



United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition

UNSCN Informal Report to ECOSOC April 2017

INTRODUCTION

In April 1977, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Sub-Committee on Nutrition (SCN). The original ECOSOC mandate (1977) remains valid: focusing on policy coherence and advocacy for nutrition at global level. The main areas of responsibility are to: i) keep under review the overall direction, scale, coherence and impact of the UN System response to nutrition problems; ii) be point of convergence to harmonize UN policies and activities; iii) provide initiative in development and harmonization of concepts, policies, strategies and programs in UN System; and iv) appraise experience and progress towards the achievement of objectives in order to be better able to develop guidelines for mutually supporting action at UN interagency and country levels.

EVOLUTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2010

Significant achievements in the past decade include: i) the production of the annual World Nutrition Report, which grew to become the Global Nutrition Report; ii) support to the development and early operations of the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement; iii) the production of UNSCN Briefs on key thematic issues, including an influential one on the Indicators for SDG; iv) support to the implementation of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2); and v) the coordination of many activities to promote research and improvements on nutrition. At the request of the communities it served, UNSCN also established time-bound communities of practice to advance the analysis and discussion of key nutrition topics.

The secretariat was moved from WHO (Geneva) to FAO (Rome) and Michel Mordasini, IFAD Vice-President was elected as Chair. 2016 marked the first year of a renewed UNSCN as a UN members-only committee. In the same year, UNSCN adopted a new Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2020, coinciding with the first five years of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. It also commissioned a paper on [Global Governance for Nutrition](#) to enable the wider nutrition community to better understand the role of UNSCN in the significantly evolved nutrition landscape. A second paper was produced making the link between the global targets, the actions and the relevant actors working on nutrition to help provide clarity and streamline efforts.

The continual increase in membership (currently 13 official members and one observer¹) demonstrates the multi-disciplinary nature of nutrition and the growing number of UN agencies considering nutrition in

¹ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and Bioversity International as an associate member.



their policies and programming. UNSCN builds on the mandate and strengths of its members, and works according to a principle of subsidiarity, ensuring maximum impact while avoiding duplication of efforts.

The UNSCN Steering Committee consists of FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNSCN Chair and Secretariat.

UNSCN IS ACTIVE AT GLOBAL LEVEL TO SUPPORT COUNTRY LEVEL ACTION

The global nutrition targets as agreed by the World Health Assembly in 2012, the global Noncommunicable Diseases targets and the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014, provide a clear direction for action to fight all forms of malnutrition. These have been woven into the fabric of the Sustainable Development Goals, where they should be seen as crosscutting and essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) proclaimed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on April 2016 amplifies this message by calling for ten years of accelerated, coordinated, global action on nutrition so that the above targets can be reached. 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 Work Programme and will continue to support the progress, delivery and monitoring of the achievements that come as a result.

At the global level, UNSCN works to maximize policy coherence among UN agencies and initiate global guidelines for nutrition policies and programming, in line with global frameworks. UNSCN reviews members' policies to find synergies and advises on ways to optimize available resources. This is a challenging and ongoing process but essential if the ambition of the 2030 Agenda is to be realized.

The Nutrition Decade encourages Member States to implement the recommendations agreed at global level and invites all relevant stakeholders to pool their actions in support. The UNSCN is doing its part to stimulate the UN "delivers as one" by helping to strengthen policy coherence, enhancing dialogue and identifying linkages to foster joint nutrition action, partnership, accountability and advocacy on nutrition. UNSCN is working on the development of global guidelines to integrate nutrition in UNDAF processes at country level. A mapping of evidence gaps has also been initiated to be better able to respond to emerging issues.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To achieve the ambitious goals of the Agenda 2030, the coming few years will be decisive on a number of fronts. It will require a mobilization of energies and resources and follow through in shaping and delivering robust work plans and ultimately, successful programmes. In this regard, consistent with its mandate and continued inter-agency efforts, the UNSCN will contribute to the global nutrition agenda along the following lines.

Strategic Objective 1: Maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition

UNSCN provides global strategic leadership to strengthen policy coherence on nutrition across the UN system, through dialogue, research and policy briefs, as well as through rallying UN agencies around unified positions. Since 2000, UNSCN has produced nine policy or discussion papers, with four forthcoming on i) Climate Change, Healthy Diets and Nutrition; ii) Discussion paper on School Based

Interventions and Nutrition; iii) School food and nutrition, acute malnutrition, global nutrition narrative; and iv) Joint Statement on Community Based Management of SAM/CMAM.

In addition to increased coherence in nutrition policy, another expected result is to have more effective UN advocacy on nutrition. UNSCN will also seek out and facilitate exchanges of views and experience on issues related to nutrition, water and sanitation, social protection, and food and health systems, with other (non-UN) stakeholders. This will be done through existing platforms, such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Inter Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (IATF), the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC) of the 10 Year Framework Program (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SFS) and the SUN Movement. In addition, UNSCN will selectively engage in global “non-nutrition” forums to raise awareness on the impact of other sectors on nutrition, such on climate change and trade.

Strategic Objective 2: Support consistent and accountable delivery by the UN system

UNSCN contributes to the goal of “harmonizing UN methodologies, guidelines, policies and strategies to better respond to the needs of countries is key to helping them achieve their nutrition goals” by fostering joint global actions, partnership and accountability between UN agencies. This work is carried out in close collaboration with the SUN UN Network, which is mobilizing UN action in SUN countries.

UNSCN supports FAO and WHO by activating other relevant UN agencies to ensure a robust and coherent response and engagement of the entire UN system in the context of the Nutrition Decade by fostering joint programming under the six Action Areas of the Nutrition Decade and assisting with the monitoring of outcomes.

Strategic Objective 3: Explore new and emerging nutrition-related issues

UNSCN engages with our members to discuss global trends, progress and results in relation to nutrition in the context of the 2030 Agenda. It identifies critical emerging issues and propose strategies to investigate them and address knowledge gaps, in collaboration with members also engaging with several platforms such as the [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#), the Multi-Actor Advisory Committee (MAC) and the [UN Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of noncommunicable diseases \(IATF\)](#), as well as strategic research and knowledge institutes.

Strategic Objective 4: Promote knowledge sharing across the UN System

UNSCN selectively convenes time-bound communities of practice (COPs) to advance the analysis and discussion of key topics, capitalizing on the competence and experience from its members. These include: i) AREA Community of Practice for 2016; ii) The Agriculture-Nutrition Community of Practice; iii) The Nutrition and Climate Change E-group; and iv) Nutrition and Noncommunicable Chronic Diseases – e-discussion Forum.

Through a restructured website, supported by other means of communication, UNSCN offers a user-friendly and state-of-the-art “one-stop-shop” for nutrition information on best practices and lessons learned. Nutrition news and information sharing has also been ramped up through E-Alerts and Quarterly Updates to UNSCN Subscribers, and to a wider audience through social media. As a result, followers on Twitter increased by nearly 400 and on Facebook by nearly 300 in 2016. UNSCN will



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continue to track these analytics throughout 2017 to tailor the nutrition news that it delivers to its readers.