

Invitation to an open discussion on the political outcome document of the ICN



Comment Form

The following comments have been submitted on behalf of World Cancer Research International and the Non-Communicable Disease Alliance and are endorsed by UK Health Forum and the World Obesity Federation

May 28 2014

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World Cancer Research Fund International is an umbrella organisation that leads a network of cancer charities and has a global reach. The network funds scientific research and updates and interprets the evidence on the relationship of food, nutrition, body weight, physical activity and alcohol to cancer risk. WCRF International advocates the wider implementation of effective policies to prevent cancer and other non-communicable diseases.

The NCD Alliance is a unique civil society network of over 2,000 organizations in more than 170 countries focused on raising the profile of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on the global development agenda. Founded in 2009, the NCD Alliance unites five international NGO federations and a network of global and national NGOs, scientific and professional associations, academic and research institutions, private sector entities, and dedicated individuals. The NCD Alliance works closely with key partners, including the World Health Organization and Member States, to catalyze action on NCDs at all levels.

Overarching comments

We commend the Joint Working Group for streamlining and improving the body of the text. We make some suggested wording changes to the text below, clearly identifiable through “track changes”. We also make some specific comments in comments “boxes”. These suggestions:

- Improve the clarity of the text
- Link the document more fully to existing internationally agreed global initiatives and actions relevant to nutrition
- Add in one further commitment (on advancing the development of data systems and metrics) and an additional “call” (for more official development assistance)
- Call on the Joint Working Group to specify the timeframe for the Framework for Action (we propose 2015-2025) and the Decade of Action on Nutrition
- Recommend that, for the purpose of monitoring and accountability, the ICN political outcomes document is ratified / adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 and that progress towards implementation of the political outcomes document on nutrition is reviewed by the UN General Assembly once every five years (ie in 2020 and 2025).

We remain disappointed that the commitments are insufficiently specific for the purposes of monitoring and accountability. But we recognise the importance of a Framework for Action, which we call on the JWG to draft and complete ready for adoption at the November meeting along with the Political Outcomes document. We recommend the Framework builds on the commitments made in the Outcomes Document, and is concise, focused and actionable.

Draft of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition

1. We, Ministers and Plenipotentiaries of the Members of the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, assembled at the Second International Conference on Nutrition in Rome on 19-21 November 2014, to address the multiple threats of malnutrition to health and sustainable development.

2. Reaffirming the commitments made at the first International Conference on Nutrition and the World Food Summits as well as in relevant international targets and action plans.¹

3. Reaffirming the right of everyone to have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

Multiple threats of malnutrition are a major challenge to sustainable development

4. Acknowledge that malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, as well as noncommunicable diseases caused by unbalanced diet, has high socioeconomic and other costs for individuals and families, communities and states; threatens their health and wellbeing by impacting negatively on human physical and cognitive development; compromises the immune system; increases susceptibility to communicable and noncommunicable diseases; and poses heavy burden on societies by restricting the attainment of human potential and reducing productivity.

5. Recognize that the root causes of malnutrition are complex and multidimensional:

- Lack of year-round access to sufficient food, which is nutritious, safe, of good quality, affordable and culturally acceptable, is a key determinant; compounded and often aggravated, in a vicious cycle, by non-potable water, poor sanitation, food borne and parasitic infections, and ingestion of harmful levels of chemical contaminants due to unsafe food supplies;

- Poverty is a major contributor to malnutrition in both rural and urban areas.

6. Acknowledge that different forms of malnutrition co-exist within most countries; while dietary risk affects all socio-economic groups, large inequalities exist in nutritional status, exposure to risk and adequacy of dietary energy and nutrient intake, between and within countries.

7. Recognize that economic, environmental, societal and food system changes, including those brought about by globalization, have an impact on dietary and physical activity patterns, leading to higher susceptibility to obesity and noncommunicable diseases through increasingly sedentary lifestyles and greater consumption of processed food, that is high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars, and salt/sodium.

8. Recognize that climate change is negatively impacting the quantity, quality and diversity of food grown and is therefore posing a major threat to food and nutrition security.

9. Acknowledge that current food systems are being increasingly challenged to provide safe and nutritious food for all to enable healthy diets, due *inter alia* to constraints posed by resource and ecological sustainability, large food losses and waste, unbalanced distribution, and trade

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Comment [1]: We recommend adding a list here of all other relevant global initiatives and actions e.g. nutrition targets agreed at the WHA 2012, Global Action Plan for NCDs 2013-2022, 1000 Days initiative etc

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Comment [2]: We strongly support this paragraph, and recommend it is moved down to what is currently paragraph 9

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distorting economic measures, including unilateral coercive economic measures.

10. Note, with profound concern that, notwithstanding significant achievements in many countries, recent decades have seen modest and uneven progress in reducing malnutrition among children, women and the general population, and that:

a) the prevalence of undernourishment has declined, but absolute numbers remain unacceptably high with at least 842 million in 2011-2013;

b) chronic malnutrition (stunting) has declined, but still affected 162 million children under 5 years in 2012, while acute malnutrition (wasting) affected 51 million children under 5 years in 2012;

c) over two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies such as of vitamin A, iodine, iron and zinc;

d) overweight and obesity among both children and adults have been increasing rapidly in all regions, with 44 million children under 5 years of age affected by overweight in 2012 and 500 million adults affected by obesity;

e) NCDs are responsible for 63% of 57 million deaths worldwide disproportionately affecting lower and middle income countries (LMIC) and populations; underweight, overweight and obesity, are having a direct impact on the global rise in NCDs;

f) while dietary risk factors, together with inadequate physical activity, account for almost 10% of the global burden of disease and disability and different forms of undernutrition are the biggest underlying cause of death in children under the age of five, causing 45% of all child deaths in the world today.

A vision for global action to end all forms of malnutrition

11. Reaffirm that:

a) the elimination of malnutrition in all its forms is an imperative for ethical, political, social and economic reasons, paying particular attention to the special needs of children, women, elderly and disabled people;

b) coordinated action of different actors, at international, regional, national and community levels should be supported, through cross-cutting policies, programmes and initiatives in the food system, as well as health, social protection, education, research, energy, trade, rural development, water, sanitation, hygiene, consumer protection, transport, urban planning, and the environment;

c) global and national policy coherence is needed between policies that aim to address malnutrition in all its forms and policies in other relevant sectors, including in trade and investment agreements, and in policies, investments and incentives which affect agricultural production, food processing and distribution;

d) the risks linked to higher and more volatile prices for agricultural commodities and their

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Comment [3]: We suggest making explicit mention of anaemia in women since it is explicitly referenced in the commitments (13a)

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Comment [4]: We recommend adding this sub-para to add the data on NCDs, which is currently not included

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Comment [5]: Neither paragraph 11 or 12 makes any reference to the importance of the role of women in both food production, provisioning, and consumption. We would ask you to consider how to better incorporate the gender element.

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Comment [6]: Could you clarify whether this is referring to government actors, or government and non-state actors?

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consequences for global food security and nutrition, need to be managed;

e) improvements in diet and nutrition require strengthening the legislative and regulatory framework for food safety and quality control at national, regional and international levels, including enhanced engagement of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, increased participation of Member States and adherence to the Codex Standards and Guidelines.

12. Recognize that:

a) international cooperation and official development assistance for nutrition should, as appropriate, support and complement national nutrition initiatives and measures;

b) achieving the right to adequate food for all requires sustainable, equitable, accessible and resilient food systems;

c) food and agriculture (including crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture) systems need to be addressed holistically by public policies, including the resources, investment, environment, people, institutions and processes with which food is produced, processed, stored, distributed, prepared and consumed;

d) while private investments and markets will continue to drive both the supply of and access to nutritious food, responsible public investments and appropriate market regulations in food, agriculture and other sectors are crucial to overcoming malnutrition in all its forms;

e) nutrition improvement requires the provision of balanced and diversified diets, meeting nutrient requirements of all age groups and all groups with special needs, avoiding excessive intakes of saturated fat, sugars and salt/sodium, and removing trans-fat;

f) food systems need to promote healthy dietary patterns by providing year-round access to safe and nutritious foods including fruits, and vegetables, pulses, wholegrains and adequate but not excessive amounts of animal source foods such as fish, while limiting the consumption of processed foods that negatively affect nutrition and health;

g) food systems need to address and prevent infectious and zoonotic diseases and to tackle antimicrobial resistance;

h) food systems should be sustainable, and all components for food production, processing and distribution (including land, soil, seeds, fertilizers, water, energy, harvesting, storage and transport) should be managed sustainably, with due attention to environmental impacts;

i) efforts should be made to reduce post-harvest losses and food waste throughout the food chain including consumption, as these can significantly contribute to reducing sustainability and nutrition security;

j) the United Nations system and the international financial institutions must work more effectively together in a coherent manner to enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition.

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Comment [7]: We strongly support the inclusion of this sub-paragraph

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Comment [8]: We strongly support the inclusion of this sub-paragraph

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Comment [9]: We strongly support the inclusion of this sub-paragraph

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Commitment to action

13. We commit to:

- a) eradicating hunger, particularly stunting, wasting and overweight in children under 5 and anemia in women; reversing rising trends in overweight and obesity; and addressing nutrition- and diet-related non-communicable diseases.
- b) reshaping food systems to provide access to safe, nutritious and healthy foods in a sustainable and resilient way;
- c) coherent implementation of public policies and investment plans throughout food value chains to serve the health and nutrition needs of the growing world population
- d) taking leadership to shape and manage food systems and improve nutrition by strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring adequate resourcing and coordinating effectively across sectors, including through the establishment of cross-government and multi-sectoral governance structures;
- e) encouraging and facilitating contributions by all stakeholders in society and promote collaboration within and across countries, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, while safeguarding against conflicts of interest;
- f) accelerating the implementation of policies and initiatives that enhance people's nutrition, including people with special needs, for healthy diets throughout the life course, starting from the early stages of life, before and during pregnancy, promoting and supporting adequate breast feeding and appropriate complementary feeding, healthy eating by families, and at school during childhood;
- g) attaining internationally agreed targets and implementing international policy frameworks, including the Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable diseases 2013-2020 and the WHO Set of Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children.
- h) advancing the development of data systems and metrics to monitor progress and drive commitment and accountability for addressing malnutrition in all its forms, including metrics linking food systems with malnutrition.
- i) adopting and implementing a Framework for Action for the period 2015-2025, and developing associated work plans, that should be used to monitor progress in achieving targets and fulfilling the commitments made here;
- j) integrating the objectives of the Framework for Action into the post-2015 development agenda including a possible global goal on food security and nutrition.

14. We call on FAO and WHO to maintain the cooperation they offer to support governments as

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Comment [10]: The edits to this sub-para reflect (a) it is not realistic to "eradicate/eliminate" overweight; (b) NCDs are also important as well as obesity;

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Comment [11]: This was previously part of the above sub-para

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Comment [12]: We believe greater reference is needed to already agreed international frameworks, as well as those targets still being discussed, in order to contextualise this outcomes document. This could also be added to sub-para (f) above since these frameworks set out the policies referenced in that paragraph

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Comment [13]: It is widely acknowledged that more data and better metrics are needed to drive progress and enable accountability

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Comment [14]: We call on the JWG to specify the time period for the Framework for Action, and to specify that work plans will be needed for implementation

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Comment [15]: What targets? There have been no targets referenced here yet (but see our new suggested point f)

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appropriate, in the development and implementation of their national programmes and plans to address malnutrition in all its forms through reshaping the food system.

15. We call on official development assistance, to support capacity building and knowledge transfer in order to implement the above commitments

16. We recommend the United Nations General Assembly to endorse the ICN2 Declaration and to declare a ~~2015-2025~~ a Decade of Action on Nutrition.

17. We recommend that the ICN political outcomes document is ratified / adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 and that progress towards implementation of the political outcomes document on nutrition is reviewed by the UN General Assembly once every five years (ie in 2020 and 2025).

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Comment [16]: We call on the JWG to make the dates for the Decade of Action on Nutrition the same time period as the implementation of the Framework for Action