



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

Summary from the Network Meeting, 11th October 2022, FAO Headquarter Rome/Virtual on zoom

Executive Summary

- Meeting chaired by Norway, the leader of the Global Action Network
- Welcoming remarks by the joint WHO/FAO leadership of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition
- Introduction of the network by the network leadership for new participants
- Relevant actions conducted by participants
- Progress and status on 2022 actions by the leadership of the network and 2022 working groups
- Walk the talk in 2023
 - Themes
 - Working groups
- Relevant upcoming events
- TaskForce 2023 established
- Working groups 2023 established (participants are welcome to join any of these groups by emailing foodfromtheocean@hi.no)
 - Related to International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)
 - Related to One Food System – a blue & green approach for actions on food and feed within planetary boundaries
 - Related to Bridging the Decades – connection between the UN Ocean and UN Nutrition Decade
 - Related to Food Composition Data
- Inputs for further development of network tools for sharing knowledge and solutions
 - Gain and Share
 - Upcoming events
 - Newsletter

Please see the in-depth summary below for further information



In-depth Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to present the Global Action Network's status and achievements and to plan future work. At the meeting we shared actions made in 2022 in support of our [mission](#), and discussed how to continue mobilizing strong actions, and increase knowledge and awareness for sustainable aquatic food systems, food security and nutrition, in 2023. The meeting took place in conjunction with CFS50. A total of 99 people from 41 countries signed up, including representatives from government, institutions, NGOs and industry. It was organised as a hybrid meeting, and participants joined in person at the FAO headquarter as well as virtually via Zoom.

Welcoming remarks were held by the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition WHO/FAO joint leadership; They stressed that aquatic foods have important roles in safeguarding both human and planetary health. They reminded us about commitment to ensure sustainable food systems for healthy diets ([Rome Declaration](#), 2014), as well as the importance of aquatic foods in preventing food insecurity, malnutrition, diseases, and death. Progress has been made during the Nutrition Decade; however, nutrition challenges are growing. 3.1 billion people are unable to afford a healthy diet (2021), and 1.5 million deaths are attributed to diets low in seafood omega-3 fatty acids (2017). Transformation is needed. Food systems should be sustainable, resilient, and provide more diverse foods in an equitable manner with due attention to assessing environmental and health impact. The fisheries sector can play a unique role in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition as a provider of nutrients such as vital vitamins and minerals. Effort is needed to include fish in global discussions on food security and nutrition as well as in national nutritional policies. Unhealthy diets are a main risk factor for the global burden of disease, and aquatic foods can potentially have the largest impact against micronutrient deficiencies. The UN Nutrition Decade is inclusive and engages a wide range of stakeholders. Progress made towards the ICN2 commitments will be reviewed at the end of the Decade, providing contributions for setting priorities after 2025. The Global Action Network participants were encouraged to partake in the review process.

The Global Action Network is an open and informal network under the UN Nutrition Decade. A brief introduction was given: Sustainable food systems for healthy diets is an action area under the UN Nutrition Decade. Action Networks are established to accelerate implementation of commitments on food security and nutrition. Network activities are reported to the UN Secretary-General. The SDGs and the CFS recommendations for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and food security also provide a basis for the work. A [Mission Statement](#), a [Concept Document](#), and an [Action Plan](#) frame the work of the Global Action Network, focusing on sustainable aquatic food systems for food security and nutrition. The network shares relevant news and actions through the [Network's webpage](#), our [newsletters](#), [twitter](#) and [Linked-in](#) and a [Gain and share](#) tool is developed to share knowledge and practical solutions related to challenges in aquatic food systems. Several [meetings and events](#) have been arranged so far to showcase how to walk the talk. **Participants were reminded that they are welcome to provide inputs and share relevant information by contacting the [secretariat](#).**

Participants also shared information on important work supporting the mission in 2022 and discussed how to walk the talk in 2023. The [networks leadership, secretariat, TaskForce 2022 and working groups](#) have been working actively through the year to follow up actions on topics identified at the [network meeting in November 2021](#). Many actors have contributed to the success of these events. We contributed to the webinar [Women and a changing tide: how to break the bias](#) by the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquacultures (IYAFA), and arranged the CFS50 side-event [Solutions for empowering women's engagement in aquatic food systems](#), to promote IYAFA. The value of regional cooperation was showcased and discussed at the webinar: [The gain of food system cooperation in the Nordic region-from healthy waters to healthy people](#), connected to the Nordic Council of Ministers. We also arranged the virtual side event [One food system: A paradigm shift including intersections between aquatic and terrestrial food systems](#) at the UN Ocean Conference 2022, where Norway also [committed](#) to continue the Global Action Network until 2030, bridging the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The network also supported side event applications on aquatic foods for food security and nutrition. Detailed information of all the network activities can be found under the attached links.

The head of the [Coordination HUB](#), established after the UN Food System Summit, gave a short status of their work. Several coalitions have emerged and the importance of integrating aquatic food into various work, such as the coalitions on School Meals and on Healthy Diets, was highlighted. Some network participants also follow the [Blue food coalition](#). The Blue food coalition seem to align with the mission of the Global Action Network, and the importance of close dialogue was highlighted, to ensure that new initiatives amplify ongoing work. So far, the Global Action Network



have shared information from the Blue food coalition, and the two initiatives have supported each other's side events and other initiatives. Both initiatives have a multistakeholder approach, which was highlighted by participants at the meeting as important to get the actions done. Reaching out to multistakeholder groups nationally was also encouraged.

During the dialogue many themes were highlighted as important for the Network to focus on. Such as the importance of low trophic food resources, seaweed and others, food composition data, food safety issues and food waste. The importance of funding to support poor countries in reaching their goals was also underscored, and to give these communities a voice. Connecting relevant initiatives, including academic and knowledge communities, was highlighted as important. It was suggested that the Network could seek to involve young researchers at universities to promote knowledge about aquatic foods and to increase the collection of data at regional and country level. "Inclusive language" was highlighted as important (use food production/ food systems instead of agriculture and agri food systems), to include aquatic foods in the general discussions on food security.

Based on interest from the participants it was decided to continue the Network working group on **IYAF**, which promotes the importance of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture – and the working group on **One Food System**, which promotes a blue/green approach for actions on food and feed within planetary boundaries. In addition, a new working group was established on **Bridging the Decades**, which will be looking at the connection between the UN Ocean and the UN Nutrition Decade. Linking the UN Ocean Decades activities and knowledge on aquatic food related topics (including also new food sources, low tropic aquaculture, mesopelagic etc) to the Global Action Network, looking at possibilities and limitations. Interested partners were Ireland and Norway. A fourth working group was suggested on **Food Composition Data**. FAO is upgrading the INFOODS database, and the U-Fish database will be upgraded with better data and more species. This working group will elaborate on promoting the importance of food composition data for food and nutrition policies. FAO, Norway, and Japan expressed interest to partake in this working group. **Other stakeholders are welcome to actively partake in any of these four working groups by emailing the Global Action Network [Secretariat](#).**

The participants also discussed important arenas for highlighting the important role of aquatic foods, in addition to those the Network has attended. It was suggested that the Network could promote the importance of aquatic food systems at conferences on climate, such as [COP](#), on conferences on nutrition such as [22nd IUNS-ICN International Congress of Nutrition](#), and [Micronutrient Forum 6th Global Conference](#) and follow up meetings from the UN Food systems Summit (FSS), such as the healthy diet coalition and the school meal coalition. Further suggestions can be forwarded to the Global Action Network Secretariat WHO, FAO and other partners mentioned that they are launching an initiative on climate and nutrition at COP 27. Participants were reminded that such activities can be promoted by the Network or shared among the network participants through the network platform.

Network participants were welcomed to join the Network TaskForce 2023. The TaskForce, together with the Norwegian leadership, plans the network follow ups and actions. Leaders of the Network working groups are also invited to the TaskForce meetings. Representatives from UN Nutrition, Island, WorldFish and the University of Ghana have expressed that they wish to continue in the TaskForce in 2023. **Others may join the TaskForce by emailing the Global Action Network [Secretariat](#).**

