

## Terms of Reference for the WHO/UNICEF Technical Advisory Group on Wasting

The area of nutrition continues to rapidly evolve and challenge implementers. The WHO wasting treatment and prevention guideline review and update process (and WHO-led EmCare App development) have identified a number of operational issues where practitioners require more guidance to help apply normative guidelines in different contexts and to address issues that fall beyond the scope/remit of the wasting guideline process. This has highlighted the need to update existing WHO/UNICEF operational tools and guidance related to wasting management (technical products) and, if necessary, to develop additional guidance materials that aim to support effective implementation.

In addition, significant research gaps also identified in the guideline process need documenting and taking forward in terms of what support and advocacy WHO and UNICEF can bring to address this important evidence generation process.

Reflecting commitments under the UN Global Action Plan (GAP) on Child Wasting, WHO and UNICEF have established a partnership (announced at the Nutrition4Growth UN Summit in Tokyo 2021) to collaborate on a) prevention, early detection and treatment of child wasting by providing more up-to-date global normative and operational guidance, b) support to national governments in adapting their national guidelines, and c) coordination of the wasting-related research agenda.

The Advisory Group (the “AG”) will act as an advisory body to WHO in this field.

### I. **Functions**

In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO and UNICEF, the AG shall have the following functions:

#### **Short term**

##### **A. Operational Guidance:**

1. Identification of operational guidance gaps in the prevention and treatment of growth faltering and wasting in infants and children
2. Contribute to the prioritisation of the workplan for producing operational guidance as identified in point 1
3. Timely review and contribution (where appropriate) to relevant WHO/UNICEF-led technical product development/update (operational guidance, research agenda etc).

4. In consultation with the Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) Technical Alliance's Thematic Working Group<sup>1</sup> on Wasting and other relevant forums/partners/groups, identify means, mechanism and schedule to address outstanding operational guidance and research gaps that do not fall within the remit of the WHO/UNICEF technical products and processes.

#### **B. Research into wasting:**

1. To identify and prioritize formative and operational research and knowledge gaps on wasting prevention and treatment
2. To support knowledge management and generation efforts by reviewing research protocols and studies when relevant

#### **Long term**

Provide technical advice and expertise on ongoing or updated guidance needs, urgency of these needs and the decision to trigger either interim or a full GDG process and review of guideline recommendations/good practice statements.

## **II. Composition**

1. The AG shall have up to [15] members<sup>2</sup>, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to wasting. In the selection of the AG members, consideration shall be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.
2. Members of the AG, including the two Co-Chairs, shall be selected jointly by WHO and UNICEF, and appointed by WHO under the WHO Regulations for Study and Scientific Groups, Collaborating Institutions and Other Mechanisms of Collaboration, in consultation and coordination with UNICEF, following an open call for experts. The two Co-Chairs' functions include the following:
  - to chair the meeting of the AG;
  - to liaise with WHO and UNICEF between meetings.

In appointing two Co-Chairs, consideration shall be given to gender balance and geographical representation.

3. Members of the AG shall be appointed to serve for a period of minimum 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment<sup>3</sup>. Two Co-Chairs are eligible for reappointment as members of the AG, but are only permitted to serve as Co-Chairs for one term. Their appointment and/or designation as Co-Chair may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires and/or, in consultation with UNICEF, if the interests of UNICEF so require, or as otherwise specified in these terms of reference or letters of appointment. Where a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ta.nutritioncluster.net/node/30>

<sup>2</sup> Members serve as full participants and partake in the decision-making process of the meeting in which they are involved.

<sup>3</sup> [Internal Note: If any limitation is felt to be preferable, possible limitations, depending on the Department's wish, could be: "only once"; or "may not serve more than two consecutive terms"].

member's appointment is terminated, WHO and UNICEF may decide to select a replacement member.

4. AG members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO and UNICEF. In performing their work, members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to WHO and UNICEF. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
5. Following a determination by WHO that a proposed member's participation in the AG would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter by WHO, in consultation and coordination with UNICEF, inviting them to be a member of the AG. Their appointment to the AG is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement (together, "Letter of Appointment"). Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, AG members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO and UNICEF of any interests real or perceived that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
6. As contemplated in paragraph II.4 above, WHO may, from time to time, request AG members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before a AG meeting or any other AG-related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO in consultation and coordination with UNICEF. Where WHO has made such a request, the AG member's participation in the AG activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
7. Where a AG member is invited by WHO and UNICEF to travel to an in-person AG meeting, WHO, in consultation and coordination with UNICEF, shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.6 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together "Temporary Adviser Letter"). WHO shall not authorize travel by an AG member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.
8. AG members do not receive any remuneration from WHO or UNICEF for any work related to the AG. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO and UNICEF, their travel cost and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

### III. Operation

1. The AG shall normally meet at least three times each year. However, WHO and UNICEF may convene additional meetings. AG meetings may be held in person (at WHO headquarters in Geneva or another location, as determined by WHO and UNICEF) or virtually, via video or teleconference.

AG meetings may be held in open and/or closed session, as decided by the two Co-Chairs in consultation with WHO and UNICEF.

(a) Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.3 below).

(b) Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO and UNICEF shall be restricted to the members of the AG and essential UNICEF and WHO secretariat staff.

2. The quorum for AG meetings shall be two thirds of the members.
3. WHO and UNICEF may, at their sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of an advisory group, or parts thereof, as "observers". Observers may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-state actor. Observers invited in their personal capacity will be required to complete a WHO confidentiality undertaking and a WHO declaration of interests form prior to attending a session of the advisory group. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-state actors will be subject to internal due diligence and conflict of interest considerations in accordance with the WHO Framework of Engagement with non-State actors ("FENSA"). Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a WHO confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of the AG at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

At the invitation of the Co-Chairs, observers may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting decisions and recommendations of the AG.

4. The AG may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the AG) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations may take place via teleconference or video-conference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the AG for review at one of its meetings.
5. AG members are expected to attend meetings. If a member misses three consecutive meetings, WHO, in consultation with UNICEF, may end his/her appointment as a member of the AG.
6. A yearly report shall be submitted by the AG to WHO (the Assistant Director-General of the responsible Cluster). All recommendations from the AG are advisory to WHO and UNICEF, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the AG.
7. The AG shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.
8. Active participation is expected from all AG members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and further interaction. AG members may, in advance of AG meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the AG.

9. WHO and UNICEF shall determine the modes of communication by the AG, including between WHO/UNICEF and the AG members, and the AG members among themselves.
10. AG members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, the AG or WHO and/or UNICEF to any third party.

#### IV. Secretariat

WHO will provide the secretariat (the “ Secretariat”) for the AG in close coordination with and support from UNICEF, including necessary scientific, technical, administrative and other support. In this regard, the Secretariat in coordination with UNICEF shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to Observers will be determined by WHO and UNICEF. The meeting agenda shall include details such as: whether a meeting, or part thereof, is closed or open; and whether Observers are permitted to attend.

#### V. Information and documentation

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing AG related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and UNICEF and/or parties collaborating with WHO and UNICEF. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II(5) above, AG members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their AG-related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO and UNICEF.
2. AG members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use AG documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.
3. WHO and UNICEF retain full control over the publication of the reports of the AG, including deciding whether or not to publish them.