

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Agenda Item 3

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES

Forty-fourth Session, Dresden, Germany  
2 – 6 October 2024

### MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

#### SCIENTIFIC ADVICE WORK CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORK OF CCNFSDU

##### ***Joint FAO/WHO update of nutrient intake values for infants and young children from birth through 3 years of age***

FAO and WHO last updated vitamin and mineral requirements for all age groups in 2004. Since then, new data have emerged suggesting that requirements for some micronutrients may need to be updated, particularly for infants and young children. Therefore, in part to inform the updating of WHO guidance on complementary feeding and also to contribute to the ongoing work of CCNFSDU in establishing nutrient reference values (NRVs-R) for children aged 6-36 months, FAO and WHO conducted the updating of nutrient intake values for infants and young children from birth through 3 years of age. Nutrient intake values include requirements (e.g. average nutrient requirement [ANR], adequate intake [AI], individual nutrient level [INL<sub>x</sub>]) and safe upper levels of intake (ULs). Using data obtained from preparatory work done by WHO, FAO and WHO identified calcium, vitamin D and zinc as the first three priority nutrients to be updated.

The work of updating the FAO/WHO nutrient requirements for calcium, vitamin D and zinc for children 0-3 years of age has been completed. Nine virtual expert meetings were held, and more than 15 systematic reviews and reports were generated, many of which have been published in peer-reviewed journals. Guidance documents are currently being drafted and should be ready for public consultation in Q4 2024.

##### ***Ad hoc FAO work on the Nutritional Composition of Foods and Beverages made from Plant-based and other Alternative Protein Sources***

Following a request submitted at the 43rd Session of the Codex Committee of Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, FAO has prepared a literature review to guide the future development of "Guidelines including General Principles for the Nutritional Composition of Foods and Beverages made from Plant-based and other Alternative Protein Sources". The review identified literature with data on the nutrient profiles of foods and beverages made from plant-based and other alternative protein sources, which are intended to replace animal-based products, currently in the marketplace and comparison with their animal-based counterparts. A narrative review has been submitted for publication in Q4 2024.

#### OTHER INFORMATION

##### ***UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025***

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2016, aims to accelerate implementation of the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in 2014, achieve the global nutrition and diet-related noncommunicable disease (NCD) targets by 2025, and contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), compiled by the joint FAO/WHO Secretariat of the Nutrition Decade, was released on 30 April 2024 ([A/78/865](#)). This report provides an overview of the progress for the period 2022-2023 towards achieving the global nutrition and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and substantial advances in a wide variety of nutrition-related activities within the six action areas of the Nutrition Decade's Work Programme and other nutrition-related global processes. Both the Nutrition Decade and the global nutrition targets have shown their use in providing a vision, a multisectoral framework and ambition in support of the SDGs, especially to reach SDG2. Towards the end of the Nutrition Decade, informal dialogues will be convened in 2025 with the aim to reflect

on global progress achieved and challenges encountered, building upon and connecting initiatives of Governments and their many partners, and to review an extension of the Nutrition Decade to 2030. By aligning with the overarching goals of the SDGs and leveraging multisectoral approaches, such an extension or other can catalyse coordinated action across governments, civil society, and the private sector, leading to improved nutrition outcomes, enhanced resilience, and a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

### ***The Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative***

The Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative (HDMI), a joint initiative of FAO/UNICEF/WHO was formed in 2022 to bring together experts and initiate a process to reach consensus on the core principles of a healthy diet, to assess the construct validity and cross-context equivalence of available healthy diet metrics, and to develop guidance for monitoring progress towards healthy diets at national and global levels. A suitability assessment report, call-to-action, technical expert meeting report, and guidance version 1 were published in 2023-2024, in addition to ongoing reviews and statistical analyses which aim to accelerate progress in the development, validation, and uptake of evidence-informed healthy diet metrics: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/the-healthy-diets-monitoring-initiative-hdmi/>

Healthy diets are fundamental to SDG 2 and are a prerequisite for achieving many other SDGs, yet diets are not captured specifically by any indicator in the current SDG framework. During the 2025 Comprehensive Review of SDG indicator framework, the “Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity (MDD), by population group (children aged 6-23.9 months and women aged 15 to 49 years)” was submitted as an additional SDG 2 indicator by Switzerland (lead), Bangladesh, Brazil, and Malawi, with support from FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO. The proposal of MDD is one of 15 included in the global open consultation: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/2025-comprehensive-review>. The IAEG-SDGs will prepare the final proposal for the 2025 Comprehensive Review and submit it to the UNSC for its consideration at the fifty-sixth session in March 2025.

### ***Joint Statement on the Principles of a Healthy Diet***

In September 2024, FAO and WHO will publish a Joint Statement on the Principles of a Healthy diet. The statement will lay out four core principles of what makes diets *healthy* for humans. These principles are driven by human biology, underpinned by evidence, and universal in their application. Specifically, to be healthy, diets must be **adequate** in all essential nutrients to prevent deficiencies and promote health, without excess; **diverse**, including a wide variety of nutritious foods within and across food groups, favoring nutrient adequacy and consumption of other bioactive health promoting substances. They must also be **balanced** in energy intake aligns with requirements to favor healthy weight, growth among children and adolescents, and pregnancy outcomes, and with the main sources of energy (i.e., fats, carbohydrates, proteins) in proportions that help prevent disease (refs). Finally, healthy diets are **moderate** in (or avoid) non-essential nutrients (e.g. free sugar) and foods that are associated with negative health outcomes (e.g. ultraprocessed foods). The joint statement also stresses the importance of food safety to prevent illness and promote the body’s optimal utilization of nutrients.

The Joint Statement also emphasizes that many dietary patterns – or the combinations of foods that people consume over time and in context – can be healthy, when meeting these four principles. Dietary patterns are highly contextual, depending on local food access, preferences, culture and traditions. To guide consumer education and inform policies to promote healthy dietary guidelines, countries must develop local guidelines.

### ***The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms***

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO partnered to produce the joint report on The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 ([SOFI 2024](#)), which provides latest trends and analysis on the global food security and nutrition situation, including updated estimates on the cost and affordability of healthy diets. Furthermore, it provides a definition of financing for food security and nutrition, which refers to the process of providing or obtaining financial resources to ensure that all people, at all times, have stable, physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, and suitable food preparation and handling, feeding, caring, and health-seeking practices, and access to health, water and sanitation services to ensure a continued adequate nutritional status. Additionally, it covers expenditures and investments that aim to ensure that all individuals are protected against short-term or long-term instability in food security and nutrition, caused by various climatic, economic, social, commercial and political factors. The report also presents recommendations regarding the efficient use of innovative financing tools and reforms to the food security and nutrition financing architecture.

### ***Joint IAEA/FAO/WHO meeting to review Human Energy Requirements, 23-25 June 2024***

Twenty years on from the 2001 Joint FAO/WHO/UNU expert consultation on human energy requirements, with growing literature from across populations and the wealth of data now available in the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) Doubly Labelled Water (DLW) Database, the meeting was organized to revisit the understanding of human energy requirements and to ensure global indicators are accurately informing policy in the fight against the double burden of malnutrition. This includes informing estimations for the prevalence of undernutrition (PoU); an influential SDG2 indicator advising policy makers and public agencies. The meeting provided an update on scientific developments in the area of energy requirements and agreed on a roadmap for immediate and longer-term actions. Scientific developments presented, suggest updates to global recommendations may be warranted to update guidance on human energy requirements.

#### ***WHO-FAO Update of the book: “Guidelines on food fortification with micronutrients***

Drawing on the advancements spanning over two decades, WHO in collaboration with FAO is developing programme guidance to improve the implementation quality of food fortification programmes globally. This document updates Part IV of the book “Guidelines on food fortification with micronutrients”, published in 2006. Part IV of the book describes the key steps for designing, implementing and sustaining fortification programmes, starting with the determination of the amount of nutrients to be added to foods, followed by monitoring and evaluation, including quality control/quality assurance procedures, and estimation of cost-effectiveness and cost–benefit ratios. The importance of, and strategies for, regulation and international harmonization, communication, advocacy, consumer marketing and public education are also explained. It is planned for release by the first half of 2025.

#### **FAO ACTIVITIES**

##### ***Alternative animal source foods: A comprehensive review of the evidence on their benefits and risks for nutrition, environment, livelihoods, and food safety”***

FAO will produce a comprehensive review with related recommendations for the current state of evidence on this topic. To do so FAO has commissioned a series of background reviews of the evidence on the benefits and risks of A-ASFs for nutrition, environment, socio-economic considerations, and food safety. FAOs work will include defining A-ASFs and their sub-categories and developing a glossary of relevant terminology and synonyms. In addition to the FAO document, the background papers will be published as scoping/ narrative reviews on the topics mentioned.

##### ***Joint IAEA–FAO-IAEA Protein Quality Database Technical Advisory Group and relevant meetings***

Defining accurately the amount and quality required to meet human nutritional needs and describing appropriately the protein supplied by foods and diets is critical in meeting global nutrition targets. Scientific advice on protein quality evaluation is also relevant for the development of Codex Alimentarius food standards and guidelines. More specifically, the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) has considered the issue of protein quality in foods and diets on several occasions. Standardized protein quality of foods data in humans has a potential to inform dialogue on recommendations for protein requirements for all age groups, especially in first 3 years of life. Following the "Joint FAO IAEA Meeting on the Meeting on the Way Forward for the Assessment of Protein Requirements and Protein Quality and for the Development of a Protein Digestibility and Quality Database" held in October 2022, the Joint FAO-IAEA Advisory Group was established in March 2024 to provide advice on the construction of the Joint FAO/IAEA database on ileal digestibility of protein and individual amino acids in foods consumed by humans. Virtual meetings have been held in April 2024 and a physical meeting will be in Paris in November 2024 to discuss the progress of the construction of the protein quality database and evaluate actions needed for its finalization.

##### ***International Symposium Dietary Protein for Human Health, 13-16 September 2023***

The International Symposium: Dietary Protein for Human Health was co-organised by FAO, two leading Universities and in collaboration with IAEA and brought together international leaders in protein nutrition and related areas and provided an authoritative update on recent scientific developments of critical importance to human welfare and food security. The three-day Symposium included presentations and discussions on protein nutrition and health; amino acid requirements; amino acid digestibility and availability; dietary protein quality, including PDCAAS and DIAAS; influence of protein quality; influence of protein quality on growth and development and on whole-body protein metabolism; protein and future food sustainability. A Research Topic ‘Dietary Protein for Human Health’ is to be published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, showcasing the original research presented at the summit meeting and providing a comprehensive update on recent advances in the area. More information can be found here <https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/56742/dietary-protein-for-human-health>

##### ***Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition***

*Better nutrition* is one of the four fundamental aspirations of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 guiding FAO's support to its Members in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To help prioritize action, FAO has articulated a vision for nutrition of a world where all people are eating healthy diets from

sustainable, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems, which was included in a dedicated cross-organizational strategy that was requested by the FAO Governing Bodies with accountability to Members. The *Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition* was adopted at the 166th Session of the FAO Council in 2021. In 2023, FAO completed the first biennium of implementing this corporate document that aims to guide and support the Organization in its mission to raise levels of nutrition. As this Strategy will come to an end in 2025, FAO will update it in 2024-25, ensuring alignment and complementarity to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, and aiming to enhance efforts to elevate healthy diets as part of the agenda of nutrition for governments and other stakeholders and achieve dual outcomes for agrifood systems' resilience, profitability and enabling access to healthy diets.

### **Global Food Consumption Databases**

The FAO/WHO Global Individual Food consumption data Tool (FAO/WHO GIFT) is an open-access online platform, hosted by FAO and supported by WHO, that enables the dissemination of individual-level quantitative food consumption data, especially from low- and middle-income countries. This comprehensive database is a multipurpose tool that allows users to download available data for free in a format following a standardised data structure and codebook. In addition, the platform provides data visualisations related to food consumption, nutrient intakes, dietary diversity, food safety, and the environmental impacts of diet. The platform uses a food classification and description system called FoodEx2 which allows for harmonisation of food names and food codes across diverse datasets. FoodEx2 has been developed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and was enhanced for use at a global level by FAO. It is continually being populated with additional data. To date, the platform contains data from 59 surveys (20 national and 39 sub-national) from 36 countries. The platform also contains a global inventory map with detailed information on 351 surveys (181 are national and 170 are sub-national). The FAO/WHO GIFT platform is available at <http://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>.

In 2024 FAO launched a new domain on FAOSTAT, the corporate statistical database for food and agriculture. The new domain, known as "food and diet", was developed to share statistics on different types of dietary related data in an effort to help close data gaps and contribute to better guidance for nutrition-sensitive agrifood systems policies. Statistics for four types of data are presented in four subdomains: availability, based on supply utilization accounts; apparent intake, based on Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys; intake, based on nationally representative individual quantitative dietary intake surveys; and diversity, based on the minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) indicator. A total of 24 nutrients are presented for the first three subdomains and statistics by food groups available for all four subdomains are based on a nutrition-sensitive food grouping classification. The Food and Diet Domain on FAOSTAT is available at <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

### **Food Systems-Based Dietary Guidelines (FSBDGs)**

FAO in collaboration with world-renowned experts have elaborated a new methodology for the development and implementation of second-generation dietary guidelines that are food systems based. The new methodology will allow countries not only to address health and nutritional challenges and priorities but also to anchor them on a targeted food systems analysis for increasing their usability, relevance and contribution to the transformation of food systems towards socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability leveraging the potential of dietary guidelines to inform and guide policies and actions throughout the food system. The guidelines resulting from this new methodology are context-specific multilevel recommendations that enable governments to outline what constitutes a healthy diet from sustainable food systems, align food-related policies and programmes and support the population to adopt healthier and more sustainable dietary patterns and practices. Their effectiveness resides in that they are developed through an evidence-informed, multidisciplinary and multisectoral engagement process and with a food system approach. They result in a package of outputs and resources that can be adopted and used for food system transformation towards better diet-related practices and, subsequently, better health, better nutrition, and other sustainability outcomes. An overview of the new methodology is available and can be accessed at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc9394en>. The methodology will be released in a modular format, starting from later this year (2024).

FAO continues providing technical support to countries for the development and implementation of dietary guidelines. In the last four years, FAO provided technical support to at least 14 countries in the Africa region, 9 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 countries in Europe and Central Asia and 1 country in Asia and the Pacific. The FAO website on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines which was launched in November 2014, continues to be updated and serves as the only global repository and platform for information exchange on dietary guidelines from across the world. At present the repository contains information from 100 countries. To access the FAO website on FBDGs: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/nutrition-education/food-dietary-guidelines/en/>.

### **School-based Food and Nutrition**

FAO recognizes schoolchildren as a priority population for nutrition interventions and views schools as ideal settings to support the nutrition and development of children and adolescents. Based on FAO's School Food and Nutrition Framework<sup>1</sup> and the white paper on school-based food and nutrition education<sup>2</sup>, FAO has been collaborating since 2021 with UNICEF for strengthening school-based food and nutrition education (SFNE) in low and middle-income countries, with the ultimate goal of fostering food competences in schoolchildren and adolescents for better food choices and for adopting healthier and more sustainable diets. In 2022 the two organizations designed a joint global initiative for developing the capacities of education officials and curriculum developers to integrate action-oriented food and nutrition education curricula into their school systems. The initiative has been piloted in Colombia and is currently being revised based on the feedback received. FAO and UNICEF are currently providing technical support in SFNE to a variety of countries including Ghana and China.

In June 2022, FAO launched the [School Food Global Hub](#)<sup>3</sup>, developed by FAO in collaboration with WFP and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The Hub supports the Peer-to-Peer Initiative of the School Meals Coalition that was launched at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and is part of a project that aims to create a global methodology to help countries develop robust nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals and school food. One of the main objectives of the Hub is to stimulate global dialogue on the importance of school food to support healthy eating habits among children and adolescents. It also showcases the complementary measures that contribute to this, such as the school food environment, policy and legal frameworks, the integration of school food and nutrition education within the curriculum, home-grown school feeding initiatives, etc.

Finally, FAO is an active member of the Global School Meals Coalition, providing technical expertise in various of its initiatives (such as the Monitoring and Data initiative and the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition). Main areas of support include the development of nutrition guidelines for school meal programmes, monitoring and evaluation, policy and legal frameworks and public food procurement. The global FAO-WFP methodology for developing nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals is currently being piloted in Cambodia and will be launched, together with a package of guidance manuals in 2025.

## **WHO ACTIVITIES**

### ***WHO guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and children 6-23 months of age***

In October 2023, WHO published guidelines on complementary feeding of infants and young children. The guidelines reiterated the long-standing recommendation for continued breastfeeding for 2 years or beyond. It stated that for infants and young children 6-23 months of age who are not breastfed or who need supplemental milk, either milk formula or animal milk is an acceptable alternative. Complementary foods should be introduced at 6 months of age. A diverse diet, including animal-source foods, fruits, vegetables, nuts, pulses and seeds is important. Starchy staple foods should be minimized. When cereal grains are used, whole cereal grains should be prioritized. Foods high in sugar, salt and trans fats, sugar-sweetened beverages, and non-sugar sweeteners should not be consumed. Where nutrient requirements cannot be met with unfortified foods alone, children 6–23 months of age may benefit from nutrient supplements or fortified food products.

### ***WHO technical support on the Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes***

WHO and UNICEF co-hosted a Global Congress on Implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes in Geneva in June 2023. Delegates from some 130 countries engaged in knowledge transfer and technical assistance with experts on the Code. The Congress covered six key themes that are essential for effective Code implementation: 1) building political will; 2) identifying and managing industry interference; 3) implementing the Code into national law; 4) strengthening coordination and governance mechanisms in national laws; 5) monitoring and enforcing Code laws; and 6) taking action. Countries shared their successes and challenges with Code implementation, particularly highlighting stories of industry interference in the legislative and monitoring processes. Each country developed road maps or workplans to continue work on strengthening national legislation, monitoring and enforcement of the Code. In several regions networks have been built to continue sharing information and assistance across countries.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO School Food and Nutrition Framework, 2019, <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA4091EN/>

<sup>2</sup> FAO. 2020. School-based food and nutrition education – A white paper on the current state, principles, challenges and recommendations for low- and middle-income countries. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2064en>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/platforms/school-food/en>

WHO and UNICEF hosted regional workshops on Code implementation in Sri Lanka (November 2022), Nepal (May 2023), Côte d'Ivoire (March 2024) and Uzbekistan (May 2024). WHO updated the online training course about the Code to use the most recent learning technologies and make it more accessible. The course is directed towards health workers, policymakers, public health practitioners and others with responsibilities for putting the Code into effect.

At the request of the World Health Assembly, WHO developed guidance on regulatory measures aimed at restricting digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes, containing 11 recommendations for Member State action<sup>4</sup>. The recommendations highlight new marketing tactics that were not possible without digital technologies and describe legislative solutions to addressing them.

The 2024 Code Status Report<sup>5</sup> analyzed the provisions of the Code covered in national legislation for all 194 WHO Member States. The report found that 146 countries (comprising 91% of all global annual births) now have laws on at least some provisions in the Code, although only 33 countries' laws are substantially aligned with the Code. Monitoring and enforcement is needed for laws to effectively improve breastfeeding — the exclusive breastfeeding rate is 53% in countries where monitoring and enforcement procedures are spelled out in the Code legislation compared to only 27% in countries that do not include these procedures. The report included case-studies from Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Sierra Leone highlighting the impacts of industry interference in Code legislation as well as ways to defend against it.

### ***WHO guideline on the prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema (acute malnutrition) in infants and children under 5 years***

WHO released the guideline on the prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema (acute malnutrition)<sup>6</sup> in December 2023, which, for the first time, includes recommendations and good practice statements on prevention of wasting. The key prevention message in this guideline is the multi-sectoral and multi-system approach to delivering the interventions for the prevention of wasting (i.e., prioritizing multi-sectoral approaches involving health, food, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and social protection systems) as outlined in the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting<sup>7</sup>. The updated recommendation on the quantity and duration of RUTF for treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema was also included as part of the guideline.

### ***Updates related to Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF)***

WHO and UNICEF submitted an application for the inclusion of RUTF in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) for the treatment of severe wasting and/or nutritional oedema in children older than 6 months. This application was evaluated and approved by the 24th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines held in April 2023<sup>8</sup>. Currently RUTF is mainly procured by donors, and to ensure sustainability and availability of RUTF within national health systems, national authorities need to be involved in the procurement of RUTF. The inclusion of RUTF on the WHO Model List is expected to facilitate its adoption within national health systems and increase the potential for national health authorities to procure RUTF as part of national health system planning, budgeting and integration into the health supply chains.

Following the publication of the WHO guideline on the dairy protein content in ready-to-use therapeutic foods for treatment of uncomplicated severe acute malnutrition<sup>9</sup>, WHO and UNICEF convened a 2-day technical consultation in November 2021 on improving the availability and cost of RUTF for treating children with severe wasting. The meeting report has been published<sup>10</sup>.

### ***WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Diet and Health***

The following WHO guidelines related to healthy diets were released in 2023: i) **Saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid** intake for adults and children; ii) **Total fat** intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain in adults and children; iii) **Carbohydrate** intake for adults and children; iv) Use of **non-sugar sweeteners**.

The WHO guideline on **polyunsaturated fatty acid** intake for adults and children and the WHO guideline on use of **low-sodium salt substitutes** are currently being finalized and are planned for release in early 2025 and end of 2024, respectively.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240084490>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240094482>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240082830>

<sup>7</sup> [Global Action Plan on Child Wasting | Child Wasting Child Wasting](#)

<sup>8</sup> [WHO Model List of Essential Medicines - 23rd list, 2023](#)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022270>

<sup>10</sup> [Meeting-Report-WHO-UNICEF-Technical-Consultation-on-RUTF.pdf](#)

### **WHO guidelines on the optimal intake of animal source foods**

WHO has initiated work on developing guidelines on the optimal intake of animal source foods which will include guidance on commonly consumed animal source foods (including red meat, dairy and fish) and plant alternatives (legumes, whole grains, nuts/seeds and soy). In addition to health effects of consuming these foods, elements of sustainability, environmental impact, and microbial and chemical risk will be considered when developing the guidance.

### **WHO guidance on the consumption of “Ultra-processed” foods**

WHO is developing guidance on the consumption of highly processed (AKA “ultra-processed”) foods, in a two-step process. The first step will be the development of a more objective, operational definition of ultra-processed foods than is currently used, and thus more amenable to use in applications such as nutrient profile models. The second step will be the development of a WHO guideline on consumption of ultra-processed foods (informed by the operational definition).

### **WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions**

Following the WHO guideline development process, the NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions is working on developing guidelines on priority food environment policies. The guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of **food marketing**<sup>11</sup> and the guideline on **fiscal policies** to promote healthy diets<sup>12</sup> were launched in July 2023 and June 2024, respectively. The guideline on **nutrition labelling policies** has been finalized and is being prepared for peer review and public consultation. The NUGAG Subgroup on Policy Actions will meet virtually in September 2024 to review the outcomes of a rapid updated search of evidence for the **school food and nutrition policy guideline** and to finalize the recommendations.

### **Food classification, including nutrient profiling, to support food environment policies**

As part of its normative mandate, WHO has been working on establishing nutrient profile models (NPMs) for over a decade<sup>13,14</sup>. WHO has developed region-specific models in five WHO regions to support governments in implementing policies to protect children from the harmful impact of marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages<sup>15,16,17,18,19</sup> and a region-specific model in one WHO region to support implementation of multiple food environment policies, including front of pack warning labels, marketing restrictions, school food procurement policies, and taxation<sup>20</sup>**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**classifying foods for policies to improve food environment.

### **WHO Activities to promote healthy diets and reduce NCD risk factors**

Member States committed to reducing exposure to unhealthy diets through the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) (2011). The Fourth High-level Meeting, to be held in 2025, will provide an opportunity to adopt a new, ambitious and achievable political declaration on NCDs towards 2050. In the lead up, efforts are scaled up to achieve the set of nine voluntary targets established by the WHA in 2013, including the target to reduce sodium intake, and to halt the increase in adult and child obesity. This will enable countries to achieve SDG target 3.4 (by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs).

Decision WHA75(11) (2022) adopted recommendations for the prevention and management of obesity over the life course and related targets, which were accompanied by an acceleration plan that clarifies how WHO will support Member States in implementing these recommendations. Resolution WHA76(9) (2023) endorsed

<sup>11</sup> [Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing: WHO guideline](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Fiscal policies to promote healthy diets: WHO guideline](#)

<sup>13</sup> WHO. Nutrient profiling: Report of a WHO/IASO technical meeting. (2010): [https://apps.who.int/nutrition/publications/profiling/WHO\\_IASO\\_report2010/en/index.html](https://apps.who.int/nutrition/publications/profiling/WHO_IASO_report2010/en/index.html)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/pt/?Ink=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-720-43%252FCRDs%252FNFSDU43\\_CRD37x.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/pt/?Ink=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FMeetings%252FCX-720-43%252FCRDs%252FNFSDU43_CRD37x.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> WHO/EURO Nutrient profiling model (2015): [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/270716/Nutrient-children\\_web-new.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/270716/Nutrient-children_web-new.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> WHO/WPRO Nutrient profiling model (2016): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789290617853>

<sup>17</sup> WHO/SEARO Nutrient profiling model (2017): <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/253459>

<sup>18</sup> WHO/EMRO Nutrient profiling model (2017): [https://applications.emro.who.int/dsaf/EMROPUB\\_2017\\_en\\_19632.pdf](https://applications.emro.who.int/dsaf/EMROPUB_2017_en_19632.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> WHO/AFRO Nutrient profiling model (2019): <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329956>

<sup>20</sup> WHO/PAHO Nutrient profiling model (2016): [https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/18621/9789275118733\\_eng.pdf](https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/18621/9789275118733_eng.pdf)

the updated menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of NCDs<sup>21</sup>, which includes a number of interventions to promote healthy diets, such as reformulation of processed/manufactured food, public food procurement and service, encouraging consumers to make healthier choices (media campaigns, front-of-pack or other interpretative nutrition labelling, menu labelling), food marketing restrictions, the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, and taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages. WHO's Global database on the Implementation of Food and Nutrition Action (GIFNA)<sup>22</sup> is an interactive platform for sharing standardized information on numerous food and nutrition policies and interventions, which enables monitoring of global progress in implementing legislative and other measures and increased accountability towards political commitments.

### **Population sodium/salt intake reduction**

WHO continues to support Member States to reduce population sodium intake, and achievement of the nine global voluntary targets, including a 30% relative reduction in mean population sodium intake by 2030, with a goal of achieving an intake of < 2 000 mg/day sodium; and a 25% relative reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure by 2030, so as to contain the prevalence of raised blood pressure. The updated menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions remain of critical importance to sodium reduction. WHO has published several tools and technical documents to support Member States, industry and communities in reducing population sodium intake including: The SHAKE Technical Package for Salt Reduction, which is currently being updated and will be re-released in 2024, the Action Framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies to promote healthy diets (2021), the Global Sodium Benchmarks for different food categories (second edition released in 2024)<sup>23</sup> and the Sodium Country Score Card, hosted within the GIFNA database, which tracks country progress towards introducing policies for sodium reduction. The first Global Report on Sodium Reduction was launched in March 2023. WHO is also working on a "step-by-step" guidance on national adaptation of the WHO sodium targets, either the WHO global sodium benchmarks or regional sodium targets<sup>24</sup> where available.

### **Elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids**

In May 2018, WHO called for the global elimination of industrially produced of *trans*-fatty acids (TFA) by 2023. To achieve successful TFA elimination, WHO recommends governments to adopt either of the two best-practice policies: 1) Mandatory limit of 2 grams of TFA per 100 grams of total fats and oils in all foods; and 2) Mandatory ban on the production or use of partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) as an ingredient in all foods. WHO has released the REPLACE action package and other tools and provided capacity-building assistance to support country efforts.<sup>25</sup> In June 2024, WHO released its fifth annual progress report "Countdown to 2023: WHO 5-year milestone report on global trans fat elimination 2023"<sup>26</sup>. The report shows that at the end of 2023, 53 countries have implemented best-practice policies for tackling TFA in food, with 3.7 billion people protected globally<sup>27</sup>. While the ambitious target to fully eliminate TFA from the global food supply by the end of 2023 has not been fully met, there has been remarkable progress made towards this goal in every region of the world. In 2023 alone, new best-practice policies became effective in seven countries: Egypt, Mexico, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Philippines, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In January 2024, WHO awarded its certificates validating progress in eliminating industrially produced TFA to five countries: Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Thailand<sup>28</sup>. WHO recommends that all countries enact best practice policies and strengthen their mechanisms to monitor and enforce the policies. WHO also encourages suppliers of oils and fats and food manufacturers to remove industrially produced TFA from their products. To provide countries with further guidance on healthier alternatives, WHO is currently developing a guideline on tropical oils consumption.

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<sup>21</sup> Update of Appendix 3 of the WHO Global Action Plan on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (2013–2030): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240091078>

<sup>22</sup> <https://gifna.who.int/summary/sodium.int>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240092013>

<sup>24</sup> WHO South-East Asia Region Sodium Benchmarks for Packaged Foods ([9789290210818-eng.pdf \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789290210818-eng.pdf)); [Updated PAHO Regional Sodium Reduction Targets \(PAHONMHRF210016\\_eng.pdf\)](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789290210818-eng.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/replace-trans-fat>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240089549>

<sup>27</sup> <https://gifna.who.int/summary/TFA>

<sup>28</sup> [WHO awards countries for progress in eliminating industrially produced trans fats for first time](https://www.who.int/news/2024/01/10/who-awards-countries-for-progress-in-eliminating-industrially-produced-trans-fats-for-first-time)