

YEAR REPORT 2016

Narrative

Introduction

2016 marked the first year of a renewed UNSCN as a UN members-only committee focusing on policy coherence and advocacy for nutrition at global level. Its mandate is to increase consistent delivery by the UN system to reach the global nutrition targets, to explore emerging issues, and to share knowledge across the UN system and beyond.

Added Value and Role of UNSCN - See UNSCN Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

Early 2016, UNSCN members met at FAO HQ in Rome to renew their support to UNSCN and to agree on the development of a new strategic plan, according to the agreed new roles, and its added value in the current nutrition context. The original ECOSOC mandate (1977) remains valid.

The early months in 2016 were focused on rebuilding the UNSCN secretariat and setting up a new office at FAO HQ. During these months the UNSCN secretariat, in close collaboration with its Chair, Michel Mordasini and its members, also developed the UNSCN Strategic Plan (2016-2020), including a work plan for 2016 and an indicative work plan for 2017. The unique role of the UNSCN as a convener at global level of all UN agencies with an interest in nutrition has received overwhelming recognition and support by individual member states and UN agencies throughout 2016.

Priorities 2016

Considering the new strategic direction of UNSCN, the following priorities had been identified for 2016: Identify a clear UNSCN position in the global nutrition architecture; Ensure coherence of UN engagement in global fora; Establish working relations with UNDG to integrate nutrition in UNDAF; and Initiate the mapping of evidence gaps. The first two priorities are in support of ensuring coherent policies and advocacy for nutrition across the UN (1st UNSCN strategic objective). The development of global UNDAF guidelines for nutrition contributes to a consistent delivery on the ground by the UN system (2nd UNSCN strategic objective) whereas the initiation of the mapping of evidence gaps contributes to the exploration of emerging issues (3rd UNSCN strategic objective). A major operational priority for 2016 was the renewal of the UNSCN website contributing to the sharing of knowledge (4th UNSCN strategic objective).

In April 2016, the UNGA proclaimed the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025. While FAO and WHO are convening the Decade, the UNGA also called on UNSCN to support the Decade as a coordinating body. As such UNSCN contributed to the development of the Decade's draft Work Programme. Support to the development, delivery and monitoring of the achievements that come as a result of the Decade will continue throughout 2017.

Achievements in 2016

The achievement in 2016 have been listed according to work plan 2016 and its deliverables, and according to their contribution to the four objectives of UNSCN as formulated in its strategic plan 2016-2020.

1 - Maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition

In this first year of the new strategic plan it has been important for UNSCN to clearly position itself and its policy and discussion papers in the complex nutrition landscape (refer to annex 4 of the strategic plan). Two documents that clarify the UNSCN position are in their final stage of development: Global Nutrition Narrative and a discussion paper about UNSCN in global nutrition architecture. The first one explains the numerous nutrition targets and their connections. It also highlights how these contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The global governance for nutrition paper sketches the many nutrition actors worldwide and suggests how global governance for nutrition could look, specifying the role for UNSCN.

Three publications that were initiated by the former UNSCN secretariat were finalised in 2016. These three discussion papers aim to assist with implementing the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition: They include i) Enhancing Coherence Between Trade Policy and Nutrition Action ii) Investment for Healthy Food Systems and iii) Impact Assessment of Policies to Support Healthy Food Environments and Healthy Diets. These publications are available in all UN official languages on the UNSCN website and have been displayed in the major nutrition-related events, as well as distributed among members and interested actors.

UNSCN also helped set the agenda for nutrition and fostered UN coherence in global fora. This was most visible in its active engagement with several bodies of the CFS: AG meetings of CFS, as well as in the OEWG on Nutrition, SDGs, MYPOW and GSF. Furthermore UNSCN made valuable contributions to the nutrition debate, including through official interventions and/or the co-organisation of events, most notably:

- Participation and co-organisation of a side event at the 69th World Health Assembly;
- Policies Against Hunger Conference in Berlin; Nutrition events in Brussels organised by EC, IFPRI and CTA and EC; HLPF, UNGA, WHA and CFS plenary and side events. All statements are based on UNSCN Strategic Plan (2016-2020);
- UNSCN contributed to the work of the Interagency Task Force on NCDs and the 10YFP SFS Programme.

Following the proclamation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), UNSCN supported the development of the Work Programme of the Decade. From September to October, UNSCN collected the ideas and contributions of all relevant actors by facilitating an online discussion through the FSN Forum. Participants were asked to share their expectations for the Decade, and in particular how it could make a difference in improving nutrition in their own countries. The consultation also asked which critical activities need to be included in the Decade's Work Programme, which specific activities would need to be accelerated in countries, and how we can work together to improve the quality of commitments. Participants from 48 countries responded through 119 individual contributions. These contributions were considered in the development of the Decade's Work Programme.

Regular bilateral meetings with members to seek their input to the Decade, as well as plenary discussion about the Decade during CFS, UNSCN's contribution to the FAO-WHO International Symposium and monthly UNSCN member teleconferences are more examples of UNSCN's contribution to the building of the Decade.

2 - Support consistent and accountable delivery by the UN system

2016 was key to re-establish working relations with UNDG and to integrate nutrition in UNDAF. During several meetings in New York, UNSCN received support from UNDOCO as well as UNDG (Chair of the Working Group) to start working on guidelines to integrate nutrition in country development plans. This work will continue in 2017. Collaboration will be sought with the programming group of UNDG.

UNSCN also started work on the development of two technical papers:

- School Food and Nutrition: Led by FAO with inputs from IFAD and WFP, as well as UNICEF, IFPRI, Global Child Nutrition Forum and the WB
- Treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition and Moderate Acute Malnutrition: Led by UNICEF, in collaboration with UNHCR, WHO and WFP

The following planned activities were done in support of both maximising policy coherence and advocacy as well as support consistent and accountable delivery by the UN system:

- Out-reach: OCHA, UNEP, UNHCR and UNWOMEN joined as UNSCN members; discussions in progress with UNFPA and OHCHR. The increase in membership shows the multi-disciplinary nature of nutrition and the increased number of UN agencies committed to joint-action to make the Decade a success;
- Consistent engagement with the UN Network for SUN secretariat to ensure a clear division of roles between SUN UN and UNSCN;
- Organisation of online consultation about UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and the contributions of several actors, including UN.

3 - Explore new and emerging nutrition related issues

The nutrition landscape has been changing rapidly over the past few years. This is a consequence of greater attention for nutrition and, related to this, the more central position of nutrition in the global sustainable development agenda. Nutrition is now often seen in connection with areas such as climate change and trade. In addition, new knowledge continues to become available, including on ways to tackle the multiple burdens of nutrition. UNSCN explores this ever evolving setting in order to be better able to reach its objectives of coherent nutrition policies and advocacy in support of consistent delivery on the ground.

UNSCN engaged in the following activities to initiate a mapping of evidence gaps. The fact that new members joined UNSCN (including from “non-traditional” nutrition actors) facilitates the uptake of issues by UNSCN that are linked to nutrition but not yet fully covered by the nutrition community:

- Participated in several short meetings and side event, exploring emerging issues (i.e. bio fortification and traditional crops, equity, social issues, etc.) and the link to nutrition. (Short reports covering these issues are available upon request);
- Participated in World Public Health Nutrition Association’s (WPHNA) World Nutrition Congress (September 2016), which included discussions about the role of private sector;
- Participated in the Seminar Human Rights and Healthy Diets, which included discussions about the role of private sector;
- Hosted CFS43 side event on climate change, sustainable diets and nutrition and related discussion brief in preparation;
- Active engagement in CFS multi-year planning (MYPOW) to help shape the CFS’s plan of work in the coming biennium;
- Held several bilateral meetings and events with private sector actors and UNSCN members (i.e. November 2016 meeting) to discuss the role of the private sector in nutrition. Going forward, UNSCN will accommodate CoI and private sector engagement in its 2017 work plan, capitalizing on the work done by WHO;
- Built links with the academic community, including through the close collaboration of the UNSCN Secretariat with Global Nutrition Report Team;
- Helped shape the nutrition related work of the CFS through the UNSCN secretariat’s engagement with CFS High Level Panel of Experts and its Chair. UNSCN submitted list of proposed themes for HLPE reports (see below);
- Identified the landscape of CoP and relevant actors involved in nutrition.

The activities mentioned above (as well as the event mentioned under 1 - Maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition) enabled UNSCN members to speak with one voice and to have coherent views on nutrition. It also helped to gather insights on the new research developments in nutrition and the issues that could be taken on board by various groups of academia, knowledge centres or even by the UNSCN.

As mentioned above, UNSCN engaged with the High Level of Experts of the CFS. After having consulted with our members, UNSCN submitted the following areas of attention to the HLPE for the emerging issues concept note:

1. Nutrition, food systems and social protection
2. Nutrition and trade and markets approaches
3. Climate and nutrition security and increased resilience of food systems, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions
4. Rural transformation, urbanization and nutrition
5. Migration and nutrition
6. Nutrition, food systems and health systems
7. Food safety, food processing, food distribution and bioavailability of nutrients: nutrition-sensitive value chains
8. Developing enabling food environments, including PPPs

UNSCN works from a rights based perspective, therefore all the topics above have been considered from this approach. The list would still need further thinking and analysis to support further development of a clear UNSCN work agenda on emerging issues. A succinct analysis is available and will be further developed and discussed with UNSCN members in 2017.

4 – Promote knowledge sharing across the UN system and beyond

Throughout 2016 UNSCN has worked to update its visual identity, including a completely revised website, which was launched in November.

Nutrition news and information sharing was also ramped up through E-Alerts and Quarterly Updates to UNSCN Subscribers, and to a wider audience through social media, as noted in the finalised UNSCN Communication Plan. As a result, followers on Twitter increased by nearly 400 and on Facebook by nearly 300, with a spike of participation during the CFS Plenary in October and the FAO/WHO International Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition in early December. UNSCN had a dramatic increase of subscribers in the last two months of 2016 with more than 150 individuals registering to receive E-Alerts and Quarterly Updates. UNSCN will continue to track these analytics throughout 2017 to tailor the nutrition news that it delivers to its readers.

The development and publication of the discussion papers as mentioned (see 1 - Maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition) also contribute to promote knowledge sharing among the UNSCN members and beyond. In addition, the discussion brief “Enhancing Coherence Between Trade Policy and Nutrition Action” focused the discussion at a successful event that was organised for CFS stakeholders (and supported by CFS) entitled Trade and Nutrition - Opportunities and Risks. This event attracted more than 130 CFS stakeholders and representatives from civil society, the private sector and academia. Building on the positive feedback received, the issues were also discussed during the 2016 Ministerial roundtable in October (FAO HQ), were brought forward by FAO in technical meeting in November 2016 and were captured by the FAO/WHO International Symposium in December 2016. It has been agreed by the CFS OEWG on Nutrition that the first intersessional event on nutrition in 2017 will be based on the UNSCN paper “Investments for healthy food systems”. The OEWG is also considering other UNSCN papers for a second intersessional. An additional value of these events is their contribution to better

awareness about emerging issues, as well as enabling policy discussions that contribute to more policy coherence.

Regular exchanges of information by UNSCN members were encouraged throughout 2016. This included three face-to-face meetings in 2016 and well-attended monthly calls by all five constituent members and at least four other members and observers such as the CFS secretariat and the UN Network for SUN secretariat.

UNSCN Communities of Practice

As part of its knowledge sharing role, UNSCN has also facilitated the following online communities of practice:

AREA Community of Practice for 2016

The UNSCN, WHO, and USAID-funded SPRING project moderate the Accelerated Reduction Efforts of Anaemia (AREA) Community of Practice (CoP) to help reduce maternal anaemia by half by 2025. In 2016, CoP membership more than doubled to over 600 members from 60 countries; 78 percent of survey respondents stated that the CoP supports their engagement on anaemia. Members shared on: guidelines revisions, cutoffs, infectious disease, fortification, sheep, conferences and SPRING's resource review. Webinars on iron-folic acid (IFA) safety, weekly IFA for adolescents and the UN tool for country-level targets each drew over 70 participants. The new Twitter handle is @AREAnaemia.

The Agriculture-Nutrition Community of Practice

In 2016, the Ag2Nut CoP held five webinars hosted by the USAID SPRING Project with an average of 46 people per call. Membership reached 3853 members from 92 countries, more than doubling from 1850 at the end of 2015. In July, we also formed an Ethiopia Ag2Nut sub-group now with 1178 members from 26 countries. Announcements are disseminated nearly daily including job announcements, new publications, events and information requests. Recorded webinars are available at: <https://www.spring-nutrition.org/events/series/agriculture2nutrition-community-calls>. The Nutrition and Climate Change egroup.

The Nutrition and Climate Change E-group

The NutCC Egroup has more than 700 members from 81 countries and provides a forum that aims bringing a nutrition lens into climate change issues. In 2016 members of the NutCC group contributed to discussions related to Climate, Nutrition, Health and Gender shared at the 31st session of the Human Rights Council. They co-organized with UNSCN members events on Sustainable Food Systems, Biodiversity and Health at the WHO Global Conference on Climate and Health, at the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTA 20) at the UNFCCC COP22 and at the CBD COP13.

Nutrition and Noncommunicable Chronic Diseases – e-discussion Forum

The NutNCD e-group was established in 2011, just before the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases took place in September in New York. Since then the membership has steadily and continuously grown and at the end of 2016 reached 832 members from 88 countries. This e-group is mainly an information sharing platform. In 2016, 29 discussions took place on a variety of topics: the publication of interesting papers, sharing of useful tools, announcements of webinars related to the topic.

Human and financial support

UNSCN Trust Fund and Budget 2016

In 2016, UNSCN was relying mostly on the first half of the USD 1,000,000 from FAO, as agreed in the transfer letter. A Trust Fund was established in October 2016 and the balance of past UNSCN resources were transferred from WHO (USD 431,134) smoothing the transfer from full reliance on FAO to the contributions of other members. Letters welcoming contributions were sent to the members with the expectation of USD 130,000 from the other four constituent members. Other UNSCN members agreed to support in kind or with a smaller financial contribution. In 2016 no resource mobilization efforts took place outside of the existing members. A financial report will be delivered as separate document.

UNSCN secretariat

Due to the transition to Rome, the UNSCN was required to replenish its staff in 2016. Two staff members were hired by FAO: A UNSCN Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. To further support the well-functioning of the secretariat, two consultants (part-time) and one intern were hired. In addition the secretariat hired consultants to deliver discussion papers. Editing and lay-out for all UNSCN products was done by an external consultant.



United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition