In an environment of revitalized global momentum for improving nutrition, WHO has affirmed its leadership role by developing its Ambition and Action in Nutrition 2016–2025. This strategic document, aligned to the timeframe of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, builds on a solid platform of WHO commitments, responds to the dynamic global and internal environments and defines the role and unique value of WHO for advancing nutrition.

VISION

A world free from all forms of malnutrition where all people achieve health and well-being
THREE CORE FUNCTIONS AND SIX PRIORITIES

MISSION

To work with Member States and partners to ensure universal access to effective nutrition actions and to healthy and sustainable diets. To do this WHO:

- uses its convening power to help set, align and advocate for priority actions to improve nutrition;
- develops evidence-informed guidance based on robust scientific and ethical frameworks;
- supports the adoption of guidance and implementation of effective actions;
- monitors and evaluates policy and programme implementation and nutrition outcomes.

LEADERSHIP

- Shape the narrative of the global nutrition agenda
- Leverage changes in relevant non-health sectors to improve and mainstream nutrition
- Leverage the implementation of effective nutrition policies and programmes in all settings, including in situations of emergencies and crisis

GUIDANCE

- Define healthy sustainable diets and guide the identification and use of effective nutrition actions
- Improve the availability of nutrition actions in health systems

MONITORING

- Support the establishment of targets and monitoring systems for nutrition
1. All forms of malnutrition need to be addressed to achieve the SDGs. The six Global Nutrition Targets and the diet-related Noncommunicable Disease Targets represent the main nutrition challenges.

2. All countries are affected by one or more forms of malnutrition.

3. Poor nutrition affects the economy, and investment in good nutrition has potentially important economic returns.

4. Nutrition needs to be addressed at every stage of life and access to a healthy diet is a human right.

5. Good nutrition in early life is critical for child health and development and for adult functional capacity.

6. The basic underlying causes of malnutrition are food systems that are not conducive to healthy diets, weak health systems and environmental challenges.

7. Improving nutrition requires action in multiple sectors and with multiple partners simultaneously, including food safety, water and sanitation, and physical activity, as described in the Second International Conference on Nutrition Framework for Action.

8. Providing healthy diets to all is crucial to ensuring optimal health for people and the planet.

9. Solid evidence exists for effective programmes and policies, and action should be carried out urgently and at scale, leveraging the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

10. Improving nutrition is a responsibility for all actors of society, but government leadership is essential to ensure that all actions are conducted in the public interest.

WHO’S AMBITION AND ACTION IN NUTRITION 2016–2025 IS BASED ON A CLEAR RESULTS CHAIN

The results chain articulates how the unique strengths and core activities of the Organization contribute to reducing malnutrition and to preventing and treating noncommunicable diseases.
WHY THIS STRATEGIC APPROACH, AND WHY NOW?

WHO’S AMBITION AND ACTION IN NUTRITION 2016–2025 RESPONDS TO A DYNAMIC GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–2025 have revitalized global momentum for improving nutrition. Nutrition contributes directly to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, is a decisive enabler of SDG 3 and is paramount to ensuring the success of other SDGs.

There is a clear expectation that WHO play a leadership role in the complex global nutrition landscape. Agendas must be aligned in order to avoid overlap, incoherence and duplication of work, and to ensure mechanisms that safeguard public health at all levels. The UN General Assembly calls upon WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to lead implementation of the Nutrition Decade.

WHO’S AMBITION AND ACTION IN NUTRITION 2016–2025 RESPONDS TO A CHANGING INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The process of WHO reform calls for fresh and cohesive cost-effective approaches to meet rising expectations from Member States and the global community. WHO’s Ambition and Action in Nutrition 2016–2025 addresses the dual nature of the Organization’s work on nutrition (a specific programme area as well as an implicit contributor to other programme areas) in order to avert the risk of strategic and operational dilution. It recognizes that getting results will require significant investment in improving nutrition capacities particularly in countries, and thus defines a clear allocation of roles between WHO headquarters, regional and country levels, and proposes mechanisms to improve efficiency and coherence.

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1 SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
2 SDG3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.