

# Standing Committee on Nutrition

## Report of the Standing Committee on Nutrition at its Thirty-Third Session

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### A. Introduction

1. SCN Chair Ms Catherine Bertini welcomed participants to the 33<sup>rd</sup> SCN Session and to the Symposium on *Tackling the double burden of malnutrition: a global agenda*, hosted by the World Health Organization. In her opening remarks Ms Bertini noted that it might seem strange to be discussing the double burden of malnutrition at a time when the people in the Horn of Africa are facing one of the worst famines ever. However, in fact all too often the idea that food and nutrition programmes are important in emergency and famine relief, becomes one of the principal barriers to getting investment in food and nutrition programmes in non-emergency situations. The case studies carried out for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session in Brazil, showed that

governments often consider food and nutrition programmes as areas for humanitarian action, but not for development investment. The SCN was committed to helping strengthen national food and nutrition programmes as a way of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and realizes that to do that requires the development of a common understanding about what hunger and malnutrition are and what actions need to be put in place in the short, medium and long term to tackle the double burden of malnutrition, i.e. both under and overnutrition. Increasingly countries are having to face both, and having two agendas, one for undernutrition and another for overnutrition, does not help to create a common understanding of what needs to be done. By the end of the Session, it was hoped that a Participants' Statement would be agreed by the participants that lays out what actions are needed.

## **B. Symposium on *Tackling the double burden of malnutrition: a global agenda***

2. The Symposium was well attended with over 300 participants reflecting the SCN's tripartite constituency: registered participants included bilateral partners, and NGO/Civil Society members, in addition to representatives of 12 UN agencies. Dr Jong-wook Lee, Director-General, World Health Organization welcomed participants to Geneva and confirmed that WHO considers nutrition a core component of its work. Dr Lee referred to his visit the previous week to three African countries and the immediate realities of the field, he urged participants to keep a strong sense of reality, to rise above the boundaries that normally separate participants' work, and to look to the greater good of clear common interest. Catherine Le Gales-Camus, Assistant Director-General Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, World Health Organization, made a presentation on *Nutrition—an input and foundation for health*, and showed how for WHO it was essential to have one agenda for dealing with overnutrition and undernutrition, Ms Le Gales-Camus confirmed that WHO was fully engaged on the issue of the double burden of malnutrition and was prepared to work with others in a coordinated fashion to advance the agenda, to speak with one voice. Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice President Human Development Network, World Bank, made a presentation on *Nutrition—a new opportunity in development*, where he argued that improving nutrition can add 2-3% to the GDP in poor countries and drive their economic growth and that nutrition has long been a pioneer in aid effectiveness principles. Only too often however there is a lack of consensus among on how to best address malnutrition. A lack of consensus among nutrition experts often gives policy makers the wrong impression about the importance of nutrition. Thus, it is essential to bridge the gap between nutrition and development policy. A coherent, simple, agreed-upon policy message must be developed which prioritizes nutrition and can help mobilize resources for scaling-up when feasible. Kul Gautam, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, made a presentation on *Implementing the life cycle approach to nutrition to support the Millennium Development Goals*, where he affirmed that implementing a life-cycle approach to improved nutrition, encompassing adolescent girls but recognizing the greatest impact of scaling up effective interventions in the pregnant women and children below 3 years of age, is one of those well-known facts of development. Applying this knowledge and turning it into action would be the best way for us to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to fulfil the SCN's vision to help create a world free from hunger and malnutrition. Mr Gautam further suggested that in the light of the new guidance coming from WHO, we should make child growth the gold standard for measuring human development, alongside the GDP per capita and the Human Development Index.

3. Dr Kathryn Dewey, Professor of Nutrition at the University of California at Davis, made a presentation on key actions at the individual and family level: prioritizing food and care for pregnant and lactating women and their infants, exclusive breastfeeding for six months; appropriate complementary feeding and care practices for infants and young children, and emphasized food group diversity and adequate physical activity throughout the life cycle. Dr Isatou Jallow, Executive Director of the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) in The Gambia presented the actions needed at the community level to ensure that food health and care are adequately articulated in order to prevent the double burden of disease in a life cycle perspective. Professor Yu Xiaodong, Director-General of the Centre for Public Nutrition and Development in China, provided a national level perspective on the double burden. China's experience with rapid economic growth and the consequent rise in obesity levels and diet-related chronic diseases provides a prime example of the nutrition problems many countries are faced with today. Professor Yu appealed to the SCN for help in providing clear recommendations on how governments should address the double burden. Professor Ricardo Uauy, President

of the International Union of Nutrition Sciences, outlined a strategy the international community should adopt in order to develop a global agenda to fight malnutrition in all its forms. He urged developing common definitions of malnutrition, identifying standards for good quality diets, and promoting physical activity. Professor Uauy concluded by reminding development organizations of their role in promoting capacity development in young professionals that will give them the skills to take on new nutrition challenges.

4. In summing up the Session, after a lively debate from the floor, Ms Bertini concluded that there was a clear consensus around a number of issues: First and perhaps most important, the speakers had mentioned how their agencies welcome the SCN Action Plan and are keen to try to help take it forward. Also, that we should all focus our actions on the poor, that the 'window of opportunity' was when growth faltered during pregnancy and the first two years of life, that micronutrient interventions through supplementation and fortification were some of the most cost effective of interventions, and that we need to build capacity at country level and advocate for carrying forward this consensus into national development plans and investment programmes.

5. Camila Corvalan, University of Chile/Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, and 2006 winner of the Abraham Horwitz Lecture competition, presented a memorable 10<sup>th</sup> Horwitz Lecture on *Avoiding the nutrition transition trap in Latin America*. Ms Corvalan noted that countries in Latin America have the responsibility of decreasing poverty and ensuring a better standard of living for their entire populations while at the same time ensuring that such economic development does not lead to an epidemic of obesity and obesity-related diseases. Latin America can avoid the nutrition transition trap, however, valuable time has been lost, and in order to effectively avoid the trap, the problem must be acknowledged, and action must urgently be taken. This included the need for national policies to face both overnutrition and undernutrition, i.e. the need for agreement on one agenda for tackling the double burden of malnutrition.

### **C. Working Group meetings: summary reports, including work plans and key recommendations for action**

6. All nine working groups met during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, with four Working Groups holding pre-Session meetings on the Sunday in addition to the shorter regular meeting during the Session. The Chair and the Secretariat met twice with the Working Group Chairs, once on the Sunday afternoon and again on Thursday afternoon. On Sunday the discussions focussed on how the Working Groups are run, what their objectives are and how to further improve the Secretariat's support to the Working Groups. The Thursday session was to hear the results of the Working Group meetings and a summary of their work plans. The Working Group Chairs largely welcomed the Sunday meetings of the Working Groups since it allowed much more in depth discussion, and all wanted this to be repeated again next year, even making it Saturday and Sunday. Two main conclusions emerged from these discussions: the issue of overlap across Working Groups suggests many possible benefits of Groups seeking to develop joint activities: The issue of *capacity building* as a cross cutting theme provides the greatest area of overlap and some special Working Group initiative was called for in order to channel and link this potential into the efforts to develop the SCN Action Plan. Full reports of each Working Group meeting, with work plans for the year to come can be found on the SCN website [http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/AnnualMeeting/working\\_groups.htm](http://www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/AnnualMeeting/working_groups.htm)

#### **C.1 WORKING GROUP ON BREASTFEEDING AND COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING**

7. The Working Group chaired by David Clark (UNICEF), Isatou Jallow (The Gambia) and Kay Dewey (University of California, Davis) met on Sunday and Tuesday, and the Sunday Session morning meeting was held jointly with the Working Group on Nutrition in Emergencies. The joint session looked at preventing and controlling micronutrient deficiencies in populations affected by an emergency, infant feeding in emergencies (including HIV/AIDS) and the Innocenti + 15 meeting recently held in Florence. A review of the 2005 work plan revealed that implementation had been disappointing, and that this was due to the non-specific nature of the recommendations of last year's Working Group, which was in turn a result of the lack of time available to the Group (only two hours). One of the recommendations that had been fulfilled was the creation of a task force on human rights and IYCF, and the work plan of the task force was reviewed. WHO described plans to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes at the World Health Assembly in May. Kay Dewey made a presentation on the case for the link between breastfeeding and

child obesity. Deliberations continued on Tuesday 14 March, with Ellen Piwoz making a presentation on *The very important contribution of breastmilk to energy and other nutrient requirements beyond six months of exclusive breastfeeding*. The remaining time was devoted to the identification of priorities and agreement of the work plan for 2006/2007, which was agreed as follows: 1) to improve communication among members of the Working Group through: Creation of a list of members of the Working Group; establishment of a list serve for the Working Group; utilization of space on the SCN website. 2) to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes through a series of activities. 3) to seek SCN endorsement of the 2005 Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding. 4) to support rolling-out of the new WHO Growth Standards, 5) to encourage the revitalization of BFHI and extension into the community, 6) to establish a taskforce on HIV and Infant Feeding chaired by Ted Greiner (PATH), 7) to establish a taskforce on complementary feeding chaired by Kay Dewey. Work plans for these Task Forces will be submitted to the Working Group and shared with Steering Committee by 30 June 2006.

#### C.2 WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

8. The Working Group chaired by Francisco Espejo (WFP), Lesley Drake (Partnership for Child Development, UK) and Karin Lapping (Save the Children, US) met on Sunday and Thursday. The Working Group aims to revitalize the current membership and establish a wide group of collaborators that will share information and best practices to influence policy making and programme design. The vision of the Group is the promotion of equitable child development through improving the health, nutrition and education of school age children. The Group established three objectives together with the activities needed to achieve them. The first objective is to advance the state of the art in School Health and Nutrition (SHN) SHN policy and programming. To achieve this, the Group will: 1) review the Existing Evidence Base (EEB) of science and case studies, 2) identify gaps and ways to address them (i.e. nutritional benefit, assessment, guidelines, protocols, costs etc.) 3) facilitate access of EEB to stakeholders. The second objective is to develop a coordinating mechanism to promote and support a multi-sectoral, multi-partner approach addressing the health and nutrition needs of School-Aged Children (SAC). The Group will 1) organize a satellite SAC WG meeting to identify needs, audience, generate information to feed the coordinating mechanism with data and best practices in order to promote exchange and collaboration. 2) develop a web based coordinating mechanism for SCN SAC information management, coordination and support. The third objective is to advocate for schools to become effective venues for health and nutrition interventions to enhance SAC and their communities. The activities envisaged include: 1) SAC Working Group gains consensus on framework and harmonization of communication language; 2) develop advocacy messages from SAC Working Group. The Group has established a core membership of 30 active members.

#### C.3 WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

9. The Working Group chaired by Andrew Tomkins (ICH, UK), Bruce Cogill (USAID/FANTA), Randa Saadeh (WHO), and Stuart Gillespie (RENEWAL) met on Tuesday. Ongoing work was reviewed and future activities presented for discussion. The work plan includes the continued use of the SCN webpage (which was demonstrated on line): to provide a data base of key peer reviewed papers on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS on the SCN webpage; to further develop a database on the SCN webpage of key resources for knowledge, guidelines and policies—e.g. FANTA, RENEWAL, UN Agencies, NGOS, other websites/Email lists; to develop and maintain a database of current research projects; to provide notification of meetings plus reports of meetings. The Working Group also plans to develop a special edition of *SCN News*—on Nutrition/Food Security and HIV/AIDS, which would attempt to ensure that Working Group knowledge is readily available for those responsible for resource mobilization activities and programmes, to identify knowledge gaps and priority research gaps to facilitate funders' recognition of the need. The Working Group also plans to: support the formation of National SCN Working Groups on HIV/AIDS; link with Working Group on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding who are doing work with a focus on HIV/AIDS; draw attention to need for new knowledge—e.g. better markers of nutritional assessment in HIV/AIDS and impact of HIV/AIDS on adolescent nutrition; contribute to review of the nutritional guidelines within HIV/AIDS protocols—e.g. on WHO/UNAIDS websites.

#### C.4 WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION IN EMERGENCIES

10. The Working Group chaired by Fathia Abdallah (UNHCR), Caroline Wilkinson (ACF), and Caroline Abl (USAID), met on Sunday and Tuesday. The Sunday morning meeting was held jointly with the Working

Group on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding. The joint morning session focussed on micronutrients, child development, Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IFE) & Innocenti + 15 meeting. The afternoon session covered assessments and integrating nutrition and food security responses in emergencies. The Tuesday meeting included a summary of the Sunday proceedings and a review of the work plan and proposal for 2006. Reports were provided on the WHO/UNICEF/SCN informal consultation on community based management of severe malnutrition in children; the IASC nutrition cluster concept and practice; the humanitarian tracking service proposal; a case study on the double burden of disease, as well as election of candidates for the Chair. The proposal for the work plan focussed on the development of specific mechanism of collaboration between IASC Nutrition Cluster and the Working Group on Nutrition in Emergencies. For IFE this would be in the area of policy and capacity building; on the issue of assessments, the wealth of ongoing work was reviewed and the agreement to work towards a common core assessment as a basis for joint programming was emphasized. All participants expressed a need for more time to systematically review the work plan, to cover a wider range of topics, and to better define the role of the members of the Working Group. The proposal was made to hold a separate three day interagency annual meeting to be held mid way between SCN meetings, to be organized by a steering committee of the Working Group on Nutrition in Emergencies—perhaps with ENN as a permanent member. The purpose of the meeting would be to review evidence based achievements of theme groups; look at identification and prioritization of themes/gaps/emerging topics; review of the Group's achievements to date, explore networking opportunities. UNHCR may be able to host the first of this kind of meeting in 2006.

#### C.5 WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION THROUGHOUT THE LIFE CYCLE JOINT SESSION WITH WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION, ETHICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

11. The Working Group on Nutrition Throughout the Life Cycle, chaired by Ricardo Uauy (INFA and LSHTM) and Ted Greiner (PATH) together the Working Group Nutrition Ethics and Human chaired by Wenche Barth Eide (IPRFD) and Uwe Kracht (WANAHR [who was unable to be present]) held a joint three hour meeting on Wednesday morning. The dual nature of the meeting including both the biosocial aspects as well as the human rights dimension of malnutrition through the life course was explained by both chairs. The programme included a discussion of a proposal for defining *malnutrition in all its forms*. After much discussion the joint Group endorsed the concept of developing definitions that met the twin objectives of being effective in communications to the public as well as to policy makers, while at the same time being supportive of a common implementation strategy. The second topic covered malnutrition as a key component in child survival, with the following presentations: The development of a *Lancet* series on Nutrition, with five papers being prepared by a consortium of authors after the inaugural meeting was held the week previously at Johns Hopkins University; WHO reported on the technical consensus being achieved on the complementarity of the community and hospital based management of severe malnutrition, and how a report of the SCN/WHO/UNICEF October 2005 consultation on this topic will be released shortly; IUNS reported on progress of the International Malnutrition Task Force, grounded on a network of regional centers that includes ICDDRDB for Asia, University of the Western Cape for Southern Africa, University of San Andres Bolivia for South America. The Minister of Health of Bolivia described the *Zero Malnutrition Initiative*, based on the recognition of the ethical and moral obligation of the Government in response to the malnutrition problem in Bolivia. The third agenda topic was on the issue of advertising and marketing of energy dense nutrient poor foods to children and adolescents. A Statement entitled *The human right of children and adolescents to adequate food and to be free from obesity and related diseases* was discussed, and agreed to be presented by the Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights to the Steering Committee, to be sent as a letter to UN Secretary General's Special Representative on transnational corporations and other business enterprises (Statement attached as Annex 1)

#### C.6 WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION, ETHICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

12. The Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics, and Human Rights chaired by Wenche Barth Eide (IPRFD) and Uwe Kracht (WANAHR [absent]) met on Sunday to discuss how it would contribute to the two joint Working Group meetings to be held with Working Group on Nutrition Throughout the Life Cycle and the Working Group on Capacity Development in Food and Nutrition, as well as to develop its own work plan. The Working Group taskforce on the human rights responsibilities of the corporate food sector developed a statement on marketing practices, obesity, and the rights of children and adolescents to adequate food for the

consideration at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the SCN. The future work of the Group will continue to focus on facilitating the mainstreaming of human rights approaches into the work of the SCN in 2006/7, and will seek to meet jointly with the Working Group on Household Food Security and the Working Group on Nutrition of School-Age Children in particular, to solicit their interest in conducting joint meetings during the 34<sup>th</sup> Session. The Group also wishes to be actively involved in the process of developing the 6<sup>th</sup> *Report on the World Nutrition Situation*, particularly with those portions of the report that address human rights, rights-based approaches to food and nutrition policy, and the right to adequate food. In order to facilitate the interpretation and promotion of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food*, the Group will establish four task forces: to work with approaches to capacity development for human rights in nutrition; to continue work on the human rights responsibilities of the corporate food sector; to work on the issue of international obligations arising from the Right to Adequate Food, as discussed in Voluntary Guideline 19; and to work on the issue of indigenous peoples and the right to adequate food (Guideline 8). The task forces will develop their own detailed work programmes within the next two months and report to the Steering Committee. The Working Group aims to meet again on the Sunday before the 34<sup>th</sup> SCN Session. Proposals were also made on new Working Group chairs for the consideration of the SCN Chair and Steering Committee.

#### C.7 WORKING GROUP ON MICRONUTRIENTS

13. The Working Group on Micronutrients, chaired by Martin Bloem (WFP), Jacques Berger (France), and Gary Gleason (INF) met Wednesday afternoon. The Working Group have developed new approaches for information exchange and technical information sharing on micronutrient malnutrition. The Working Groups's electronic *Report on Recent Activities Related to Improving Vitamin and Mineral Nutrition* including information from more than 110 contributing institutions, organizations and researchers on activities and plans in more than 120 countries was available throughout the SCN Session on a new large display board. Oral presentations included: the current status and challenges related to Vitamin A supplementation; the progress of Universal Salt Iodization and Iodine Deficiency Disorders; proposed actions for zinc deficiency; and a keynote presentation entitled *Can we do better on improving iron nutrition*. Preliminary activities proposed for the next year include: holding a meeting at the 2007 annual Session of the SCN; promoting membership of the Working Group together with registration and encourage ongoing participation from those who join; identifying and beginning work on a minimum of two and a maximum of four substantial policy/strategy papers with progress reports to be given before the next annual SCN meeting; to develop and initiate an active, ongoing system for relevant research, guidelines, and technical information exchange and project experience sharing; to participate in and contribute to the overall SCN advocacy and communication activities of the SCN Action Plan; to promote the incorporation of assessments of vitamins and minerals status into all relevant standard surveys (including DHS and MICS); to promote engagement with relevant current and potential producers of high quality, centrally produced fortified complementary foods to increase accessibility and affordability and acceptance of such products in developing countries; to promote development of goals for control of zinc deficiency, and inclusion of zinc assessment in national surveys (see above); to develop consensus on preventive zinc intervention strategies and promote their introduction into existing nutrition/health programs including the roll-out of zinc treatment of diarrhea; to promote consensus on WHO guidelines and WHO and UNICEF programming guidance on anemia, including the preventive supplementation of women of reproductive age and supplementation of pregnant women, as well as activities to clarify iron supplementation of children in malaria endemic areas with the objective of reducing anaemia, particularly in children between 6-24 months of age.

#### C.8 WORKING GROUP ON HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

14. The Working Group on Household Food Security, chaired by Florence Egal (FAO) and Shakuntala Thilsted (Denmark), held a meeting on Thursday morning. The meeting was divided into three parts, with two presentations/discussion followed by discussion of the work plan. The first presentation on household food security and double burden of malnutrition explored issues of the *nutrition transition* and the *paradoxical association between obesity and poverty* terminology. The following recommendations emerged from the discussions: urgent attention should be given to the role of trade and supermarkets in changing dietary practices; the positive deviance approach should be tested in fighting obesity; a public nutrition approach should take into account traditional attitudes and practices (including taboos, and perceptions of desirable body size); voluntary regulation of marketing of foods for children should be actively promoted. The second presentation on biodiversity, agriculture and health led to the suggestions from the floor that: indigenous people are key to the

cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition; it is important to look at local foods (including wild foods) but it is also essential to retrieve relevant traditional food processing techniques (e.g. steaming). A call for looking at the emerging issue of linkages between avian flu, control strategies, household food security and nutrition was made. Bruce Cogill (USAID/FANTA) agreed to act as focal point and link with relevant FAO units, and to develop a Working Group declaration for the SCN to communicate to the relevant agencies of the UN system (Statement attached as Annex 2 ). In further developing the Working Group process and work plan, candidates for the remaining NGO/CSO co-chair position were solicited with expressed preference for institutions involved in nutrition programmes and projects, with a view to obtain the appropriate blend of skills. Those participants of the session interested were invited to join the e-mail list and volunteer to co-opt relevant colleagues to join the network. The proposal for of a stock-taking and information-sharing workshop on local experiences on food security, nutrition and livelihoods was accepted. Issues for follow-up include: Consolidate Working Group Email list; set-up a Working Group webpage; organize 3-day workshop on local experiences on food security, nutrition and livelihoods as a basis for improved joint programming for achieving MDGs.

C.9 WORKING GROUP ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN FOOD AND NUTRITION *JOINT SESSION WITH*  
WORKING GROUP ON NUTRITION, ETHICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

15. The Working Group on Capacity Development in Food and Nutrition met on Wednesday. Chaired by David Sanders (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) and Cutberto Garza (formerly UNU [absent]), assisted by Patrick Stover as the new UNU Food and Nutrition Programme Coordinator. This was a joint session together with the Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights. Increasingly the capacity building efforts of the Working Group include human rights dimensions. The Working Group's focused mission, as part of the UNU Food and Nutrition Programme, remains unchanged and is expressed through three specific goals: (1) to assist developing regions enhance individual, organizational and institutional capacity in the area of food and nutrition, (2) to undertake research activities that require global efforts, and (3) to serve as the academic arm for the United Nations System in areas of food and nutrition that are best addressed in a non-regulatory, non-normative environment. Presentations were made of the work carried out over the past year by seven task forces: Mirjana Pavlovic for the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries; David Sanders for Southern Africa; Emorn Wasantwisut for Asia; Ricardo Uauy for Latin America; Azza Gohar for the Middle East; Fre Pepping for the African Nutrition Leadership Programme; Joseph Mensah-Homiah for the African Graduate Student Network. Discussion centered around several themes including the expansion of the capacity network to include additional countries; challenges in sustaining the African task force sites when key leaders are constantly recruited out of Africa into international, governmental and non-governmental agencies and when financial support of African academic institutions continues to erode; inclusion of professional societies within task force activities and the possibility of creating a capacity development page on the SCN web site to enable international organizations to identify capacity leaders as advisers.

**D. Report from the Bilateral Partners**

16. Arne Oshaug (Norway), Bilateral representative on the Steering Committee, chaired the meeting. Shakuntala Thilsted (Denmark) and Gerd Holmboe-Ottesen (Norway) were elected as rapporteurs. Several members of the Group agreed to write segments of the Bilateral Partners' report. It was also agreed who would participate in reviewing the *Participants' Statement* and the *Private Sector Engagement Policy*. Arne Oshaug (Norway), was re-elected as chair, and Jeanineke Dahl Kristensen (Denmark), and Ana Beatriz Vasconcellos (Brazil), were elected as co-chairs.

17. The Bilateral Partners Group comprised 26 participants (from 13 countries), including the honourable Minister of Health of Bolivia, Dr Nila Heredia. The group appreciated Dr Heredia's engagement and vision of *Zero Malnutrition*. It was a considerable stimulus for the group that a minister devoted time to their deliberations, and provided such a clear vision for a policy aimed at eradicating malnutrition by promoting the human right to adequate food.

18. The Bilateral Partners' welcomed the reappointment of Dr Roger Shrimpton as Secretary of the SCN, and expressed appreciation of the important contribution he had made as a the driving force for the development

of SCN as a vibrant and very lively meeting ground for those concerned with the links between food, nutrition, health and the importance these issues play in human wellbeing throughout the world.

19. The Bilateral Partners appreciated the lead role SCN Chair, Ms Catherine Bertini, has taken in revitalizing and directing the new SCN. We realize and appreciate the importance of Ms Bertini's contributions which will be a significant part of the legacy of SCN. We also are fully behind the selection process for the new Chair to replace Ms Bertini, and are satisfied with the transparency within the Steering Committee regarding this delicate and challenging task. In the future, it will be important to use the criteria for selecting a Chair as guiding principles so that when the final selection and approval mode, the SCN would have a well placed person, who would be a member of the CEB and thus able to put nutrition at the centre of the deliberations on a sustainable development for all people in all countries.

*Matters related to the UN's international development agenda*

20. The Bilateral Partners recognize the significant individual, community and national costs of the double burden of malnutrition. Diet related chronic diseases (DRCD) continue to spread throughout the world at a pace and extent that is beyond comprehension. Given this dramatic transition with increased focus on overweight and obesity, there is a danger of diverting attention away from the brutal and stark reality of poverty and undernutrition, the individual misery and lack of dignity, and furthermore how this impacts development. We agree that these problems in our society are intrinsically linked, and focus on one area should not mean that others be forgotten.

21. We are therefore glad that the term *malnutrition* addresses both obesity and undernutrition. In our Group we heard about situations in which obesity among women was common, and higher in incidence than in men, and yet at the same time undernutrition may exist within the same household.

22. Some Bilateral Partners expressed concern that a food based approach to address malnutrition was not stressed sufficiently in the Symposium. An appropriate approach to address malnutrition should at its core be food based, while fortification and supplementation should be additional strategies when necessary. Fortification has in some working groups been termed a *magic bullet* approach, and we agreed that fortification should always be based on local needs.

23. In some situations behavioural change in relation to dietary habits and food selection is needed, and while this takes place, other approaches, including supplementation and fortification should supplement food based strategies. Given the double burden of malnutrition, it is essential that all people have physical and economic access to safe foods and nutrient dense diets that can meet everybody's nutritional needs. The Group maintain that diverse food based strategies building on local and indigenous food systems are necessary strategies.

24. It is essential that food based strategies reflect the diversity of local foods and provisioning systems, and take advantage of biological diversity and sustainability. In addition, approaches should build on the sharing of information for adequate diets while working with environmental, agricultural, health, education and commercial systems to influence and reinforce positive food choices and behaviour of all groups in society, including infants and children. An important element of food based strategies is breastfeeding, and especially exclusive breastfeeding. Some felt that this was not emphasized enough in the Symposium.

25. We should be aware of the need to analyze the double burden in relation to urban and rural contexts. Food based approaches are different in the two contexts. In this context, food quality is important. A lot of high energy and low nutrient dense foods are presently overflowing markets globally. Developed countries should take more responsibility and stop dumping unhealthy foods in developing countries.

26. The Bilateral Partners consider the MDGs are important, but given the continuous increase in DRCD, underline that in discussions on the MDGs, one must not forget that they do not reflect the challenges of the increasing double burden of malnutrition. One needs to underline that nutrition is a cross-cutting issue of all MDGs. In strategies to tackle undernutrition related to the MDGs, one should take care not to create obesity. In relation to this, the Group urge relevant UN agencies to revise the recommendations for energy intake in the light of the dietary, nutrition and health challenges that are one of the strongest global forces now impacting public health negatively.

*Strategies of the different UN agencies on food, diet, nutrition and health*

27. The Bilateral Partners appreciated the Symposium presentations by WHO, World Bank and UNICEF. The Group discussed several of the UN agencies' nutrition strategies that are available on the internet. After many years of decline in the focus and funding of nutrition strategies and activities, it seems that some agencies are rediscovering nutrition, and some are also increasing their contribution to SCN, which we consider most positive. We fully agree with the World Bank that nutrition as an investment gives one of the highest rates of return. Nutrition is a cross cutting issue, with more than enough room for activities by FAO, IFAD, IAEA, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNU, WFP, WHO and other relevant organizations, as reflected in their nutrition policies. Each has its mandate which guides the expansion of its programmatic profile, and provide a solid basis for collaboration between organizations, which is so vital for a positive outcome of improved nutrition, reduced misery and poverty reduction. This is particularly important at country level, where only some agencies are operating.

28. In this context the Group discussed the reorganization and changes in FAO. The first mandate in FAO's founding document is addressing nutrition challenges. We see now a shift towards food safety and consumer protection and away from nutrition issues. We appreciate the importance of these issues, but would like to remind FAO that in its reorganization, the focus on nutrition should be safeguarded. FAO, together with WHO has the responsibility to follow-up on the decisions of the ICN of 1992. A reference to this important conference was given at the World Food Summit in 1996 and reiterated in the WFS:*fjl* in 2002. They have thus been taken into consideration when deciding on the MDGs, although not to the extent that the Bilateral Partners would have liked. The ICN, the WFS, WFS:*fjl* and the Millennium Summit provide the basis for urging all relevant UN agencies to enforce the work on nutrition and not weaken it in their future work. We have noted with regret that PAHO has absorbed its nutrition section. They should consider ensuring that nutrition get higher priority, especially given the interest in nutrition by member states such as Bolivia and Brazil.

29. The Group welcome the decision that the IAEA will use the Nobel Peace Prize award to support nutrition efforts in member countries.

30. The Group consider it important that international trade and industry should not negatively impact national food control systems, such that public health is endangered. Some countries would like that SCN raise the issue of control of market strategies of food products, especially targeting children and adolescence within a human rights approach.

31. Overall the agencies were considered as having an adequate holistic approach. However the Group still see a need for greater collaboration and dialogue between the agencies, in particular at country level. International agendas do not always reach the country level, and the country offices do not seem to have the flexibility to address the needs of the countries, if those do not already appear in the agencies' objectives.

*Matters related to the SCN*

32. The Bilateral Partners are comfortable with the procedures with respect to the selection of the new C hair, and await the final announcement with pleasure.

33. The *Strategic Framework and Action Plan* were endorsed with minor adjustments.

34. The Bilateral Partners welcomed the document on *Private Sector Engagement Policy*, but had a number of comments. The Group accept it as an interim document, but are not ready to endorse it in the present form, although we consider it well developed and improved in structure and content since the last time it was presented at the Session in Brasilia in 2005. We ask therefore to be given two months for further consideration of the text, and will provide feedback to the SCN Secretariat via the Bilateral Partners Chair, at the latest by 15 May 2006. The Group underlined that we see it as a living document, and that reports on the progress and experiences would be presented at the SCN Annual Sessions.

35. The Bilateral Partners consider the Working Groups are critically important to the SCN. It was agreed that the quality of the sessions of the Working Groups this year was even better than the previous year. It was also appreciated that the Groups did not overlap (except for one meeting). We appreciate in particular that two Groups met jointly with another (the Groups on Capacity Development in Food and Nutrition and Nutrition

Throughout the Life Cycle both met with the Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights), and that in the future the Secretariat is requested to look into how the Working Group on Capacity Development in Food and Nutrition could interact with other relevant Groups in the same way as it did with the Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights. We realized that meetings on Sundays may be important in the future to provide the opportunity for several groups to spend more time than the regular agenda allows.

36. The guidelines for the various Working Groups should include policy and programmatic issues as well as ideas of opportunities for studies or reports on common issues.

37. The Bilateral Partners look forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> Report on the World Nutrition Situation, and asks the Secretariat to share the concept note when it is ready.

## **F. Report from the Nongovernmental/Civil Society Organizations**

38. The meeting was Chaired by Flavio Luiz Schieck Valente, Brazilian Forum on Food and Nutritional Security/ABRANDH/APAN, with David Sanders, PHM, University of the Western Cape, South Africa and Elisabeth Sterken, Nutritionist, INFAC Canada/IBFAN North America as Co-Chairs.

39. Over 80 participants from various sectors of civil society, comprising of academics, large and small non-governmental organizations, and consultants, and from nearly 30 countries—Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Pakistan, Canada, USA, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, UK, France, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Germany, Finland participated in the NGO/CSO meeting. Approximately one half of the representatives were first time participants.

40. Advisory members working with the NGO/CSO representatives (Flavio, Elisabeth and David) to develop recommendations on agenda items were: Catherine Geissler, King's College, London, UK; Geoffrey Cannon, World Health Policy Forum, Brazil; Harriet Kuhnlein, McGill University, Canada; Susan Siew, World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, Malaysia; Ted Greiner, PATH, USA; Adrian Diaz, Action Contra el Hambre, Argentina; George Kent, University of Hawaii, USA; Joseph Mensah-Homiah, Cornell, USA. This group met to develop positions and comment on the UN SCN Draft Plan well as other key agenda items to make recommendations for adoption by the main Group.

41. The agenda for discussion covered two broad areas: Matters related to the structure and operations of the CSNGO group and Matters related to the SCN.

### *Matters related to the structure and operations of the NGO/CSO group*

42. *NGO/CSO election of representatives to the Steering Committee* The Group has established a procedure for the election of its representatives to the SCN Steering Committee. The terms of two of our representatives expired at this Session. David Sanders and Flavio Valente have both served our Group for four years. Two new representatives were elected: Mary Materu from Tanzania and Ted Greiner from the USA. Elisabeth Sterken remains on the Steering Committee as the Chair. In addition to the elected representatives an advisory group to the committee was established: Geoffrey Cannon, Edward Frongillo, Catherine Geissler and Susan Siew.

43. *NGO/CSO Action Plan 2006-2010* The NGO/CSO group has developed a draft action plan which will be circulated among its members for discussion and adoption.

### *Matters related to the SCN*

44. *The UN SCN Action Plan 2006-2010 and Strategic Framework* The NGO/CSO advisory group met for several hours to draft its comments on the *Action Plan*. The proposed comments were discussed with the group and adopted as the NGO/CSO Group's recommendations for changes to the draft *Action Plan*. Some key recommendations were: the Group welcomes the SCN *Action Plan 2006-2010 and Strategic Framework* Final Draft for Session Adoption of 31/01/2006, acknowledges the substantial efforts that have gone into its preparation, and sees it as providing a strong basis for the future work of the SCN.

- There needs to be a glossary of abbreviations

- The document should be divided into two separate documents, one on the *SCN Action Plan 2006-2010*
- We have inserted a statement that the SCN acknowledges the special role of women as important actors engaged in nutrition-related activities, viz:
  - o Breastfeeding and provision of expressed breastmilk
  - o Household food production, processing and preparation of meals
  - o Caring and feeding of infants, young children, the sick and the elderly

45. We have added a statement on the appointment of a Vice Chair and added a section entitled Terms of Reference for the Vice-Chair.

- In the overview of the malnutrition problem, we have spelled out deeper seated causes of malnutrition—unfair trade, suffocating debt, inequitable land distribution and environmental degradation, all closely linked to a process of inequitable globalization
- We have added a description of food quality and food sustainability
- We have expanded on what is meant by human rights
- Where Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are mentioned we have added to this *as well as national development strategies*.

46. *UN SCN Private Sector Engagement Policy* The NGO/CSO Group accepted the draft policy as written. We applaud the excellent work of the Secretariat that went into putting together such a well-balanced document after so much laudable effort by all three of the SCN constituencies.

47. *UN SCN Participants' Statement* The NGO/CSO Group made a number of suggestions for changes.

48. *UN SCN Endorsement of the Innocenti Declaration 2005 on IYCF* The NGO/CSO Group unanimously endorsed the Innocenti Declaration 2005 on Infant and Young Child Feeding. The Innocenti Declaration on IYCF recognizes inappropriate feeding practices, sub-optimal or no breastfeeding and inadequate complementary feeding—as the greatest threats to child health and survival globally. Improved breastfeeding practices alone can save the lives of more than 3,500 children every day.

## **G. UN Agencies Report**

49. 12 agencies participated in most productive meetings held on Tuesday 14 and Thursday 16 March.

### *SCN Annual Report*

50. The agencies welcomed the draft SCN Secretariat Annual Report 2005/6, which was stressed was still a draft since it had not yet been approved by the Steering Committee.

### *Strategic Framework and Action Plan: implications for future functioning of Steering Committee, including three task forces*

51. The Strategic Framework/Action Plan had been further developed since its introduction in Brasilia last year as noted in the draft Annual Report, and was now approved by the agencies with the proviso that a note on membership along with a note on leadership selection procedures, be included. It was agreed that the three new task forces would now need to develop work plans detailing what they hoped to achieve during the next year. The agencies briefly discussed how the three task forces would do this, and an outline of such a workplan for each will be communicated separately.

### *Support to the ECOWAS meeting in September*

52. The agencies welcomed the invitation from the West African Health Organization (WAHO) to support them in realizing the bi-annual meeting of the nutrition focal points of ECOWAS in Cap Verde in September 2006. WAHO had invited the SCN to facilitate the technical update at the meeting on the theme 'Nutrition and Chronic Diseases'. A meeting would be held on Friday at 1330 to discuss details of how SCN would support the ECOWAS meeting.

### *Private Sector Engagement Policy*

53. The UN agencies are most grateful for the input of the Private Sector Engagement Task Force. The agencies agreed the draft private sector engagement policy document is acceptable as an interim document, and in principle, UN agencies welcome the private sector to SCN meetings.

54. Since WHO hosts the SCN Secretariat, WHO Legal Office should be asked to look at the document, particularly with a view to its consistency with WHO's policy on the receipt of funds from food-related private sector organizations to support nutrition and diet-related activities

55. A key question which remained to be answered is how does the SCN define private sector? In defining the 'private sector,' foundations which are legally separated from corporations would be acceptable to the agencies, while those with no legal governance separation would not be. This distinction is only of relevance if the firms are food-related and the policy is not to accept funds from the food industry.

56. A show of hands revealed a mixed reaction to the question of allowing food companies to participate in SCN meetings, some thought they should be allowed to participate in everything, others thought their participation should be for specific purposes only.

57. On the question of funding from the private sector, there was openness to funding from non-food companies.

58. On the question of funding from food companies, there was also openness, subject to the above review by WHO Legal Office, under specified circumstances: a) funding must be unrestricted, and not to support specific research, b) funding mechanisms must be transparent.

59. The IUNS policy of accepting unrestricted funds from all sources through an intermediary foundation, that then provides funding to the organization might be a model for the SCN. Donors could fund an *SCN Foundation* and the foundation could provide unrestricted support to SCN.

60. Membership needs to be defined in the Strategic Framework rather than in the private sector document.

61. Those in leadership positions should complete a *Potential Conflict of Interest Statement* every year (Steering Committee members and Working Group Chairs/Co-Chairs, as well as all core members of Working Groups).

62. Reference to the Private Sector Engagement Policy should be inserted into the Strategic Framework.

#### *Working Group membership*

63. It was suggested by the Secretariat that those participating in the open Working Group meeting at the Annual Session might be considered *observers* and those participating in specific meetings of the Group held for a certain purpose during the course of the year would be considered *core* members. There was no consensus among the agencies on this question.

#### *Report of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session to be sent to the CEB*

64. The Chair would ensure that a brief report with the main conclusions and products of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session be submitted to the CEB who will meet 6-7 April 2006 in Madrid.

#### *Process of transition to new Chair*

65. The Chair briefed the agencies on the process developed within the Steering Committee for identifying a new Chair for the SCN. The Steering Committee had agreed on the desirability of a sitting agency head as Chair and the current Chair had acted on that and moved matters forward. The UN agencies looked forward to welcoming Ann M. Veneman as the new SCN Chair if she accepts the invitation.

66. It was agreed that in future the search for a new Chair should be begun well in advance, that the search committee would be the Steering Committee, that the candidate should be an agency head who attends the CEB, and that rotation between agencies and north/south should be aimed for, and where possible the vice chair be from the south if the Chair were from the north, and vice versa. It was agreed that these modifications should be incorporated into the Strategic Framework.

#### *Review of Agency Nutrition Strategies and how they relate to the SCN Action Plan*

67. The World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, FAO, UNHCR, and IFAD all presented summaries of their emerging food and nutrition strategies, and where possible how these could relate to an evolving SCN work plan was discussed.

#### *Other Business*

68. FAO would prepare a draft statement for Steering Committee consideration, to be sent by the SCN to the June HABITAT Urbanization meeting emphasizing the link between the double burden of malnutrition and urbanization.
69. FAO was congratulated on having doubled its core budget contribution to \$100,000 a biennium.
70. IGPRI's application to become an SCN member was welcomed and they were encouraged to discuss the issue of contributions with the Secretariat.
71. It was agreed that the SCN should follow-up once again with UNDP and the UNDG, regarding SCN participation and collaboration in activities aimed at strengthening the UNDAF process so that UN food and nutrition activities were adequately developed through the Resident Coordinator System.
72. The IASC experience with *cluster* through country case studies is of relevance to the SCN and the IASC should be invited to share this experience at the next Session.
73. The UN agencies agree that the SCN should endorse the Innocenti + 15 meeting Declaration.
74. The agencies appreciated the fine work carried out by Dr Roger Shrimpton, SCN Secretary, and welcomed his reappointment.
75. The agencies congratulated Dr Kraissid Tontisirin on his forthcoming retirement and thanked him for his important leadership in coordination among the agencies and in nutrition world wide.

### **H. Plenary Session Discussion**

#### *Private Sector Engagement Policy*

76. While there were clear differences between the UN and the NGOs/CSOs on the question of private funding, it was agreed that it was important to have some sort of policy document which clearly states the SCN will not accept any conflict of interest funding. The SCN Chair was pleased to note that all three constituencies agreed to accept the *Draft Private Sector Engagement Policy* as an interim document pending future discussion.

#### *SCN Annual Report*

77. The plenary welcomed the *Draft Annual Report* on Secretariat activities, and looked forward to seeing the final version once it was approved by the Steering Committee.

#### *Strategic Framework, Action Plan and Work Plans*

78. The SCN Chair was pleased to note that all three constituencies had approved the *Strategic Framework* and that this document would now replace the 2000 Strategic Plan. However, it was agreed that a terms of reference for a Vice Chair which could ensure the vice chair was a sitting member of the Steering Committee, and that they would fill in for the Chair in chairing meetings when the Chair was not available, would be included.

79. The SCN Secretary reported on the key recommendations from the Working Groups, which are reported above under Item C (Paragraphs 4-13), and which would become part of the programme of work of the SCN to be reported on at the next Session.

80. The SCN *Action Plan 2006-1010* had also agreed as is by all three constituencies, and *Biennium Budget 2006-2007* had been agreed in principle, subject to fund raising, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session in Brazil. The next steps were to develop the plans of action of the three Steering Committee Task Forces, which should become the focus of reporting for the SCN Secretariat at the next Session.

81. The three Task Force Chairs outlined their intentions for developing work plans:

- *Advocacy, Communication and Partnership Building Activities*: The WHO representative Denise Coitinho explained the process being pursued to develop the Task Force work plan, including consultations carried

out with Working Group Chairs during the Session. The initial plan is to start the process with a brainstorming meeting in July and it was hoped to have developed the full Advocacy and Mobilization and Partnership Building Strategy so that it could be launched at the next Annual Session. A more detailed proposal would be presented to the Steering Committee by the end of April.

- *Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation:* Kraissid Tontisirin, the FAO representative explained how the initial efforts, being carried forward by the FIVIMS coordinator in FAO as the focal point, with the help of the Secretariat and the WFP representative Martin Bloem. A concept note would be developed for further discussion purposes among the Task Force before presenting to the Steering Committee for approval.
- *Development of Integrated Approaches:* The UNICEF representative Ian Darnton-Hill explained that this Task Force has not yet mapped out next steps, but that during the Session the roundtable discussion on mainstreaming nutrition into MCH programmes, led by Cornell University and ICDDR,B offered an excellent opportunity to jump start this effort, and the results of these efforts would be reported at the next Session.

82. The ensuing discussion of the three Task Force presentations served to emphasize the importance of the Advocacy and Communication and Partnership building activities as proposed. It was also largely agreed that the focus of all these efforts should be country oriented, and supportive of the objectives of the Action Plan. The fundamental importance of ensuring that the country level UNDAF processes were properly oriented with regard to their food and nutrition content, the essential role of UNDP and the resident coordinator system in ensuring this, and the need to work with UN Country Team food and nutrition theme group members, were once again re-iterated by many speakers from the floor. There was strong support for the idea of developing a list of all nutrition professionals, by agency and by country, so that the Task Forces could map out where we are strongest, in order to facilitate choosing which countries to concentrate initial joint efforts. There was also agreement that the next SCN Session should focus on these issues of implementation, or the 'how' of taking forward the content of the Participants Statement, which largely defines the 'what'.

#### *ECOWAS*

83. The plenary welcomed SCN involvement with ECOWAS and other organizations/interagency involvement, and looked forward to working with WAHO to facilitate the technical update Session for nutrition focal points to be held in Cap Vert in September.

#### *Innocenti Declaration*

84. The plenary agreed to support the *Innocenti 2005 Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding* which reaffirms the original *Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding* and reiterates that these actions are urgent and necessary to ensure the best start in life for our children, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and for the realization of the human rights of present and future generations. The Declaration can be found at: [www.linkagesproject.org/media/publications/innocenti2005.pdf](http://www.linkagesproject.org/media/publications/innocenti2005.pdf)

#### *Participants' Statement*

85. The Participants' Statement had been discussed during the course of the week by a small team of representatives from the three constituencies. A first draft had been discussed by each constituency and comments integrated into a final draft version which was further discussed and agreed in the plenary meeting at the closure of the Session (attached as Annex 3).

#### *Bolivia*

86. The Honourable Dr Nila Heredia, Minister of Health, Bolivia, briefly addressed the Session. Dr Heredia announced the Bolivian Government's launch of the *Zero Malnutrition* programme which would establish the necessary institutional framework to guarantee the eradication of infant and child malnutrition within five years. Dr Heredia confirmed the new Bolivian Government recognized its obligation to protect and promote the right to adequate food and good nutrition, especially for the most vulnerable, which was why the only possible target was *Zero Malnutrition*, not just a partial reduction.

87. The SCN Chair noted that in fulfillment of its *Action Plan and Strategic Framework* the SCN would support the Bolivian Government initiative, building on the work carried out in the 2004 case study and other SCN

capacity building initiatives in the region. The Bilateral Partners' Chair hoped that Bolivia would become a permanent member of the Bilateral Partners Group.

*Date and Place for next SCN Session*

88. Negotiations are well under way for hosting the 34<sup>th</sup> SCN Session in 2007. It was hoped that a final decision would be made shortly.

*SCN Leadership*

89. The SCN Chair was delighted to note the SCN's consensus regarding the proposed new SCN Chair. Ms Bertini was therefore pleased to propose Ann M. Veneman as Chair from 1 August 2006 for a two year period. UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam read a statement from Ms Veneman accepting the invitation, and reiterated that the SCN could count on Ms Veneman for leadership as well as the continuing support from UNICEF staff at all levels. Mr Gautam expressed his sincere and profound gratitude to Catherine Bertini for her energy and leadership for the SCN over the last four years in pursuit of the MDGs.

90. With the unanimous agreement of the Steering Committee, Ms Catherine Bertini was pleased to confirm that SCN Secretary Roger Shrimpton's contract had been renewed for a further period of two years from July 2006.

91. SCN Chair Catherine Bertini had received an encouraging and supportive letter from former Distinguished Nutrition Advocate Bishop Dom Mauro Morelli. The 33<sup>rd</sup> SCN Session joined her in sending their warm regards to Dom Mauro.

## **I. Closure of the Session**

92. WHO ADG Catherine Le Gales Camus also expressed her gratitude to Catherine Bertini for her leadership and continuous engagement, noting that she would be leaving the SCN in strong shape. WHO was pleased to host the SCN 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, and pleased to work with the SCN Secretariat. Dr Le Gale Camus noted that there was an excellent relationship between WHO and the SCN.

93. SCN Chair Catherine Bertini said farewell to the SCN family, she would finish her second term at the end of July 2006. Ms Bertini could catalogue many achievements, the most important of which might be the renewed positive coordination among the UN agencies.

94. SCN Chair Ms Catherine Bertini thanked WHO and in particular Dr Catherine Le Gales-Camus and Dr Denise Coitinho, for hosting the Session, and for making the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session such a memorable event. The Chair thanked all those that had helped organize the Session, and especially Jane Hedley and Andrea Moreira, in the Secretariat, for all of their support in helping to make this such a successful Annual Session. The SCN Chair then closed the meeting.

## **Joint Statement by the Working Groups on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights/Nutrition Throughout the Life Cycle on the human right of children and adolescents to adequate food and to be free from obesity and related diseases: the responsibilities of food and beverage corporations and related media and marketing industries**

Child obesity has long been a problem in many high-income countries and is becoming a major health problem in many other countries throughout the world, including in developing countries, notably in Latin America and certain parts of South-East Asia and the Pacific. The causes are several and include inadequate breastfeeding, changing dietary consumption towards high energy, low nutrient-dense food items including fat-rich snacks and drinks containing high levels of sugar or salt. Lowered physical activity levels contribute to the picture and thus the causes are certainly multi-factorial. There are adverse health consequences for children, including the emergence of type 2 diabetes, but childhood and adolescent obesity also predisposes for long term health consequences in adulthood, increasing the risks for chronic diseases and reduced life expectancy.

There can be no doubt about the role played by the corporate sector and its active marketing of the kind of products that contribute to generating this change towards unhealthy consumption patterns affecting all age groups. Among these groups it is common knowledge that young mothers – often those pregnant for the first time and later their children – are particularly susceptible to marketing strategies that appeal to certain 'modern' lifestyles and group identity. An important example of how such marketing should and can be regulated is the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly Resolutions, which have been successfully incorporated into national laws in dozens of countries since the Code was passed at the 1981 WHA.

The aggressive marketing practices of much of the corporate sector, particularly those aimed at programs for school children, as well as an increasingly narrowly controlled retail market chain, are working directly against young people's right to adequate food<sup>1</sup> for nutritional health and wellbeing. It is important that such corporate actors recognise their joint responsibility, together with governments and other non-state actors, for the realisation of the right to adequate food and the highest attainable health<sup>2</sup> of all individuals and particularly of the young. Corporate practices should not contribute to establishing unhealthy food habits, thereby increasing the risk of developing disabling diseases and reduced quality of life.

A dialogue with the corporate food sector and related media and marketing industries should be initiated with a view to progressively shifting the demand away from, and eliminating the promotion of food and beverage products that contribute to diets that lead to childhood and adolescent ill-health and prospects for early death and/or disabling life years in adulthood. It is known that some corporations have already begun to alter their products to make them less harmful. This is welcome and must proceed systematically and on an accelerating

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<sup>1</sup> The right to 'adequate' food is the formulation used in the relevant provision under international human rights law, notably Article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. The meaning of 'adequacy' in regard to food has later been interpreted in General Comment No.12 on the right to food issued by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1999, see: <http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/3d02758c707031d58025677f003b73b9?Opendocument> and subsequently used in *Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security* adopted by the FAO Council in November 2004, see <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/y9825e/y9825e00.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> The right to 'the highest attainable health' is the formulation used in Article 12 of the same Covenant and later interpreted in General Comment No. 14 on the right to health issued by the committee on ESCR in 2000. see: [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/E.C.12.2000.4.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/E.C.12.2000.4.En?OpenDocument)

scale. The current activities within the United Nations system, to encourage responsible corporate practices in regard to human rights, provide an important facilitating context.

Therefore, the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition requests

- 1. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on business and human rights to give in-depth consideration to these issues in their forthcoming reports in order to increase the awareness of the problems faced.*
- 2. The UN agencies concerned, in particular WHO, UNICEF and FAO to develop a code of conduct concerning [unethical] marketing to children and adolescents.*
- 3. Governments to urgently move towards appropriate regulation in this area.*

## **Working Group on Household Food Security Statement on Avian Influenza**

The Working Group on Household Food Security recognizes the specter of Avian Influenza (AI) pandemic has captured the international agenda. However, the potential direct and indirect impacts of AI on livelihoods, food security, nutrition and thus health and survival has received scant attention. Already reports of AI outbreaks in domestic poultry held by smallholders in developing countries suggest direct impacts on dietary diversity and incomes.

Given the significant contribution of poultry to the diets and livelihoods of the vulnerable, especially women and children, the group recommends that the SCN encourage the relevant UN and partner agencies to commit resources to the following urgent actions:

1. Determine the food security/livelihood/nutrition impacts of AI among small holders in developing countries using existing household level data and reports as well as the potential impact of government and UN programs of containment and response.
2. Monitor and support interagency and intersectoral efforts to monitor at the program level the control mitigation efforts in response to poultry to poultry transmission especially among smallholders.
3. Actively engage the food security and livelihood communities in designing strategies including advocacy to mitigate the impact on diet, household food security and nutritional status of AI including but not limited to: complimentary or alternative income earning strategies, access to credit for restocking, locally-sensitive culling and human health responses, safe food handling including the disposal and consumption of dead animals, appropriate dietary modification including behavior change approaches, animal husbandry and targeted safety nets.

## **Participants' Statement**

### **Double Burden of Malnutrition - A Common Agenda**

#### **The participants in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session of the SCN**

Agree current actions to combat malnutrition in all its forms are insufficient. Also agree that an adequate response to ensure that malnutrition is no longer a major impediment to human development in the next generation requires unprecedented collaboration. It means that the UN family, national governments, civil society and the private sector must come together in a broad based alliance with one vision. This collaboration should be developed within the promotion and protection of all human rights, especially the right to adequate food and the right to the highest attainable standards of health.

#### **The Problem**

We live in a world of great and increasing inequity between and within countries. This is unacceptable.

In this world, 800 million people are suffering from undernourishment and about 170 million infants and young children are underweight. More than 5 million children die each year as a result of under-nutrition.

And further, billions of people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies (so-called 'hidden hunger') especially of iron, vitamin A, iodine and zinc. Under-nutrition is the main threat to health and well-being not only in middle- and low-income countries but also globally.

At the same time, childhood obesity is becoming a recognized problem even in low income countries. More than a billion adults worldwide are overweight, of which 300 million are obese.

These issues are still perceived to be separate. In reality both are often rooted in poverty and co-exist in communities, and even the same households, in most countries.

While under-nutrition kills in early life, it also leads to a high risk of disease and death later in life.

This is the double burden of malnutrition.

This double burden of malnutrition has common causes, inadequate foetal and infant and young child nutrition followed by exposure (including through marketing practices) to unhealthy energy dense nutrient poor foods and lack of physical activity. The window of opportunity lies from pre-pregnancy to around 24 months of a child's age. Schools provide a natural setting for effective interventions for older ages and to promote adequate nutrition to future mothers.

Malnutrition in all its forms amounts to an intolerable burden not only on national health systems but the entire cultural, social and economic fabric of nations, and is the greatest impediment to the fulfilment of human potential.

Yet, despite the impact of malnutrition in all its forms on mortality, morbidity, and national economies only 1.8% of the total resources for health-related development assistance are allocated to nutrition activities. Of the World Bank's total assistance to developing countries only 0.7% is for nutrition and food security. At country level, the financial commitment is even less.

Adequate food is a human right and good nutrition is essential to achieve the aims of the Millennium Declaration, including those expressed by the Millennium Development Goals. Without progress towards tackling malnutrition, these goals will not be achieved.

## The Solution

UN agencies, bilateral partners, civil society have come together to help put nutrition at the centre of development. We collectively urge:

National governments, in their internal policies, and also through their foreign policies and development assistance, to promote nutrition actions that reduce under and over-nutrition and diet-related chronic diseases. They should do this within the context of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to adequate food, and should ensure that these actions are adequately funded.

UN agencies, to act together through the UN system SCN in the context of the UN reform to accelerate the prevention and mitigation of all forms of malnutrition throughout the life cycle, towards the achievement of the MDGs and beyond. The UN agencies should also promote the integration of nutrition programmes at country level and mainstream them into national development policies.

Civil Society and non-governmental organizations, to advocate and adopt policies and practices that tackle the double burden of malnutrition and hold governments accountable at all levels.

The private sector, especially those in the food and beverage business, to support the achievement of the MDGs including by adopting responsible marketing practices on breastmilk substitutes and energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and drinks.

All constituents of the SCN will work together to raise the profile of nutrition and to increase the investments in nutrition at global, national and local level to tackle the double burden of malnutrition with one shared vision. The top priorities are to:

- Empower **all women** and protect their nutrition, human rights and entitlements and those of their children, through knowledge, skills, policies and regulations.
- Focus on the **window of opportunity** from pre-conception to around 24 months of age, the critical period when the foundation for life long health is set.
- Urge **schools**, including pre-schools, to be nutrition and physical activity-friendly, in order to promote health and well being throughout life.
- Promote the production and consumption of culturally appropriate foods that are rich in **micronutrients**, and promote micronutrient supplementation when and where needed.
- Recognize that the basic determinants of health and disease are social and environmental, and ensure **healthy choices** are accessible, affordable and safe.
- Target **the poor** and socially marginalized, including indigenous populations, people living in emergencies and those affected by HIV/AIDS.
- **Build awareness, institutional capacity and leadership** at national, sub-national, community and global levels for accelerating action on nutrition.

*Geneva, 17 March 2006*

## List of Participants

*Chair:* Catherine Bertini, *Secretary:* Roger Shrimpton

*Special Guests:* Jong-Wook Lee, Director-General, WHO and Catherine Le Gales-Camus, Assistant Director-General, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO

Kul Gautam, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice President, Human Development Network, World Bank

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 Norway—*University of Oslo (intern with WHO)*  
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