

Nutrition News – November 2018

In an effort to present nutrition related news at the global and country level, UNSCN and the UNN Secretariats are teaming up to produce the first comprehensive overview of recent developments supported and/or coordinated by the UN system.



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GLOBAL UPDATE

The Third High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs

Obesity is a global pandemic with rates at least doubling in more than 70 countries since 1980. A majority of countries now face a double burden: where undernutrition coexists with overnutrition. Governments made a bold commitment through SDG target 3.4 to reduce premature mortality from NCDs by one-third by 2030.

On 27 September 2018, [the Third High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs](#) was held to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in reducing the risk of dying prematurely from NCDs. The theme of the meeting was “Scaling up multi-stakeholder and multisectoral responses for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Twenty-three Heads of Government and State and 55 Ministers of Health attended and shared their [NCD concerns](#). The [HLM3 2018 Political Declaration](#) was adopted in the opening segment, featuring 13 new commitments.

For additional reading on NCDs, the UNSCN Brief [Non-communicable diseases, diets and nutrition](#) provides short overviews on various technical and policy aspects of the NCDs nutrition nexus.

Nutrition in the 2030 Agenda

In June 2018, UNSCN organized a two day intense [EGM Linking Nutrition with the SDGs under Review](#) at the UN HQ in New York. The objective was to better understand the interconnected and indivisible nature of the SDGs and the role for nutrition. The deliberations of this EGM fed into the 2018 [High-Level Political Forum](#), and especially through the joint [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) and UNSCN side event [Moving to sustainable and resilient societies: the food security and nutrition dimensions](#). Recommendations included, for example on SDG15, *Transform food systems to improve nutrition and support agro-ecological production methods in which agricultural biodiversity and small-scale farmers are of central importance* and on ways to strengthen sustainable and healthy food systems.

The outcomes of these discussions took center stage during the 45th session of the [CFS](#) – details available in the following article. This moment brought together the collection of recommendations generated over the past few months to highlight the interlinkages between nutrition and the SDGs, and help translate them into effective guidance for policies, programmes and stakeholder engagement.

45th Session of the Committee on World Food Security

The [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. The CFS Plenary session is held annually and is the central body for decision-taking, debate, coordination, lesson-learning and convergence by all stakeholders at a global level on food security issues. Its 45th session was held in the FAO HQ (Rome, Italy) from 15-20 October 2018.

The CFS has been ramping up its focus on nutrition since 2015 and the terms of reference to develop voluntary guidelines on food systems were approved at CFS45. Several nutrition-relevant discussions were held in plenary throughout the week, culminating under Agenda item *VI Workstream Updates & Decisions: a) Food Systems and Nutrition* and *b) IXa Food Systems and Nutrition: Good Practices and Lesson Sharing*.

Beyond the plenary walls, several noteworthy side events focused on nutrition. Worth a particular mention is the UNSCN and the UN Network event [Bringing policies to life](#) held on 18 October. Panelists from Egypt, Mali, Pakistan, the research community and civil society shared their experience on how policies have been translated into enhanced action for impact. Examples included the strategies utilized by decision-makers and the change agents they draw upon to ensure long-standing nutrition results. The importance of placing people at the centre, employing context-specific solutions and enhancing an enabling environment for implementation were common threads that emerged from the discussion. Learn more [here](#).

World Bank and UNSCN also teamed up to discuss ways of [Improving Food Security and Nutrition Through Innovative and Fish-Based Agri-food Solutions](#). This event highlighted the need for small fish species to be put on the food and nutrition policy table as these are a rich source of micronutrients, fatty acids and high-quality proteins and have a lower environmental foot print when compared to other fish species and most other animal sources proteins. Norway used the opportunity to highlight the work underway through the [Global Action Network on Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition](#) as part of the overall Nutrition Decade.

Communicating Nutrition

- The [UN Decade for Nutrition website](#) is now launched in all six official UN languages.

- UN Network for Nutrition makes its debut on Twitter; follow it at @unn4nutrition. UNSCN continues its Twitter activity at @UNSCN.



Photo credit: WHO/Yoshi Shimizu

COUNTRY UPDATE

Multi-sectoral nutrition mapping exercise in the Democratic Republic of Congo highlights opportunities for reaching more vulnerable people

A government-led mapping exercise was successfully executed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), culminating in a mapping validation workshop on 28 September 2018 in the nation's capital. The exercise was funded by UNICEF and drew upon UN Network support, with contributions from the nutrition inter-donor group in-country. The mapping encompassed a total of 23 actions that support positive nutrition outcomes at national and provincial levels. In addition, it covered health zones in seven provinces to get a better sense of decentralized action intensity. Strategic comparisons were made between geographical intervention coverage, target groups and delivery mechanisms, elucidating vast coverage discrepancies in some cases. For instance, the coverage of complementary feeding counselling considerably varied between health zones with Kasai and Kasai Oriental exceeding 75% coverage while others (Sankuru and Sud Kivu) reporting less than 25% coverage.

It also underscored the need to focus on results. While the distribution of family planning inputs is carried out by many actors in all provinces, coverage among individuals 15-49 years old was consistently less than 2%. Equally important, the mapping identified data gaps that inhibited the calculation of population coverage for some actions, such as breastfeeding counselling in two regions and animal health services for animal husbandry and aquaculture that have a nutritional objective. Overall, the exercise indicated that less than half of the actions mapped cover more than 50% of their targets in all provinces, presenting opportunities for scale-up, particularly in provinces with a high stunting levels. Read more in the mapping report and articles featured in the local press ([Agence Congolaise de Presse](#) | [Forum des As](#)).

[Mapping exercise fuels multi-sectoral action to account for nutrition results in Mali](#)

Mali continues to face high levels of malnutrition driven by multiple factors that are exacerbated by the effects of climate change and conflict. An extensive mapping exercise was undertaken in Mali, led by the Head of the national nutrition coordination cell (*Cellule de Coordination*) and SUN Government Focal Point, with the support of the UN Network. The multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral mapping is helping to paint the full picture of the

nutrition situation in the country, having covered both humanitarian and development actions. Among other findings, the exercise indicated that nutrition-specific interventions, such as the management of acute malnutrition, iron and folic acid supplementation, tend to have higher coverage than nutrition-sensitive actions, particularly those related to agriculture and social protection (e.g. conditional cash transfers). This underscores the need to further mobilize non-traditional nutrition actors, who carry out many nutrition-sensitive actions to support nutrition gains on a societal and individual level. Ultimately, the mapping is being used as part of the district-level nutrition information system to track the implementation status of the national multi-sectoral nutrition plan (2014–2018) across sectors.

[Lesotho bridging the gap for better nutrition capacity](#)

The Government of Lesotho commissioned a multi-sectoral nutrition governance capacity assessment as part of efforts to address the country's double burden of malnutrition. The assessment was supported by the UN Network's Multi-sectoral Technical Assistance mechanism – REACH – thanks to generous funding from Irish Aid. Encompassing a range of institutions engaged in multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nutrition processes such as the Lesotho Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office (FNCO) and key ministries (Health, Agriculture, Education and Training) the assessment is expected to optimize learning opportunities and increased operational efficiencies. It revealed that while progress has been made on building multi-stakeholder platforms and aligning nutrition-relevant programmes, increased focus is required for maintaining strong coordination mechanisms, mainstreaming nutrition into governmental policies and frameworks and undertaking evidence-based decision-making on nutrition. The next steps are to strengthen FNCO's coordination capacity (both technical and functional skills), operationalising the capacity development plan that was developed as part of the exercise. Actors are optimistic that this will attract additional investment to support nutrition scale-up and improved well-being of the Basotho, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalized groups.

[Tune in: 'CAN' helps sensitise the media about nutrition in Haiti](#)

The [Compendium of Actions for Nutrition](#) (CAN) is a facilitation resource for triggering multi-sectoral action at the country level, particularly on nutrition-related policy formulation and planning. Developed by the UN Network Secretariat, in consultation with external experts as well as those in UN agencies, this podcast delves into the Haiti experience. A nutrition expert interviews the former REACH International Facilitator, who recounts how the compendium inspired the development of an advocacy booklet. The booklet narrates the links between nutrition and various sectors, including: agriculture; health; education; industry and commerce; labour; natural resources; and WASH. Contextualizing those linkages in tangible terms helped engage journalists in the nutrition arena, empowering them to raise awareness about the importance of nutrition for the good health and well-being of Haitians and the country's economic development.

PUBLICATIONS

[UNSCN News 43 - Advancing equity, equality and non-discrimination in food systems: Pathways to reform](#)

Inherent barriers exist in food systems that prevent people from overcoming persistent and intergenerational malnutrition and poverty. To overcome these barriers and ensure that no one is left behind, systematic analysis of food system dynamics, as well as the various causes of malnutrition, help assess how equity impacts and is impacted by nutrition. This issue of UNSCN News explores some of the drivers of malnutrition, how they intersect and overlap, and how this intensifies the exclusion of certain groups of people.

[Strengthening nutrition action: A resource guide for countries based on the policy recommendations of the Second International Conference on Nutrition](#)

The resource guide aims at assisting countries to translate the 60 recommended policies and actions of the voluntary ICN2 Framework for Action into more binding concrete country-specific commitments for action on

nutrition. This process should be done according to the national needs and conditions, and be built on existing policies, strategies, programmes, plans and investments in order to achieve the 10 commitments of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition. This resource guide is structured around 24 themes that are unpacking the ICN2 Framework for Action policy recommendations and is intended primarily for policy advisors supporting decision-makers and development partners involved in multisectoral food and nutrition-related policy-making processes.

[Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework](#)

The resource framework is intended as a guidance tool for stakeholders involved in programme design, implementation and monitoring of Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes and the related policy and institutional environment, including, inter alia: governments and development partners providing technical and financial assistance, as well as civil society, community-based organisations and the private sector. It is a knowledge product that harmonizes the existing approaches and tools, and builds on the wealth of expertise and experience with home grown school feeding models i.e. those designed to provide children in schools with safe, diverse and nutritious food, sourced locally from smallholders, with multiple impacts on SDGs. The resource framework drew from the UNSCN discussion paper [Schools as a System to Improve Nutrition](#).

[Emergency Nutrition Network's Nutrition Exchange \(Issue 10\) profiles UN Network-supported mapping efforts in Burundi and Myanmar](#)

The SUN Government Focal Point and other government staff from Burundi and Myanmar shared their insights about how the Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping facilitated multi-stakeholder engagement across key sectors. The article acknowledges the mapping as a valuable resource for governments to orchestrate data-driven, multi-stakeholder discussions that guide multi-sectoral nutrition planning and scale-up. By identifying which stakeholders are doing what, where and how, the mapping provided a comprehensive picture of geographic and population coverage. This, in turn, enabled government to identify gaps, overlaps and opportunities to more effectively coordinate nutrition actions within the crowded landscape. It has also helped instil a new way of working among sector-specific actors. A burgeoning area of UN Network work, the mapping uses a tool developed by REACH in partnership with the Boston Consulting Group and is increasingly being leveraged to track the implementation of national nutrition plans. Interested in learning more? View the mapping materials from [Burundi](#) and [Myanmar](#).

In Memory of Dr. John Mason

All of us were very sad to hear of the passing of [John Mason](#), the former Technical Secretary of the UNSCN (1986-1996). Under his watch, the World Nutrition Report series started in the late 80s and a raft of nutrition policy papers that broke new ground.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 5-7 November: UNICEF's Food Systems for Children and Adolescents, Florence, Italy
- 20–23 November: [Week of Agriculture and Food: Future challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Argentina
- 27–28 November: [9th International Forum on Food and Nutrition: Enabling Food Systems Transformation towards the SDGs](#), Italy
- 28–30 November: [Accelerating the end of hunger and malnutrition](#), Thailand
- 2-14 December: [Katowice Climate Change Conference](#), Poland
- 3-5 December: 34th Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), Gambia
- 10-13 December: [International Symposium on Understanding the Double Burden of Malnutrition for Effective Interventions](#), Austria