The United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition notes with appreciation the Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which presents progress made by Member States towards achieving SDG 3 and other health-related SDGs and targets, as well as the work carried out by the WHO Secretariat in support to Member States.

The UNSCN would have liked to see, however, a more prominent mention of the fundamental importance of healthy diets and improved nutrition to achieving SDG 3 and most other SDGs and vice versa. For instance, maternal nutritional status is closely linked to child’s nutrition and early childbearing contribute to malnutrition of both the young mother and her child. The persistent high levels of stunting, as mentioned in the report, will not be reduced significantly without proper attention to early childbearing. Malnutrition magnifies the effect of infectious diseases. A malnourished person has more severe disease episodes, more complications, and spends more time ill for each episode. Diet is an important and undisputable risk factor for NCDs. Also, the nutrition-health linkages are so clearly important that efforts to strengthen health systems towards achieving Universal health coverage need necessarily to include the essential nutrition actions.

Finally, the UNSCN commends WHO’s efforts to work closely and coherently with all UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country level. Working as “one UN” is the only possible way to support countries towards achievement of the SDGs.