UN NUTRITION Statement at the
SEVENTY-FOURTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

UN Nutrition is an inter-agency coordination mechanism for nutrition, stemming from the merger of the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the UN Network for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. At the global level, WHO's ADG Dr Naoko Yamamoto currently serves as the UN Nutrition Chair and WHO is an active member of its Steering Committee. WHO is also engaged in the UN Nutrition collective at the country level, including in 54 SUN countries.[1] The Secretariat assists WHO and FAO in their joint efforts to implement the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025), including by creating firm linkages between nutrition and health services, climate change, biodiversity, social protection, education, women's empowerment, innovative financing, and more. UN Nutrition adopts human rights-based approaches and promotes the right to food, advocating for the need to address underlying inequalities in food and health systems and other social and environmental determinants of health and nutrition.

UN Nutrition notes with deep appreciation the huge efforts being carried out by Member States for tackling and containing the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to address other health priorities and ensuring one **billion more people** benefit from universal health coverage. In addition, UN Nutrition would recommend highlighting the fundamental importance of food systems functioning so that they deliver sustainable healthy diets for all. This is crucial for addressing concomitantly several of the priorities under discussion at the WHA74.

Unhealthy diets are a leading cause of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and oral health is also highly influenced by dietary quality (Agenda item 13.2). Improving nutrition is a key pillar of WHO's global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs. Furthermore, people living with NCDs are more vulnerable to becoming severely ill or die from COVID-19.[2] Healthy diets are at the core of efforts to prevent and control diseases and promote the health of women, children and adolescents (Agenda item 16). Ensuring sustainable healthy diets is a triple-duty action, which protects against undernutrition, overweight and obesity, while safeguarding One Health – human, animal and environment.

UN Nutrition 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. Nevertheless, UN Nutrition would like to highlight in Agenda item 32, the need to underscore the productive collaboration within the United Nations System and with other intergovernmental organizations in nutrition. Working as "one UN" is the only possible way to support countries towards a brighter future, leaving no one behind.

Finally, UN Nutrition reminds all delegations that 2021 is the Year of Action on Nutrition. The UN Food Systems Summit will take place in September and the Nutrition for Growth Summit will be held in December, providing outlets to mobilize commitments for nutrition. The window is open, and the opportunity is now for transforming food systems so that people are at the heart and nutrition outcomes are the principal measure of success.

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[1] UN Network Secretariat. 2020. *UN Network Annual Report, 2020*. Available at https://bit.ly/3pxN7NG.
[2] WHO. 2020. *Information note on COVID-19 and NCDs*. Available at: https://www.who.int/who-documents-detail/covid-19-and-ncds.