

Mid-term Review Foresight paper

The aim of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 (“Nutrition Decade”) is to accelerate implementation of the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), achieve the global nutrition and diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets by 2025,¹ and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030,² while providing an enabling environment to respect, protect, and fulfil the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food.³ The Nutrition Decade, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2016,⁴ is reaching its mid-term in 2020.

In line with ECOSOC resolution 1989/84⁵ on international decades, progress between 2016 and 2020 in the six action areas of the Nutrition Decade’s Work Programme⁶ is being evaluated at the Nutrition Decade’s mid-point. These action areas are: i) sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets; ii) aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions; iii) social protection and nutrition education; iv) trade and investment

Food systems need to enhance

to include in the basic package of primary health care. Further investments in integrated data systems are needed, with tracking of indicators on the coverage and quality of essential nutrition actions and developing local capacity to use such information effectively.

Action Area 3. Social protection and nutrition education

The contributions of social protection to food security and nutrition will depend on its integration at policy level. To ensure that social protection policies holistically combat all forms of malnutrition, a nutrition-sensitive approach needs to be employed in their design and implementation.¹⁹ Policy measures for improving food access, social protection and food assistance are prevalent in some regions,²⁰ while in other regions this continues to be an area of under-investment.²¹

Nutrition education is widely implemented in schools, but policies to ensure that education is supported by healthy school environments are lacking and implementation of school health and nutrition programmes has deteriorated in recent years.¹⁴ Although the majority of countries train health workers on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, the level of training is often inadequate and, more generally, nutrition action continues to be hampered by a lack of trained nutrition professionals.¹⁴ The potential of

1. Reconfigure global, national and subnational governance to ensure good governance⁴¹ mechanisms are in place. Such mechanisms need to facilitate robust, evidence-based processes to produce knowledge-related public goods (i.e. guidelines, standards, analysis, research, innovation), be free from conflict of interest and coherently address all forms of malnutrition. Links to other systems impacting nutrition (e.g. health systems, ecosystems, land tenure, trade systems among others) are important.
2. Strengthen nutrition action networks at all levels. Global, regional, national and local nutrition action networks can foster inter- and intra-country cooperation and political commitment for nutrition.⁴² Nutrition coordination mechanisms — reported in 80% of countries, but are located within a high-level government agency only in 30% of them — need to be elevated and additional sectors need to be represented.¹⁴
3. Address the role of the private sector. Engagement with the private sector is a point of contention, sometimes hampering global collective action on nutrition.⁴³ Public health leadership is expected of governments to create food, health and care environments for good nutrition, including by using regulation and guidance, where needed. Businesses across the food value chain can contribute to transform agriculture and food systems.⁴⁴ Benchmarks provide an essential tool for measuring and comparing corporate performance regarding food and nutrition and for holding businesses to account. They enable investors and financial institutions, companies, governments, civil society and individuals to exert influence on a company's priorities towards socially responsible investment (or divestment).
4. Increase investment in implementation-focused research to support capacity development and the scaling-up of actions.⁴⁵
5. Build coalitions for prioritizing nutrition to improve mobilization of domestic resources.
6. Streamline the global nutrition accountability infrastructure. The crowded global nutrition accountability infrastructure is leading to accountability fatigue, and needs to be streamlined. Key actions in this area include: i) making sure commitments are SMART; ii) reinfory infrastru.23 402-3(g)4(ar

Building national capacity on nutrition