

# Global Action Network Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF  
**ACTION ON NUTRITION**  
2016-2025



## Concept Document

### AMBITION

**Mobilize actions from healthy waters to healthy people to include aquatic food as a key food source for achieving food security and improved nutrition**

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has proclaimed<sup>1</sup> 2016 to 2025 to be the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (“Nutrition Decade”). The Nutrition Decade aims to accelerate implementation of the commitments made at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), achieve the Global nutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCD) targets by 2025, and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) together with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was called upon by the General Assembly to lead the implementation of the Nutrition Decade with other stakeholders, and to develop a Work Programme for the Nutrition Decade<sup>2</sup>.

The Nutrition Decade is country owned and country-driven. To achieve the objectives of the Nutrition Decade, Member States are called upon: 1) to bring forward SMART<sup>3</sup> (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) commitments based on ICN2, the SDGs and the global nutrition and NCD targets; and 2) to establish or participate in action networks to foster the implementation of the Work Programme of the Nutrition Decade.

These action networks are informal groups of countries intended to accelerate and align efforts around a specific topic linked to an action area of the Work Programme of the Nutrition Decade. This can be done by advocating for the establishment of policies and legislation, allowing the exchange of practices and experiences, highlighting successes and lessons learned, and providing mutual support. Action networks will assist countries to implement their SMART commitments.

**Sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets** is one of the six cross-cutting, integrative action areas of the Nutrition Decade. Sustainable food from the ocean and inland waters can play a critical role in global food security and nutrition, however, aquatic food is often excluded of discussions on food and nutrition policies. In addition, national policies on fisheries and aquaculture often focus on the biological sustainability and economic efficiency rather than their role in ensuring food security and optimal nutrition. Therefore, Norway has decided to establish the network **Sustainable Food from the Oceans and Inland Waters for Food Security and Nutrition**, with the aim to increase the nutritional impacts the fisheries and aquaculture sector can make as windows of opportunity for ICN2 follow-up towards achieving healthy diets. The network

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/workprogramme-doa2016to2025-en.pdf?ua=1>

<sup>3</sup> SMART commitments: S – specific M – measurable A – achievable R- relevant T- time bound.

will provide a platform for countries to include aquatic food as a key food source for achieving food security and improved nutrition. Share best practices and evidence-based knowledge, and work to priorities aquatic food solutions in policy, investment, research, and action.

## Introduction

Food production has to increase to feed more than 9.7 billion people by 2050. To end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2) is not just a question of enough food but equitable distribution to the right kind of food, with the right kind of nutrients, and a small environmental footprint

To reach the zero hunger goal we need to include all food sources. Sustainable production of aquatic food contributes to food security and nutrition as a source of nutrients and as a provider of income and livelihoods for many communities<sup>4</sup>. Micronutrient deficiencies affect the growth, development, and well-being of hundreds of millions of people<sup>5</sup>. Increasing the consumption of food from the oceans and inland waters can contribute to combating micronutrient deficiencies. Aquatic food is a unique source of essential fatty acids, bioavailable protein and essential micronutrients (including vitamins A, B and D and mineral such as calcium, phosphorus, iodine, zinc, iron and selenium). Many of these nutrients are of great public health concern<sup>6</sup>.

Climate change, environmental pollution, increased pressure on natural resources, overfishing, ocean acidification, marine litter, food waste, among other factors, pose threats to food security and nutrition. The entire value chain must be included to find solutions, including livelihood opportunities, equitable distribution, and reduction of post-harvest losses. By managing the aquatic resources sustainably and keep our oceans and inland waters clean, food from these waters can buffer both present and upcoming food security and nutrition challenges.

## Goals and objectives

International commitments through the ICN2<sup>7</sup>, global nutrition and NCD-targets<sup>8</sup>, and the SDGs<sup>9</sup> provide the overarching objectives for the Nutrition Decade. The network supports these commitments by aiming to mobilize actions from healthy water to healthy people to include aquatic food as a key food source for achieving global food security and improved nutrition. It is therefore envisaged that the network works towards a) increasing evidence-based awareness of the role of sustainable food from the oceans and inland waters for food security and nutrition, and b) increase the production and consumption of sustainable nutritious food from these waters.

## Expected activities and accomplishments

The network country members will jointly develop and agree upon common work plans for the fulfillment of the network's objectives and implementation of the activities. Examples include:

- Increased action in line with the policy recommendations on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition in the CFS global strategy<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3844e.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5555e.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/HLPE\\_Reports/HLPE-Report-12\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-12_EN.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-m1542e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/94384/1/9789241506236\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/94384/1/9789241506236_eng.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>9</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-av032e.pdf>

- Promote and advocate for the development of new knowledge through interdisciplinary and collaborative research and the alignment of international research agendas with the Network's holistic approach, "from healthy waters to healthy people"
- Share knowledge about, experiences gained, and challenges faced with:
  - production of sustainable food from the oceans and inland waters
  - knowledge/evidence- based management and
  - consumption of food from the oceans and inland waters as part of a healthy diet

The network may be a good way to share information through various means about relevant initiatives and work, and to establish connections between experts, for instance by organizing network meetings for people working with sustainable seafood production, nutrition and health, developing policy management and enforcement.

## Indicators of achievement

The indicators are based on the accomplishments expected. Examples include:

- Number of countries /of network members that implement national SMART commitments for actions with the aim to achieve sustainable seafood production and increased consumption of food from the oceans and inland waters
- Number of countries /of network members with an established policy that include activities on promoting the consumption and/or production of sustainable food from aquatic sources

## Network participants

All UN Member States are welcome to join the network. The participants are expected to actively partake in network activities, including suggesting points of action and taking steps towards their implementation. The national representatives should come from a ministry or another public institution that cover areas related to sustainable seafood, food security, nutrition and health. As food security and nutrition is a complex issue, consideration of cross-sectorial competence is suggested.

The Global Action Network is country owned and country driven. The Network Member States recognize the value of working together in reaching the common goals. Other stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society, including academic institutions, and regional and intergovernmental organizations play important roles to realize the potential of aquatic foods contribution to food security and nutrition. Thus, these stakeholders may join the network and participate in the network's activities, be invited to specific agendas or entire sessions of the network. International organizations such as FAO, WHO, the Secretariat of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), UN Environment, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Secretariat of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), or the World Bank Group may also be invited to participate in network's meetings.

## Relevant documents

The report from the High-Level Panel of Experts under CFS on Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition<sup>4</sup> may serve as a basis. In addition, the recommendations, based on the report and included in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition (GSF)<sup>10</sup>, as well as The 2016 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture contributing to food security and nutrition for all<sup>5</sup> and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing

Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty<sup>11</sup> will be relevant documents for the network. Emerging quality analytical works may also be considered relevant, particularly those developed in collaboration with member countries stakeholders as outlined above.

## Network meetings

Network meetings are by invitation and do not constitute public events. They may be held virtually and/or in person and should be seen as opportunities for exchange of experiences on content and implementation between country representatives to foster policy dialogue. Network members should decide on where and how network meetings are hosted, set the meeting agendas and invite the stakeholders they wish to engage. Norway, as the initiating country, will cover the costs of the first network meeting to establish the network. Network members should bear the costs of their own participation in the network meetings unless financial support can be provided by the host country.

The joint FAO/WHO Secretariat of the Nutrition Decade will act as a facilitator to support the action network.

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/l4356EN>