

UN NUTRITION

Terms of Reference

Preamble

1. The burden of malnutrition in the world remains inadmissibly high. While there has been progress, it has been inconsistent and slow. The world is off course to meet the nutrition targets it has set for itself and, at the current pace, we will not be able to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. An acceleration of progress is needed to accomplish the vision of the Agenda 2030 of leaving no one behind because of hunger and malnutrition.
2. The momentum for nutrition action is building globally. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, established in 2010, has been pivotal in galvanizing multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral action for nutrition, while the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) is playing a crucial role in coordinating the nutrition response in humanitarian crises. The Rome Declaration on Nutrition adopted at the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development provide global and national stimulus to address malnutrition and speed up progress.
3. Moving forward, the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo in 2020 and the Food Systems Summit in 2021 provide new opportunities to reinvigorate nutrition commitments, while capitalizing on the progress made thus far. Recommendation 7 of the Framework for Action, adopted by the Second International Conference on Nutrition in November 2014, specifically calls for strengthened nutrition governance and coordinated policies, strategies and programmes of United Nations system agencies, programmes and funds within their respective mandates¹.
4. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) have been specifically tasked by the UN Member States to lead on nutrition. Through their individual mandates, these agencies contribute to the global nutrition agenda and provide tailored support to respond to country needs and address the determinants of malnutrition. These agencies have extensive specialized expertise in nutrition policy, planning, programme implementation, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation.

¹ Framework for Action, Second International Conference on Nutrition, Rome, 19-21 November 2014.

5. With the UN System’s combined comparative advantage, being “fit for purpose” and the capacity of agencies to respond as one system is critical. Governments and other stakeholders rely on a coordinated UN support that speaks as one voice and moves in tandem with government partners.
6. In line with the ambitions set out by the UN Reform, the above mentioned five UN Agencies have harnessed the positive experiences of the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)² and the United Nations Network for SUN (UNN) and are establishing “UN Nutrition” in order to converge global and country perspectives. UN Nutrition supersedes the UNSCN and the UNN. Current UNSCN and UNN commitments and obligations will be absorbed by UN Nutrition.
7. To achieve its goals and objectives, UN Nutrition will be supported by a designated service structure, the “UN Nutrition Secretariat”. The UN Nutrition Secretariat supersedes both the UNSCN Secretariat and the UNN/REACH Secretariat.

Purpose

8. UN Nutrition is an interagency coordination mechanism for nutrition at global level and a collaboration platform at country level, which brings together UN agencies to accelerate progress for nutrition objectives and targets at all levels. Through UN Nutrition, UN Agencies are committed to increasing their agility, effectiveness and efficiency as nutrition leaders.
9. UN Nutrition aims to overcome fragmentation, increase harmonization on nutrition and provide coordinated and aligned support to governments for greater impact for children, women and people everywhere. It provides a forum through which UN agencies, programmes and funds leverage their collective strengths, build synergies, increase efficiencies and complementarities, and ultimately support governments and partners to deliver results on nutrition.
10. UN Nutrition ensures that nutrition actions and efforts are well coordinated from the global to the country level. UN Nutrition responds to the need to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of nutrition action at the country level in support of national priorities and needs, the need for policy coherence for nutrition, while representing UN agencies, programmes and funds at the global level on both policy and operational issues. UN Nutrition also takes into account the issues, concerns, and lessons learned from country action and helps to feed them back for further policy development at the global level.
11. UN Nutrition is a dedicated platform for open, substantive, forward-looking and constructive dialogue amongst UN agencies on their respective strategies and efforts related to nutrition, as well as for the formulation of aligned and joint global

² ECOSOC, *Institutional arrangements relating to nutrition*, 63rd session, E/5968, 26 April 1977

approaches, positions and actions to address the complex and many facets of the evolving nutrition challenges. It provides thought leadership on nutrition priorities, agendas and goals for the future.

Scope

12. UN Nutrition is universal in its coverage and relevant to all countries.
13. It stretches from global to country level action, enhancing collaboration, planning and priority setting on nutrition by UN agencies, while maintaining a light footprint.

Governance, Membership, and Partnership

14. UN Nutrition is connected to the Office of the UN Secretary General.
15. It is governed by a Steering Committee made up of the five agencies tasked by the UN Secretary General to be the lead on nutrition (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO). Members of the Steering Committee are the nutrition leads from the above-mentioned agencies.
16. Membership is also open to other UN entities aiming to mainstream nutrition to enhance their mandates. Each member agency at the global level must contribute resources to support the activities of UN Nutrition and its Secretariat³. Members must contribute to be a voting member. Non-contributing members will have observer status only.
17. The Steering Committee elects a Chair at least at the level of Assistant Principal. The Chair is appointed by agreement of the five agencies for a term of two years that is renewable once.
18. In the context of the UN Reform, the set-up and functioning of UN Nutrition at the country level will be in line with the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and in support of the strengthened role of the Resident Coordinator. The set-up and functions of UN Nutrition at the country level will be further articulated.
19. UN Nutrition is supported by a Secretariat born out of the merger of the UNSCN and UNN Secretariats. The structure of the UN Nutrition Secretariat, agile and light, will be outlined at a later stage; its workplan will be guided by the Steering Committee. The location of the Secretariat will be decided based on a cost-effectiveness analysis.
20. UN Nutrition, by partnering with several nutrition stakeholders, including among others, the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC), the Committee on World Food Security

³ Levels of contributions will be agreed upon at a later stage.

(CFS), international organizations and scientific professional unions, will move the nutrition agenda forward, both in development and humanitarian contexts.

21. UN Nutrition, like its predecessor the UNN, is a key member of the SUN Movement and serves as the UN support network to the SUN Movement.

UN Nutrition's Functions

22. The functions of UN Nutrition will include the following:

- a) Aligned advocacy and policy coherence for nutrition
 - i. Adopting coherent and unified advocacy and policy actions and messaging, engaging with key stakeholders, without conflict of interest, and speaking with one voice.
 - ii. Enabling the formulation of joint global approaches, and the alignment of policies, strategies and guidance in response to country need and requests.
- b) Identify and coordinate strategic issues around nutrition through
 - i. Ensuring UN alignment behind the SDGs, ICN2 Framework and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and behind national plans and priorities.
 - ii. Leveraging partner UN agencies' expertise to broker coordinated technical assistance to governments and appropriate in-country stakeholders.
- c) Emerging issues, knowledge-management and innovation
 - i. Promoting and supporting knowledge sharing across the UN and beyond
 - ii. Identifying, tracking and addressing emerging issues on nutrition.
- d) Translate global level guidance into country-level actions, guidelines and impact
 - i. Disseminating relevant global guidance developed by UN agencies as well as relevant knowledge and technologies across stakeholders at country level
 - ii. Working with Resident Coordinators in a coordinated, proactive and relevant manner to elevate and integrate nutrition into national agendas and plans.

Functions of the UN Nutrition's Secretariat (to be further articulated)

23. UN Nutrition work plan is implemented with the support of the Secretariat and its members.

Accountability

24. UN Nutrition members are mutually accountable and are accountable to Member States via ECOSOC through the UN Nutrition Chair.