



**UNSCN**

United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition

A world free from hunger and all forms of malnutrition is attainable in this generation

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## UNSCN Quarterly Update - Winter 2018

### UNIDO joins UNSCN



The [United Nations Industrial Development Organization](#) (UNIDO) is the 15<sup>th</sup> agency to join the Committee in the fight against all forms of malnutrition.

UNSCN's membership continues to grow, showing the multi-disciplinary nature of nutrition and the increased number of UN agencies committed to make the Nutrition Decade a success.

UNSCN's newest member works especially to promote inclusive and sustainable industrial development and directly contributes to the realization of SDG 9: *"To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation."* Its department of food security and nutrition (FSND) focuses on the optimization of agro-value chains during post-harvest loss management, the establishment of food safety and quality systems, and the promotion of biotechnology. FSND operations in this area work to increase the access of small-scale agro-based industrial enterprises in developing countries to financial services, including affordable credit and better access to global value chains and markets. As a result, UNIDO's work with agro-value chains significantly contributes to SDG 2 and specifically target 2.1 and 2.2: *"By 2030, to end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round."*

UNIDO contributes directly to nutrition through:

1. Legislation advice and support in the development and implementation of food standards and regulations including nutrition labelling;
2. Capacity building of support institutions in food safety and nutrition analysis, inspection and enforcement of national and international regulations; and
3. Mainstreaming nutrition in its agro-value chain development and food safety programs.

UNSCN members have already expressed their willingness to work closely with UNIDO, especially to engage with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to reduce trans-fats in foods among other areas confirming UNIDO's added value to the Committee.

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### Investing in healthy food systems requires investors

In the context of the first of three intersessional events on nutrition within the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), UNSCN and CFS co-hosted an event based on the [UNSCN Discussion Paper - Investments for Healthy Food Systems](#). The main outcome from this discussion was an increased common understanding about how policies and investments can foster good nutrition and human health.

However, investments in food systems are often disconnected from nutrition policies and programs. Agricultural and food investment policies aim to increase economic rates of return in the sectors rather than the quality of food produced. For example, most agricultural subsidies serve to increase production of commodities, not nutritious solutions such as fruits and vegetables. The UNSCN-CFS May 2017 discussion was successful due to the inputs from the various CFS constituencies but the target audience was policy makers. Therefore, UNSCN thought to expand the outreach to the international financial institutions.

On 8 February 2018, UNSCN joined forces with its associate member the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to organize the policy seminar [Investment for Nutrition](#) in Washington, D.C. During the event, IFPRI's David Laborde explained how ending hunger generates economic benefits both in the short and long term. According to Mr Laborde, bringing undernourishment to 5% or less in every country will boost global GDP by 276 billion by 2030 when considering the direct and immediate labor productivity loss of the calorie constraint on existing workforce.

The author of the paper that served as the background for the event, Rachel Nugent of Research

Triangle Institute International, described how the current trends of “rising overweight and obesity and diet-related diseases are all directly tied to investment decisions made decades ago.” Ms Nugent reminded participants that investments to support healthier food systems are easily accessible for countries in the ICN2 Framework for Action. Examples of promising double-duty interventions include marketing regulations, school nutrition programs that target differential malnutrition risks in children, the reformulation of food products to fortify with nutritious and sustainable food based dietary guidelines. However, significant knowledge gaps remain. To address these Ms Nugent encouraged financial institutions and development banks to provide contextualized financial information to better identify promising investments that improve nutrition and health.

The World Bank solutions to close the nutrition-financing gap were also highlighted by Preeti Ahuja. They include: i) identifying and scaling up impactful, cost effective, nutrition interventions; ii) stemming post-harvest loss and waste of nutritious foods; iii) reorienting public investments (e.g. subsidies, R&D) and private incentives to promote supply of nutritious foods; and iv) engaging and partnering with the public and private sector. Ms Ahuja stressed that an additional \$70 billion is needed during the Nutrition Decade to meet World Health Assembly nutrition targets.



The policy seminar closed with a clear message: A shift in investments from the current focus on the quantitative production of few crops to increased quality and diversity of food production for healthy diets is urgently needed. Existing knowledge, infrastructure and investments need to be leveraged to close the nutrition financing gap and countries need to invest more than the current rate of 1% of ODA.

The discussion about investments for better health will continue during the [Global Financing Dialogue](#) event in April 2018. UNSCN will continue to keep its readers updated as the theme develops.

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## Commitments to the Nutrition Decade continue

Currently all countries face a serious burden of either two or three forms of malnutrition. This number needs to be brought down urgently. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition is all of us, working together, to catalyze action and investment to end all forms of malnutrition. Governments, parliamentarians, farmers, academics, civil society actors, people in the medical profession, food vendors, business owners, all of us together.

In 2018, two years into the Nutrition Decade, UNSCN reaffirms its full commitment to make this decade a decade of impact on nutrition. To achieve this, the UNSCN contribution supports the development, delivery and monitoring of the achievements that come as a result of the individual commitments made to implement the outcomes of ICN2. You can read the full commitment [here](#).

UNICEF has also recently committed through the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The Strategic Plan reflects UNICEF's new ambition for Maternal and Child Nutrition in support to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, and more specifically to:

1. Prevent stunting, wasting and all forms of undernutrition in early childhood
2. Prevent anemia and all forms of undernutrition in school-age children and adolescents
3. Prevent anemia and all forms of undernutrition in pregnant women and lactating mothers
4. Prevent overweight and obesity in children, adolescents and women
5. Provide care for children with severe acute malnutrition in early childhood, in all contexts.

You can read UNICEF's full commitment [here](#).

Individuals are stepping up.

- In a [video message](#), Anna Lartey, FAO's Director of Nutrition called for action to translate commitments into national and regional policies and programmes, incorporating a food systems approach to end all forms of malnutrition. "The Nutrition Decade is for everyone; let's work together to make it a success."
- Merete Johansson, OCHA's Chief of Operations and Advocacy Division explained in her [video message](#) that eradicating malnutrition in all its forms is about strengthened humanitarian leadership around the nutrition agenda, which calls for a multi-sector approach. "It's about promoting a more joined up, sustainable approach towards

addressing acute and chronic malnutrition in emergency situations, and breaking down some of the silos that currently exist.”

- Lauren Landis, WFP’s Director of Nutrition expressed in her [video message](#) that their commitment to nutrition extends to their renewed effort in the SUN Movement and its leadership roles, and to ensuring that private sector is part of the solution.

UN agencies are not the only actors placing nutrition high in their strategic objectives. HarvestPlus also followed suit – see their commitment [here](#). HarvestPlus is deeply committed under the Nutrition Decade to working with partners to meet the bigger goal of diversifying diets. For HarvestPlus, this commitment means leveraging this decade to provide increased and inclusive access to biofortified seeds and foods for all to benefit.

UNSCN has worked to capture these actions for nutrition on its website but is now receiving additional support through the newly launched [official website for the Nutrition Decade](#). We welcome all to help populate these pages with your stories and information to inspire others.

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## Meeting our members

9 March 2018 marked the first meeting of UNSCN members in 2018, as well as the first meeting with the new Chair of the UNSCN, [Ms Cornelia Richter](#), the newly appointed Vice President of IFAD. The members started by exploring potential synergies at the international level, such as through the High Level Political Forum, the Committee on World Food Security and the High-Level meeting on NCDs, planned for the third quarter of 2018. UNSCN’s [formal report to ECOSOC](#) was also reviewed. This action re-affirms UNSCN’s full commitment to accountability towards Member States. The UNSCN 2018 Work Plan and budget were approved. The group also took a dive deeper into UN consistency and collaboration at the country level, and the working agreements among the UN agencies.

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## Joint UN efforts for nutrition at country level

The UNSCN recently completed the first phase of a lessons learned exercise on *Joint UN Efforts and Stories of Change in Nutrition Outcomes*, using Angola as a case study. The exercise comprised of a desk review and interviews with key informant conducted with UN personnel based in Angola. The current phase aimed to establish a causal link between nutrition outcomes and UN joint efforts on nutrition in the country to promote consistent and accountable delivery on the ground

by the UN system. The exercise considered the [MDG-F Joint Programme on Children, Food Security and Malnutrition \(2013\)](#) as well as an ongoing [Inter-Agency Refugee Intervention \(2017\)](#) which has nutrition components in Angola. The main lessons revealed through the exercise included:

- The pivotal role of political will.
- The importance of monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
- The importance of strong coordination and communication from the inception of a joint effort.
- The role of the UN (maintaining synergy among the UN agencies).
- The presence of a strong UN joint effort leads to a stronger emergency response.
- The role of the Resident Coordinator.



A major recommendation from the exercise is for UN Country Teams to not only work towards attaining good nutrition outcomes in countries such as Angola, but also towards assisting such countries with the institutionalization of monitoring, accountability and data collection systems that facilitate the measurement of nutrition trends, gaps, interventions and outcomes in the country. The review provided that the institutionalisation of such mechanisms will go a long way to ensure the sustainability of UN efforts, as well as provide a viable tool for evidence-based advocacy that could help drive political will on nutrition-related issues in the country.

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## New Resources

IFPRI's [2018 Global Food Policy Report](#) examines the impacts of global integration—including the movement of goods, investment, people, and knowledge—and the threat of current antiglobalization pressures. This seventh annual report also provides perspective on the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2017 and highlights challenges and opportunities for 2018.

A new tool - project-level **Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index** (pro-WEAI) - will be launched on 27 April 2018 at FAO Headquarters to help measure women's empowerment in agricultural development projects. It builds on the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), now adapted for project use and with a closer focus on aspects of empowerment related

to health and nutrition. Read more [here](#). To learn more about pro-WEAI or the launch event, please email [IFPRI-GAAP@cgiar.org](mailto:IFPRI-GAAP@cgiar.org).

[UNSCN Discussion Paper - Schools as a System to Improve Nutrition](#) is now available in all official UN languages. Work is ongoing through the Interagency Task Force (IATF) on NCDs, which focuses on school aged children and obesity. UNSCN and the IATF on NCDs will continue to create synergies among various platform that exist around schools and nutrition.

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### Upcoming nutrition related events

- **28 March:** CFS OEWG on Nutrition, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy
- **3-5 April:** 2nd International Symposium on Agroecology, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy
- **7 April:** [World Health Day](#), worldwide
- **9-11 April:** WHO Global dialogue on financing for prevention and control of NCDs, Copenhagen, Denmark
- **16-17 April:** [IFAD 123rd session of the Executive Board](#), Rome, Italy
- **20-22 April:** World Bank Spring Meetings, Washington, D.C.
- **20 May:** [Food Revolution Day](#), worldwide
- **21-26 May:** [Seventy-first World Health Assembly](#), Geneva, Switzerland
- **4-8 June:** FAO Council, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy
- **8-9 June:** [G7 2018 Summit](#), Charlevoix, Quebec
- **11-12 June:** [Eat Stockholm Food Forum](#), Stockholm, Sweden
- **18-22 June:** [WFP Annual Session of the Executive Board](#), Rome, Italy
- **25-29 June:** [Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Academy Week](#), worldwide