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) (SOFI) report, child stunting in Chad (39.9%) is approaching critical levels and the exclusive breastfeeding rate has fallen to a dismal 0.1%. A [nutrition capacity assessment](#) was undertaken to identify capacity development needs and thus help the country tackle its current nutrition challenges. The assessment focused on Chad's nutrition coordination mechanisms, particularly the Permanent Technical Food and Nutrition Committee (*Comité Technique Permanent de Nutrition et d'Alimentation* or CTPNA) and food and nutrition committees in five regions –Guéra; Logone Occidental; Ouaddaï; Tandjilé; and Wadi Fari. It examined four strategic areas regarding their capacity to plan, manage and coordinate nutrition actions. The REACH Facilitator played an integral role, advocating for and orchestrating the study as part of ongoing UNN-REACH

efforts to strengthen nutrition governance.

Overall, the study found that the country has taken strides to create a solid foundation for mobilising a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition from articulating nutrition governance frameworks and a coordination architecture to mustering political commitment. It also indicated that the functionality of the relatively new committees tasked with coordinating nutrition actions at the regional level is variable. Likewise, the extent to which nutrition has been institutionalized within relevant sectors. The assessment culminated in nine recommendations and the development of a 5-year nutrition capacity development plan. Country actors are working to operationalize that plan in order to translate governance milestones into positive nutrition outcomes. This includes efforts to formalize the *modus operandi* of CTPNA and define a strategic vision for the CRNAs. A Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping was launched on 10th December 2018, thanks to UNN-REACH support and generous EU funding, to ascertain the coverage levels of core nutrition actions. Not only will this inform decision-making, it will also further strengthen government capacity to coordinate nutrition actions across diverse stakeholders and sectors in pursuit of common nutrition goals. [LEARN MORE](#).

Second wave of multi-stakeholder nutrition mapping launched in Niger

In response to country demand, the UN Network is currently working with the Office of the High Commissioner for the 3N Initiative *Nigériens Nourish Nigériens* (HC3N) and ten ministries (e.g. Agriculture and Livestock; Public Health; Environment, Urban Safety and Sustainable Development; Water and Sanitation; Child and Women's Social Protection) to carry out a nutrition action mapping exercise. Country actors looked to the UN Network, recognizing the value of its tool in visualizing the nutrition landscape – the diverse stakeholders, intervention coverage as well as opportunities for increasing synergies and complementarities between these singular efforts. This marks the second round of mapping in the country and is being funded by FAO's FIRST initiative. The [results](#) from the initial mapping, supported by UNN-REACH, informed both the formulation of the National Policy on Nutrition Security (2017-2025) and its action plan (2017-2019), helping to capture the multi-sectorality of nutrition.

As part of the current mapping exercise, a national team was trained on the new web-based version of the UNN mapping tool, which is more conducive to monitoring progress over time. The recent training was also an occasion to adapt the tool to the Nigerien context. Officially launched to a wide group of stakeholders on 7 December 2018, where the methodology was presented, the mapping will largely focus on sub-national activity. It will generate data on geographic coverage at the municipal level and population coverage at the regional level. During the workshop, stakeholders agreed to map 26 nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions. Two of these actions target adolescent girls in an effort to give greater attention to this important target group and one action addresses overweight and obesity to help contend with growing concerns about the double burden. Similar exercises are underway in Chad, Lesotho, Sierra Leone and the Sudan, with support from the UNN Secretariat, while others are planned for 2019.

Sierra Leone-Liberia study visit

The newly appointed SUN Focal Point in Liberia travelled to Freetown in late November to obtain insights about the Sierra Leone experience and exchange good practices. During her visit, she met with colleagues at the country's SUN Secretariat as well as the REACH facilitator to learn about how multi-sectoral nutrition activity is being coordinated in the country and how nutrition has been politicized through effective advocacy that targeted parliamentarians. Other agenda items included the role and relationship between the REACH facilitator and Sierra Leone's SUN Secretariat in view of the recent launch of REACH in Liberia.

Publications

- [Call for Contributions](#): The 44th edition of UNSCN Nutrition will focus on food environments to enable healthy and nutritious diets. Submit your contributions for consideration by **10 January 2019**.
 - [Asia and the Pacific: Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition](#) is part of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition* series. Jointly developed by FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO through the Asian Regional UN Network, the report highlights key trends, noting that more than half of the world's malnourished children live in the region, which is also home to the fastest growing prevalence of childhood obesity in the world.
 - [Global nutrition policy review 2016-2017: Country progress in creating enabling policy environments for promoting healthy diets and nutrition](#) is the report of the second comprehensive analysis of nutrition-related policy environment, coordination mechanisms, available capacities and actions being taken in the WHO Member States.
 - UNICEF supported a supplement of the international journal *Maternal and Child Nutrition*, entitled [Higher Heights. A Greater Ambition for Maternal and Child Nutrition in South Asia](#).
 - [Nutrition-sensitive value chains: A guide for project design](#) brings together a series of original articles that examine the evidence on the trends, drivers and inequalities of stunting, wasting, anemia and poor child feeding in South Asia; and the pathways to improving the growth and development of children and women in the region.
 - UNN and former SUN Government Focal Point co-author an article on [Mapping Nutrition Interventions, a Key Analytical Tool for Informing the Multisectoral Planning Process: Example from Burkina Faso](#) recently published in the *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*.
 - [2018 SUN Movement Progress Report](#) takes a regional approach, highlighting progress towards the Movement's strategic objectives in the 60 SUN countries.
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The 2018 Global Nutrition Report (GNR) conveys the sense of urgency to help nutrition indicators get back on track. It propose five areas of action to avoid a reversal of gains: 1) break down silos between malnutrition in all its forms; 2) prioritize and invest in the data needed and capacity to use it; 3) scale up financing for nutrition – diversify and innovate to build on past progress; 4) galvanize action on healthy diets – engage across countries to address this universal problem; and 5) make and deliver better commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms – an ambitious,

transformative approach will be required to meet global nutrition targets. Access this edition [here](#).

Upcoming nutrition related events

- 18 December: International Migrants Day
 - 28-29 January: The [SUN Executive Committee](#) meeting, Switzerland
 - 5-7 February: [2nd Global Conference on the One Planet: Sustainable Food Systems Programme](#), Costa Rica
 - 27 February - 1 March: [4th International Congress Hidden Hunger](#), Germany
 - 11-15 March: [4th session of the UN Environment Assembly](#), Kenya
 - 11-22 March: The [63th session of the Committee Status of Women](#), UN HQ, New York
 - 20-21 March: [Global Food Security Symposium](#), United States of America
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