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**Implementation of and follow-up to
major United Nations conferences and summits**

UN-Nutrition

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour of submitting to the Economic and Social Council the report of UN-Nutrition, pursuant to Council decision 2018/207.

Report of UN-Nutrition¹

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I. Nutrition: a high-return investment

1. The right to safe, sufficient and nutritious foods, consistent with the right to adequate food, is a fundamental human right and the backbone of human and societal development in all countries. Good nutrition is necessary for good health, growth, development and all aspects of well-being. Directly linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 3, it is essential to the achievement of all SDGs.²

2. Eating a healthy diet throughout life is critical to preventing all forms of malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity. It also helps prevent diet-related non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers, and promotes good health. In 2022, however, approximately 2.8 billion people worldwide – or 35.4 percent – were unable to afford a healthy diet.³ The *Joint Statement on What Are Healthy Diets*,⁴ published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the

¹ UN-Nutrition is the mechanism that unites the former United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the UN Network for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. It provides a platform for collaboration on nutrition across the United Nations system, focusing on global- and country-level action. The Economic and Social Council, through its decision 2020/207, took note of the merger of the two bodies and the assumption by UN-Nutrition of UNSCN's annual reporting obligations to the Council.

² UNSCN (United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition). 2015. *SCN News 41: Nutrition and the post-2015 development agenda*. Rome. <https://www.unnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Nutrition-Post2025%20Agenda%20%282015%29.pdf>

³ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en>.

⁴ FAO and WHO. 2024. *What are healthy diets? Joint statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2223en>.

World Health Organization (WHO), outlines the four principles of healthy diets – adequate, balanced, diverse and moderate – urging the universal application of these evidence-based principles, while celebrating the wide diversity of dietary patterns around the world. This means that healthy diets are: (i) diverse and include a wide variety of nutritious foods within and across food groups; (ii) balanced in energy intake; (iii) adequate to meet nutrient needs; and (iv) moderate in the consumption of foods of high energy density and minimal nutritional value, such as foods high in saturated fat, trans fats, free sugar or salt.

3. The world is not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. In 2023, 733.4 million people were undernourished, and projections suggest that around 580 million people will still face hunger in 2030. Assessments of progress towards the 2030 global nutrition targets for children under five years of age show that half of all countries worldwide are off target on reducing stunting, more than one-quarter are off track on combating wasting and about 60 percent are off track on tackling overweight. In addition, three-quarters of all countries worldwide are not where they need to be to achieve the 2030 global target for low birthweight, while more than 40 percent are off track to reach the target for exclusive breastfeeding. Almost all countries in the world are lagging when it comes to the 2030 global targets for anaemia among women aged 15 to 49 years and for adult obesity.⁵ If the world maintains a “business-as-usual” approach, millions of people will continue to suffer from malnutrition, with negative impacts on individuals, families, communities, regions and nations.

⁵ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en>.

4. Improving nutrition is one of the most cost-effective investments in global development. The full scale-up of interventions to address undernutrition is estimated to generate USD 2.4 trillion in economic benefits, with a cost-benefit ratio of 1:23 – a return of USD 23 for each USD 1 invested in addressing undernutrition.⁶ Furthermore, the economic and socioeconomic costs of inaction are enormous, estimated at USD 41 trillion over 10 years.⁷

5. UN-Nutrition is the interagency mechanism that brings together United Nations agencies, programmes and funds at global, regional and country level with a mandate or interest in improving nutrition. Its aim is to optimize the collective efforts of the United Nations System to support increased positive impact on nutrition on the ground.⁸ For UN-Nutrition members, “working as one” and speaking on nutrition with one voice are indispensable in supporting countries in their efforts to implement nutrition action at full scale.

II. Addressing nutrition challenges through collective United Nations action in 2024

⁶ World Bank Group. 2024. *Investment Framework for Nutrition 2024*. Washington, DC.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/185f9382-722f-449c-8f92-aa976bba26cc/content>

⁷ Including USD 21 trillion in economic productivity losses due to undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies and USD 20 trillion in economic and social costs from overweight and obesity.

⁸ UN-Nutrition. 2022. *UN-Nutrition Strategy 2022–2030: One UN for nutrition*. Rome, FAO on behalf of UN-Nutrition. <https://www.unnutrition.org/library/publication/un-nutrition-strategy-2022-2030-one-un-nutrition>

6. Throughout 2024, UN-Nutrition members⁹ continued to work under the guidance of the Steering Committee,¹⁰ led by the UN-Nutrition Chair,¹¹ directing their collective thinking to how to enhance UN-Nutrition’s value addition for greater nutrition impact. Members focused their joint work on the delivery of strategic support to countries, joint advocacy and communications, and collective knowledge management. These three key action areas were embedded into three thematic priorities: (i) promoting healthy diets from sustainable food systems; (ii) promoting private-sector engagement for nutrition results; and (iii) accelerating coordinated work on globally agreed nutrition targets.

II.1 – Key 2024 achievements on strategic support for countries

7. Implementing nutrition action at scale at a national and subnational level is crucial to achieving positive and lasting change. Coherent policies, approaches and positions on nutrition challenges across the United Nations system, along with consistent joint actions that are aligned with government-led priorities, needs and established national targets in countries to improve nutrition, are instrumental in strategically supporting governments and their stakeholders. UN-Nutrition members continued to support the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in 2024 as its United Nations network, playing a pivotal role in the SUN Global Support System. The World Food

⁹ In 2024, UN-Nutrition had 15 members: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the CGIAR System Organization; the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food; the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the World Food Programme (WFP); and the World Health Organization (WHO). Participation entails the engagement of both technical focal points and managers in the respective agencies.

¹⁰ The UN-Nutrition Steering Committee in 2024 comprised senior nutrition leaders of seven United Nations agencies: the five founding members – FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO – and other two agencies serving on a two-year rotational basis – IAEA and the CGIAR System Organization.

¹¹ The UN-Nutrition Chair in 2024 was Najat Mokhtar, Deputy Director General and head of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications at IAEA.

Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Executive Directors served as members of the SUN Lead Group (chaired by UNICEF), while WFP represented UN-Nutrition on the SUN Executive Committee, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) acting as alternate. The SUN Lead Group and SUN Executive Committee provide governance and stewardship to the whole SUN Movement. WFP is also co-convening the SUN Business Network alongside the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). In that capacity, UN-Nutrition engaged in all SUN workstreams, including activities in the run-up to the 2025 Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in Paris, the review of the evaluation report of the SUN 3.0 strategy and discussions on the Movement’s way forward.

8. Advancements in coordination were noted in both SUN and non-SUN countries. According to the findings of the 2024 UN-Nutrition country survey,¹² 83 percent of the 55 responding countries reported a functional coordination structure for nutrition, within which the United Nations agencies were collaborating. Overall, there was reportedly greater coordination among United Nations agencies on nutrition, with 25 United Nations country teams noting “some progress”¹³ and 16 country teams citing “substantial progress” in the previous two years.¹⁴

¹² The 2024 UN-Nutrition country survey was conducted online, covering the two-year period from January 2022 to December 2023. It aimed to explore the state of collaboration among UN-Nutrition members at country level and identify emerging issues on which United Nations country colleagues could benefit from global guidance and support. Responses were accepted through June 2024.

¹³ The 25 United Nations country teams citing some progress are: Angola, Bhutan, Colombia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Gabon, Guyana, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Paraguay, the Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Sierra Leone, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

¹⁴ The 16 United Nations country teams citing substantial progress are: Burkina Faso, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, South Sudan, Viet Nam and Yemen.

9. Most United Nations country teams replying to the survey cited joint programming or support for government-led multisectoral initiatives as part of their nutrition-related activities.¹⁵ Several entry points, such as United Nations development frameworks, national food systems transformation pathways and UN-Nutrition’s coordination-oriented analytics,¹⁶ were used to strengthen joint nutrition programming. Noteworthy examples included the prevention and management of severe acute malnutrition in Haiti, the strengthening of nutrition information systems in Mozambique, and multisectoral action for nutrition and food systems transformation in Sierra Leone, with support from the highest levels of government.

10. The UN-Nutrition country survey also indicated that improvements in interagency coordination were greatly facilitated in those countries where the United Nations Resident Coordinator or Humanitarian Coordinator were engaged in advancing the nutrition agenda. Survey responses also suggested opportunities for improvement. For example, the United Nations country team in South Sudan reported that its focus was increasingly directed towards preventative nutrition strategies, presenting opportunities for greater collaboration among United Nations agencies, as preventative action is supported by multiple agencies. The survey also highlighted challenges faced by United Nations country teams, such as limited funding and human resources and data gaps. According to the survey responses, inter-agency coordination on nutrition is challenging, underscoring the need for coordination-oriented tools and support services and reaffirming the continued relevance of UN-Nutrition’s collaborative platform.

¹⁵ The 42 United Nations country teams are: Angola, Argentina, Belize, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

¹⁶ These include: the UN-Nutrition Inventory; the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Overview; the Policy and Plan Overview; the Nutrition Capacity Assessment; and the Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping tool.

11. Throughout 2024, Irish Aid remained a key partner of UN-Nutrition, supporting the “Fostering ‘one UN’ through UN-Nutrition Country Support” project, which was managed by the UN-Nutrition Secretariat. The project was a substantial support for governance-enhancing approaches to nutrition coordination, targeting nine countries: Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Liberia, Myanmar, the Niger, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. Among its activities, the project supported joint contributions to the workplan of the SUN multistakeholder platform in Lesotho, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and enhanced coordination country capacity by tracking aggregated nutrition intervention coverage through the UN-Nutrition Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping tool (for example, in Burkina Faso, the Niger and Sierra Leone).¹⁷

12. Building on the lessons learned from this project, UN-Nutrition organized the Francophone Regional Workshop on Nutrition Governance in June 2024, in which eight countries participated.¹⁸ The workshop aimed to facilitate an exchange of practices and insights. Participants emphasized the importance of the UN-Nutrition Inventory¹⁹ and the Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping tool in assessing nutrition intervention coverage to ascertain gaps and overlaps and foster alignment. The mapping tool also provided a vehicle for strengthening government coordination capacity in the area of nutrition. The analytical tools were considered especially helpful in enhancing accountability, generating action-oriented outputs for nutrition advocacy, planning and

¹⁷ UN-Nutrition. n.d. Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping. In: *UN-Nutrition*. Rome. [Cited 22 February 2025]. <https://www.unnutrition.org/library/tools/nutrition-stakeholder-and-action-mapping>

¹⁸ The eight countries are: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and the Niger.

¹⁹ UN-Nutrition. n.d. UN-Nutrition Inventory. In: *UN-Nutrition*. Rome. [Cited 22 February 2025]. <https://www.unnutrition.org/library/tools/un-nutrition-inventory>

coordination, and providing an entry point to rally United Nations agencies working on nutrition in many challenging contexts. However, the tools require regular updates and adequate funding to ensure they remain aligned with evolving country needs, priorities and targets to improve nutrition.

13. The exchange of experience at the workshop also helped to identify common issues and explored diverse approaches to addressing them. Notably, the experience of Chad in mobilizing government participation offered valuable insights that could inform strategies in other countries facing similar challenges. Workshop participants acknowledged how a dedicated UN-Nutrition facilitator with access to government officials could be particularly effective in supporting United Nations coordination efforts and government participation in high-level global events, such as the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Stocktaking Moments and N4G Summits.

14. Another important achievement in 2024 was the development of a system for tracking technical assistance needs and requests from United Nations country teams related to strengthening United Nations coordination and joint nutrition actions. A total of 145 technical assistance requests were received from 67 countries during the year, of which 45 were members of the SUN Movement. The requests were grouped into five categories: nutrition integration in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) (31); UN-Nutrition Inventory (37); multisector coordination (17); Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping (7); and miscellaneous (53). The miscellaneous category covered requests ranging from nutrition advocacy to strengthening nutrition information systems. Most frequently, the requests were for assistance in taking stock of the nutrition actions supported by United Nations agencies at country level, to enable comparisons of their focus, magnitude of investment and location for analysis and the

mainstreaming of nutrition into UNSDCF. In the future, the technical assistance tracker could be used to alert UN-Nutrition members to technical assistance needs that they or the UN-Nutrition Secretariat need to address.

II.2 – Key 2024 achievements on the three thematic priorities

15. The promotion of healthy diets lies at the heart of efforts to address malnutrition in all its forms. A key outcome of UN-Nutrition’s 2024 joint work was the completion of the Nutrition Inventory, a catalogue of member agencies’ practices and guidance on healthy diets from sustainable food systems and knowledge products, which is updated on a regular basis. This inventory is used, among other things, to support United Nations country teams in the design of nutrition action. It also helps better position nutrition within the food systems transformation agenda by raising awareness of existing guidance to increase uptake. Moreover, the Nutrition Inventory served as an important UN-Nutrition contribution to the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS Coalition)²⁰ and to the School Meals Coalition.²¹ Several UN-Nutrition members are partners in both coalitions.

16. Enhanced access to healthy diets and improved nutrition must be outcomes of food systems transformation, inseparable from environmental protection and resilient livelihoods. In 2024, UN-Nutrition members engaged in the Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN)²² and

²⁰ UN-Nutrition. n.d. The Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS). In: *UN-Nutrition*. Rome. [Cited 22 February 2025]. <https://www.unnutrition.org/coalition-action-healthy-diets-sustainable-food-systems-children-and-all-hdsfs>

²¹ School Meals Coalition. n.d. *School Meals Coalition*. [Cited 22 February 2025]. <https://schoolmealscoalition.org/>

²² World Health Organization (WHO). 2022. *Initiative on climate action and nutrition (I-CAN)*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.gainhealth.org/resources/reports-and-publications/initiative-climate-action-and-nutrition-i-can>

worked closely with the Food Systems Coordination Hub to follow up on several aspects of the UNFSS, including the climate–nutrition nexus. I-CAN continued to be implemented in partnership with FAO and WHO, alongside other partners such as GAIN and the SUN Movement. In 2024, a brief was developed under the auspices of I-CAN on how to integrate nutrition into nationally determined contributions (NDCs), including country examples. The publication of the brief was timely, as countries were working to formulate a new generation of NDCs (NDC 3.0) by early 2025, presenting a window of opportunity for nutrition integration.

17. FAO also joined forces with the United Nations Population Fund to host a side event at the Twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29). The event underscored the crucial link between climate change, food security, nutrition and maternal health, showcasing integrated solutions, including I-CAN’s efforts to promote evidence-driven policy for accelerating progress towards SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 13 and the 1.5 °C goal of the Paris Agreement simultaneously.

18. Furthermore, UN-Nutrition was actively engaged in the Food Systems Coordination Hub’s corporate accountability strengthening process, leading the discussions on healthy diets and nutrition parameters and targets for inclusion in the corporate accountability framework. This included advocating for the establishment of exclusion criteria, for example, towards companies that violate the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions, and firms involved in highly processed, energy-dense foods high in fats, sugars and salt that interfere with public health policies due to conflicts of interest. UN-Nutrition further advocated for the inclusion of civil society actors in the development of this

corporate accountability framework for the private sector. It also contributed to the multistakeholder dialogue on the principles of engagement that could be adopted for the UNFSS+ 4 Stocktaking Moment, bringing the nutrition perspective into the discussions.

19. The active involvement of UN-Nutrition in preparations for the N4G Summit held in Paris in 2025 was another important global nutrition milestone. The UN-Nutrition Chair was invited to be part of the N4G planning process as a member of the International Advisory Group. In this capacity, the Chair was invited to moderate the N4G multistakeholder working group developing the Summit's commitment guide and principles of engagement, capitalizing on UN-Nutrition's contributions to a similar process orchestrated by the Food Systems Coordination Hub. At the end of 2024, fruitful discussions took place among 21 working group members from all constituencies, leading to the drafting and launch of the N4G Paris Commitment Guide in December 2024.²³ UN-Nutrition member agencies, such as FAO, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNICEF and WFP, were also actively engaged in N4G thematic working groups, with support from the UN-Nutrition Secretariat. These included the Working Group on Nutrition, Health and Social Protection, the Working Group on Nutrition and Transition to Sustainable Food Systems and Climate, and the Working Group on Data, Research, Artificial Intelligence and Innovation for Nutrition. Their efforts helped to develop thematic calls for action and provided examples of thematic commitments to bolster nutrition action.

²³ N4G Paris Summit. 2024. *N4G Paris Commitment guide*. Paris, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. <https://scalingupnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/N4G%20Paris%20Commitment%20Guide.pdf>

20. Other key outcomes of UN-Nutrition’s joint work in 2024 related to global nutrition targets and indicators. Members actively engaged with one voice in the discussion on extending the 2025 WHA global maternal, infant and young child nutrition targets and the proposal for new process indicators. The aim is to align the global targets with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and introduce operational targets to help accelerate progress. The next step is for WHA to review and approve the extended global nutrition targets in May 2025. UN-Nutrition members also contributed to the proposal put forward by several Member States to ensure the inclusion of minimum dietary diversity as an SDG 2 indicator. The proposed refinements and revisions were submitted to the Fifty-sixth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2025 and approved.

III. Other UN-Nutrition Steering Committee member contributions to global nutrition in 2024

21. Enabling and complementing their collective work under the auspices of UN-Nutrition, the seven Steering Committee members contributed to global nutrition in 2024 by operating effectively within their individual mandates.

CGIAR System Organization

22. In 2024, the CGIAR System Organization (CGIAR) advanced nutrition outcomes in low- and middle-income countries through its Investment Prospectus 2022–2024.²⁴ Under the umbrella of 33

²⁴ CGIAR. 2021. *Investment Prospectus 2022–2024: Pooling funds for research and innovation to transform food, land and water systems*. Montpellier, France. <https://www.cgiar.org/research/investment-prospectus/>

research initiatives, including 11 focused on nutrition, health and food security, CGIAR's 13 centres collaborated with local, regional and international partners to drive food, land and water systems transformation.

23. Through its Sustainable Healthy Diets Initiative, CGIAR supported the governments of Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Viet Nam in integrating sustainable healthy diets into their national development plans. As a technical partner, it provided them with policy landscape analyses, helped to identify gaps and offered evidence-based recommendations for reshaping food systems targets.

24. CGIAR also made strides in biofortification, partnering with the Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance to develop and distribute iron- and zinc-fortified beans. Engaging with farmers, policymakers and researchers, CGIAR has now reached more than 37 million farmers – 58 percent of them women – enhancing food and nutrition security in Africa.

25. Beyond terrestrial systems, CGIAR promoted aquatic foods through the Aquatic Foods Initiative. The dissemination of Genetically Improved Farmed Tilapia (GIFT) seedlings, including 60,000 in Nigeria, has fostered sustainable fish production. In addition, the Peskas monitoring system, originally developed in Timor-Leste, was expanded to four African countries (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, particularly the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar) with a new nutrition evaluation component.

26. CGIAR's 2025–2030 Research Portfolio will include its dedicated Science Program on Better Diets and Nutrition, reinforcing its commitment to improving global food security and nutrition in an evolving landscape.²⁵

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

27. FAO's work in nutrition includes the consolidation of data and evidence and their mobilization together with technical assistance to enable the consumption and enhance the impact of healthy diets. In 2024, FAO advanced access to various types of dietary data with the launch of the Food and Diet domain of FAOSTAT, the FAO statistics database.²⁶ Also recognizing the need for consensus on how to monitor healthy diets at scale, FAO, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) worked jointly on the uptake and use of dietary metrics for decision-making through the Healthy Diets Monitoring Initiative. FAO developed step-by-step guidance to assist countries in developing, implementing and using food systems-based dietary guidelines to address their nutritional challenges and priorities while simultaneously contributing to the transformation of agrifood systems for sociocultural and environmental sustainability.²⁷

28. FAO also refined a modelling methodology that can provide policy-relevant inputs related to fiscal policies for agriculture and trade that simultaneously optimize agriculture and healthy diet outcomes. The 2024 edition of FAO flagship publication *The State of Agricultural Commodity*

²⁵ CGIAR. 2024. *CGIAR Research Portfolio 2025–2030*. Montpellier, France. <https://www.cgiar.org/cgiar-research-portfolio-2025-2030/>

²⁶ FAO. 2024. Food and diet. Statistics on dietary data. Rome. [Cited 22 February 2025]. <https://www.fao.org/statistics/highlights-archive/highlights-detail/new-data-on-food-and-diet-released-on-faostat/en>.

²⁷ FAO. 2024. *Food systems-based dietary guidelines: an overview*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/48b09e6f-bfee-4b80-a2d5-c24440c6d4a8>.

Markets focused on the linkages between food trade and nutrition, providing policymakers with an understanding of how to pursue nutrition objectives in the context of trade agreements within the changing landscape of global food systems.²⁸

International Atomic Energy Agency

29. IAEA is a specialized technical agency supporting the use of nuclear techniques in nutritional assessment. In 2024, it continued to support activities related to protein quality assessment. A joint FAO-IAEA technical advisory group convened in Paris in November 2024 and agreed on a database framework, corresponding architecture and a roadmap for launch. IAEA maintained its support for 16 Asian countries' assessments of the protein quality of sustainable food sources.

30. IAEA continued to support the regionally harmonized Master of Science in Nutrition and Nuclear Techniques for Africa, with a total of 19 students studying for the qualification in Morocco and South Africa in 2024. Two more universities in Ghana and Zambia also approved the curriculum.

31. The agency launched a novel database on body composition, comprising data from 7,694 study participants in 42 studies in 24 countries. It will be available for secondary analysis once the first phase of data submission is complete. The database will contribute to a better understanding

²⁸ FAO. 2024. *The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2024 – Trade and nutrition: policy coherence for healthy diets*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2144en>.

of the complex condition of obesity and provide evidence to support the design of nutrition interventions for obesity prevention and management.

32. An article published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in 2024, using data from IAEA-supported research, revealed the effects on gut function of living in unsanitary environments in low- and middle-income countries.²⁹ It showed that environmental enteric dysfunction, a chronic inflammatory condition associated with stunting, limits the capacity of digestive enzymes, specifically the role of the sucrase enzyme in carbohydrate digestion. This could be relevant in understanding underlying biochemical pathways in situations such as acute malnutrition.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

33. IFAD continued to meet its corporate commitment to ensuring that at least 60 percent of the projects in 100 percent of its Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes are nutrition sensitive. In 2024, it approved 21 new nutrition-sensitive projects and provided technical support to 122 ongoing nutrition-sensitive projects. In addition, IFAD issued its first nutrition bond, under its Sustainable Development Finance Framework, for USD 50 million to Zenkyoren, the National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan.

²⁹ Shivakumar, N., Huq, S., Maribel Paredes-Olortegui, M., Konyole, S.O., Devi, S., Yazbeck, R., Owino, V.O. *et al.* 2024. A cross-sectional study of associations between the 13C-sucrose breath test, the lactulose rhamnase assay, and growth in children at high risk of environmental enteropathy. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 120(6): 1354–1363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajcnut.2024.10.001>.

34. IFAD supported nutrition capacity-building and knowledge-sharing events, including three regional workshops, four webinars and a “Learning Route”,³⁰ to upgrade nutrition knowledge and skills for IFAD project staff, governments, partners and other key stakeholders in all five of its regions of operation.

35. To advance its mission of reducing poverty and hunger, particularly in rural areas, IFAD actively engaged in global and regional platforms. These included the International Advisory Group for the 2025 N4G Summit, the Committee on World Food Security and the School Meals Coalition. It continues to co-lead the financing agenda for food systems transformation in support of the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub with the World Bank.

36. IFAD also supported Rome Nutrition Week and presented the results of a grant to McGill University, Montreal, which identified appropriate indicators for nutrition-sensitive agriculture investments; developed new metrics to fill gaps, including a “whole-of-diet” outcome indicator; and produced guidance materials and tools to benefit policymakers, programme designers and implementers by enhancing evidence-based decision-making for nutrition.

United Nations Children’s Fund

37. UNICEF reached over 440 million young children with policies and programmes to prevent malnutrition in 2024. Leveraging its thought leadership to drive SDG 2 progress, UNICEF published *Child Food Poverty*,³¹ highlighting children’s inability to access healthy diets and calling

³⁰ Entitled “Seeding Prosperity: How Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture is Transforming Africa”.

³¹ UNICEF. 2024. *Child Food Poverty. Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood. Child Nutrition Report, 2024*. New York. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/child-food-poverty>

on governments to elevate their commitments to the elimination of child food poverty as a policy imperative. Under the leadership of the Brazilian presidency of the G20, UNICEF (together with other UN-Nutrition member agencies) supported the launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty to address income poverty as a driver of poor diets among children. UNICEF also published an introductory article in *The Lancet* series on “the next 1,000 days”,³² stressing the importance of the first and second 1,000 days of life as key periods for child growth, development and learning.

38. As its contribution to the food systems transformation agenda, UNICEF conceived First Foods Africa to strengthen the capacity of local food systems to produce nutritious first foods, building on the region’s experience with the production of ready-to-use therapeutic food. As part of the UNICEF-led Child Nutrition Fund, it partnered with the United Nations Capital Development Fund to unlock African companies’ access to financial capital for ready-to-use therapeutic food production.

39. The efforts of UNICEF to mobilize resources through the Child Nutrition Fund contributed to an unprecedented scaling up of actions for the early prevention, detection and treatment of child wasting. In 2024, UNICEF supported the screening of over 250 million children under the age of five and treated over 9 million children for life-threatening wasting. It also joined WFP in the Joint Action to Stop Wasting partnership to improve the effectiveness of child wasting programmes, with UNICEF leading on the prevention and treatment of life-threatening child wasting.

³² Aguayo, V.M. and Britto, P.R.2024. The first and next 1000 days: a continuum for child development in early life. *The Lancet*, 404(10467): 2028 – 2030. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)02439-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)02439-5)

40. As part of its gender-responsive programming, UNICEF reached 139 million school-age children and adolescents with policies and programmes to prevent malnutrition. It also launched an Acceleration Plan to Prevent Malnutrition and Anaemia during Pregnancy,³³ aimed at reaching 16 million pregnant women in 16 countries.

World Food Programme

41. In 2024, WFP's malnutrition prevention and management programmes reached almost 28 million people in 55 countries,^{34,35} providing life-saving nutritional assistance and supporting dietary improvements, including food and cash-based transfers. WFP also integrated nutrition throughout its operations in complementary sectors, such as agriculture, social protection and education, in 64 countries to better address the underlying determinants of malnutrition. In 2024, it provided over 38 million children with access to improved health, nutrition and education services.

42. As a result of its ongoing efforts to scale up food fortification, WFP managed to deliver nearly 660,000 tonnes of fortified staple foods, such as maize meal, wheat flour, rice, oil and iodized salt, in 60 countries. In 2024, fortified foods were integrated into school meals in 36 countries, ensuring children received essential nutrients to support growth and learning. WFP also assisted 46 countries in optimizing their food systems to provide healthy diets and improve nutrition, drawing on Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis. In addition, WFP actively explored local food solutions for the prevention

³³ UNICEF. 2024. *Improving Maternal Nutrition: An Acceleration Plan to Prevent Malnutrition and Anaemia during Pregnancy (2024–2025)*. New York. <https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/maternal-nutrition-acceleration-plan>

³⁴ Please note that the data provided are based on preliminary estimates, as the final figures for 2024 will only be reported in June 2025, following approval by the WFP Executive Board.

³⁵ 34 percent were pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and 60 percent were children under five years of age.

and management of malnutrition in at least 20 countries, leveraging locally sourced ingredients to strengthen food systems and build community resilience.

43. Aligning with new guidance from WHO on the prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema, UNICEF and WFP launched a renewed partnership to jointly expand the prevention, early detection and treatment of wasting in 15 priority countries.³⁶

44. Throughout 2024, WFP continued to actively engage in several UNFSS coalitions, such as the HDSFS Coalition. In June 2024, it launched the High-Level Task Force on the Nutritional Adequacy of WFP Food Assistance. In November 2024, it joined the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty and, in collaboration with FAO, UNICEF and WHO, drafted the nutrition policy instruments for the alliance's policy basket.³⁷ Furthermore, WFP supported the preparations for the Paris N4G Summit, including as a member of the N4G International Advisory Group and co-chair of three thematic working groups.³⁸

45. In November, WFP launched its new strategy to improve diets and address malnutrition.³⁹ The document presents WFP's objectives to reduce malnutrition during humanitarian emergencies; increase the consumption of healthy, nutritious diets among those most at risk of malnutrition;

³⁶ Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and South Sudan in Phase 1; Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger and the Sudan in Phase 2; and Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen in Phase 3.

³⁷ Maternal and early childhood nutrition; prevention and control of micronutrient deficiencies; prevention, detection and management of malnutrition; promotion and access to healthy diets, including through education and affordable/subsidized prices.

³⁸ These three thematic working groups are: the Working Group on Nutrition, Health and Social Protection; the Working Group on Nutrition and Resilience; and the Working Group on Data, Research, Artificial Intelligence and Innovation for Nutrition.

³⁹ WFP. 2024. *WFP Strategy to improve diets and address malnutrition 2024–2030*. Rome.
<https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfps-strategy-improve-diets-and-address-malnutrition-2024-2030>.

strengthen national nutrition systems and capacities; and influence social norms to support healthy, nutritious diets.

World Health Organization

46. In 2024, WHO worked with its Members, focusing on the public health aspects of nutrition in health and food systems. This entailed developing technical and implementation guidance, supporting guideline adoption and policy development, and providing technical advice to implement effective nutrition actions. For example, it published WHO guidelines on haemoglobin cutoffs to define anaemia in individuals and populations⁴⁰ and fiscal policies to promote healthy diets.⁴¹ As previously mentioned, it also developed a joint statement on healthy diets in collaboration with FAO.⁴² Other milestones include the expansion of the WHO Global Database of Nutrition and Food Actions⁴³, including 3,300 policies referenced in more than 300 United Nations and civil society reports, and the publication of the WHO Micronutrient Survey Analyzer to promote best practices on data collection, analysis and reporting of micronutrient biomarkers.⁴⁴

47. In 2024, significant progress was made on country adoption and implementation of WHO's nutrition policies. Thirty-four countries joined and received technical support to implement the

⁴⁰ WHO. 2024. *Guideline on haemoglobin cutoffs to define anaemia in individuals and populations*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240088542>

⁴¹ WHO. 2024. *Fiscal policies to promote healthy diets: WHO guideline*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240091016>

⁴² FAO and WHO. 2024. *What are healthy diets? Joint statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2223en>.

⁴³ WHO. n.d. Global database on the Implementation of Food and Nutrition Action. In: *WHO*. Geneva, Switzerland. [Cited 26 February 2025]. <https://gifna.who.int/>

⁴⁴ WHO. n.d. Micronutrient survey analyser. In: *WHO*. Geneva, Switzerland. [Cited 3 March 2025]. <https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/micronutrients-analyser/>

WHO acceleration plan to stop obesity endorsed by WHA in 2022.⁴⁵ Fifteen countries with the highest wasting burden actively supported the treatment of children with wasting as part of the Global Action Plan for Wasting.⁴⁶ Fifty-six countries had best-practice policies in effect for eliminating industrial trans fat from the food supply, up significantly from 11 countries in 2018, according to the WHO five-year milestone report on global trans fat elimination published in 2024.⁴⁷

IV. Strengthening UN-Nutrition as a collective force

48. In 2024, UN-Nutrition members engaged in an expert-facilitated UN-Nutrition Partnership Health Check process.⁴⁸ The exercise aimed to support UN-Nutrition members in working together more efficiently and effectively, optimizing collaborative value. It comprised an online survey shared with all UN-Nutrition members and the UN-Nutrition Secretariat, interviews with representatives of UN-Nutrition member agencies and the UN-Nutrition Secretariat, a document review and a virtual workshop. The Partnership Health Check highlighted some key findings related to fundamental aspects such as the mission and common vision of UN-Nutrition, collaborative relationships, governance and management structure, and the availability of resources to deliver impact, outlining recommendations to address them.

⁴⁵ WHO. 2023. *WHO acceleration plan to stop obesity*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240075634>

⁴⁶ UNICEF, FAO, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, WFP & WHO. 2021. *Global Action Plan on Child Wasting: a framework for action to accelerate progress in preventing and managing child wasting and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*. New York, USA. <https://www.childwasting.org/about-global-action-plan-child-wasting>

⁴⁷ WHO. 2024. *Countdown to 2023: WHO 5-year milestone report on global trans fat elimination 2023*. Geneva, Switzerland. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240089549>

⁴⁸ Conducted by The Partnering Initiative.

49. The exercise concluded that the time is right to strengthen UN-Nutrition. Substantive experience has been accumulated and important lessons have been learned since its foundation in 2020. The Steering Committee and Chair were positive and committed to implementing the recommendations arising from the Partnership Health Check. A follow-up face-to-face meeting was held with Steering Committee members on 19–20 November 2024 to revisit and refine the strategic visions of UN-Nutrition for the remaining five years of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, a new UN-Nutrition Senior Coordinator was selected through a competitive process at the end of 2024 to help put into practice the recommendations made.

50. Alongside the Partnership Health Check, in 2024, the UN-Nutrition Secretariat continued to advance the priority areas of work set out by its members, organizing meetings and facilitating joint positions to enable the achievement of the joint outcomes cited in this report.

51. The UN-Nutrition Secretariat also facilitated the connection of UN-Nutrition with other processes and partnerships, enabling the engagement of UN-Nutrition members and supporting the co-organization of events. This included participation in the One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force (UNIATF) on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).⁴⁹ It also facilitated the UNIATF NCD Working Group on Nutrition, particularly important in view of rising obesity levels in all regions. Furthermore, the UN-Nutrition Secretariat facilitated the School Nutrition Community of Practice

⁴⁹ UNIATF has been ECOSOC mandated since 2013. At the 2024 session of the Council, ECOSOC adopted a resolution calling on the Task Force to scale up its support for Members. This includes operative paragraph 6: “*encourages members of the Task Force, within their respective mandates, to continue collaboration among each other and to support Member States, upon their request, in promoting improved nutrition, healthy diets and lifestyles*”. United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. United Nations Economic and Social Council, 23 July 2024. E/RES/2024/17. <http://undocs.org/E/RES/2024/17>

and continued to provide support to the HDSFS Coalition Secretariat, including by hosting its website and preparing articles and newsletters to profile its latest developments and share information among countries.

52. Fulfilling its knowledge-sharing role, the UN-Nutrition Secretariat maintained its website and knowledge hub, including stories on progress, new guidance, and other developments and learning. UN-Nutrition's guidance note on integrating nutrition into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework was published in English, French and Spanish,⁵⁰ while its *Nutrition and the environment* discussion paper was published in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.⁵¹ Newsletters and social-media activity on X (formerly known as Twitter) complemented the communications work, giving further visibility to UN-Nutrition members' actions and joint achievements. This is not only helping to raise awareness about nutrition knowledge products and success stories developed and supported by UN-Nutrition member agencies, but also to boost their uptake, coherence and complementarity.

V. Conclusions

53. UN-Nutrition is progressing steadily as the United Nations interagency coordination mechanism for nutrition. As demonstrated in 2024, coordination among UN-Nutrition members transcends mere joint programming. Its value addition lies in its collective thought leadership and cultivation of a shared understanding of issues and solutions, its advocacy for speaking and acting

⁵⁰ UN-Nutrition. 2023. *A guidance note on nutrition for United Nations country teams, their government counterparts and other stakeholders*. Rome, FAO on behalf of UN-Nutrition. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4357en>

⁵¹ UN-Nutrition. 2023. *Nutrition and the environment – Nurturing people, protecting the planet*. Rome, FAO on behalf of UN-Nutrition. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5757en>

on nutrition with one voice, its setting of joint expectations and its delivery of unified support to meet them. In 2025 and beyond, UN-Nutrition members will continue to strengthen this pathway by implementing recommendations from the Partnership Health Check exercise. With commitment, thought leadership and cooperation, UN-Nutrition members will build on the lessons learned by working together to align and optimize their joint vision, aims, ways of working, systems and processes to tackle critical, enduring and emerging nutrition issues. This, in turn, will enhance value creation and impact with a view to attainment of the SDGs by all.
