

Remarks as a speaker

CFS plenary session. Adoption Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition

Wednesday, 10 February 2021 (14:30 – 15:15)

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

My sincere thanks to the Committee for addressing the role of food systems in enabling healthy diets for all – halfway through the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

I am pleased to address you as the first Chair of the newly established UN Nutrition.

UN Nutrition was created as the result of the merge of the UNSCN and the UN Network for SUN.

UN Nutrition works to overcome fragmentation, increase harmonization on nutrition and provide coordinated and aligned support to governments in addressing and preventing malnutrition in all its forms.

UN Nutrition supported the development of the voluntary guidelines on food systems and nutrition that we discuss today.

In this specific effort we mobilised the input and expertise of 10 UN agencies.

These guidelines are one of the outcomes of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

In ICN2 countries committed to enhancing sustainable food systems and ensure access to food to meet people's nutrition needs.

UN Nutrition members were actively involved at the consultations, providing evidence-based advice in the development and negotiation process, including as members of the Technical Task Team that supported the work of the CFS Secretariat.

This support was always well received and appreciated. Thank you.

For this reason, I would like to emphasize again the important role of science and evidence for normative work and policy making.

Good science and quality evidence ensure that we are giving governments and users the best choices for the health of the population and the sustainability of the planet.

Science and evidence are the backbone of the agreed intergovernmental outcomes of the ICN2, such as the implementation of the Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions.

It is of utmost importance that these voluntary guidelines align with long-standing commitments made at the ICN2 to protect the nutrition and human rights of the most vulnerable groups in our societies, namely of infants and young children.

Their health cannot be put on risk.

UN Nutrition commends the work for developing these guidelines.

They are the first of its kind to present holistic and comprehensive guidance for governments to positively influence the evolution of food systems for better nutrition.

We support their ambition to address the policy fragmentation across the food system, including its call for greater policy coherence also between agriculture, nutrition and health in line with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs approach.

UN Nutrition appreciates their important consideration of environmental, social, and economic sustainability of food systems.

The Voluntary Guidelines provide broad recommendations that will need to be further elaborated into policies and investments at national level.

We encourage the use of these Guidelines in conjunction with specific science and evidence-based, **normative** guidance from the specialized agencies constituting UN Nutrition.

As I said before, only good science and quality evidence can truly support countries in implementing normative work as we are seeing today, for example, in the context of COVID-19 and the recovery period.

UN Nutrition is well placed to provide technical support and assist CFS Members and stakeholders in the uptake of these guidelines adapted to their contexts.

UN Nutrition is ready to provide the evidence and standards to complement the general recommendations of the Voluntary Guidelines.

The strength of UN Nutrition is that it ensures inter-agency collaboration and coordination at both global and country levels.

Having followed closely the global level negotiations, UN Nutrition is perfectly placed to mobilise and coordinate its members at country level to support the uptake of the guidelines in conjunction with other relevant evidence-based guidelines and recommendations.

I thank you very much for your attention and I am looking forward to our continued collaboration.