

# UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF **ACTION ON NUTRITION**



2016-2025

## INTRODUCTION



## FACING THE GLOBAL NUTRITION CHALLENGE

All people, at all ages and at all times, should have access to affordable, diversified, safe and healthy diets. Maintaining a healthy diet throughout one's life helps prevent all forms of malnutrition – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight or obesity – and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

However, eradicating hunger and ending all forms of malnutrition are among the most pervasive development challenges of our time:

- No country is spared from malnutrition. Nearly one in three people worldwide suffers from at least one form of malnutrition.
- Unhealthy diet is now the leading risk factor for deaths worldwide.
- Most governments are currently off track to meet the [World Health Assembly global targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition](#) and [reducing NCD risk factors](#), and thus will not meet the nutrition and food security targets of the [Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) by 2030.

# THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF ACTION ON NUTRITION: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE

Affordable solutions exist to reduce all forms of malnutrition, but they require greater global ambition and action than is being displayed at present.

The United Nations (UN) Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–2025, also referred to as the Nutrition Decade, was declared by the UN General Assembly in 2016 to provide all stakeholders with a unique, time-bound opportunity to strengthen joint efforts and achieve a healthier and more sustainable future.

Acting through its joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Secretariat, the Nutrition Decade encourages governments to set and achieve specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments for urgent investment, action and collaboration at national level.

The Nutrition Decade also provides countries with mechanisms such as Action Networks for sharing experiences, promoting improved coordination and building political momentum to scale up global action. Many countries and other actors are already strongly committed to existing food and nutrition initiatives, mechanisms, alliances, movements or partnerships. These efforts will be linked, aligned and further strengthened through actions under the Nutrition Decade.

## WORKING TO:

- Accelerate the implementation of countries' commitments, made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition in November 2014
- Achieve the global targets for nutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases by 2025
- Contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

## THE NUTRITION DECADE: A NATURAL OUTCOME OF THE GLOBAL NUTRITION AGENDA

In 2015, the UN General Assembly included a specific goal to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG 2) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and embedded nutrition-related concerns in the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This formed the foundation of the current global nutrition agenda.

One year later, in April 2016, the UN General Assembly endorsed the two outcome documents of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) – the [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#) and its [Framework for Action](#) – and proclaimed 2016–2025 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

The Nutrition Decade seeks commitments from the highest levels of government to lead all relevant stakeholders<sup>1</sup> for urgent, sustained and coherent nutrition action under six integrative, cross-cutting thematic “Action Areas”. These have been derived from the ICN2 Framework for Action recommendations and are relevant to related SDGs:

- Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets
- Aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions
- Social protection and nutrition education
- Trade and investment for improved nutrition
- Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages
- Strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition.

## HOW DOES THE NUTRITION DECADE FUNCTION?

Country commitments for action are key to the functioning of the Nutrition Decade. To ensure that countries have the sustained political leadership needed to implement lasting solutions to their complex nutrition challenges, the Nutrition Decade provides:

- a time-bound framework to implement the ICN2 commitments and achieve the SDGs, within which countries are called upon to make country-specific commitments and implement action in line with set targets;
- an opportunity for countries to set up or join Action Networks to exchange good practices, illustrate successes and challenges, and provide mutual support and learning to accelerate progress on specific topics under the six Action Areas.

The Nutrition Decade is coordinated by the Decade Secretariat, in collaboration with the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Children’s Fund. Various coordination mechanisms are being used to expand collaboration, including the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition and the Committee on World Food Security.

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*1. Including governments, intergovernmental organizations, international, regional and local organizations, financial institutions, development banks, parliamentarians, cities, civil society organizations, academia, media, philanthropic foundations and the business sector.*

# IMPLEMENTING THE NUTRITION DECADE

## Nutrition Decade's Work Programme

The Nutrition Decade is about action. To spur action, partners have developed a Work Programme.

## Commitments for action

Country-specific SMART commitments will drive concrete actions on nutrition.

## Accelerating implementation

To implement commitments for action, the Nutrition Decade's stakeholders must cooperate on policy and programme design and rollout, and advocate for scaling up capacities in countries to promote nutrition. The Nutrition Decade Secretariat works to provide countries with reference materials and tools that can support them in the implementation of their commitments.

## Action Networks

Action Networks are informal coalitions of countries working on specific policies and legislation. They are used to exchange good practices, illustrate successes and challenges, and provide mutual support to accelerate implementation of actions to address malnutrition and promote nutrition.

## Forums and conferences

Conferences, summits and forums provide opportunities to share knowledge, recognize successes, flag challenges, promote collaboration, support the six Action Areas and encourage collective work across sectors and constituencies.

## Evidence-informed advocacy and communication

The Nutrition Decade is a major vehicle to advocate and communicate for accelerated action and improved nutrition. It uses evidence and data to drive policy change and effective interventions. It also galvanizes collaboration among countries and with other stakeholders determined to promote nutrition, health and development.

For more information on the Nutrition Decade, countries' commitments and progresses and the Action Networks established, see: [www.un.org/nutrition](http://www.un.org/nutrition)

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