



# WHO

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*FOOD AND  
NUTRITION ACTION  
PLANS IN  
SOUTH-EAST  
EUROPE:  
A WORKSHOP FOR  
POLICY-MAKERS*

Report on a WHO Workshop

Kranj, Slovenia  
1–3 June 2000

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2000

EUROPEAN HEALTH21 TARGET 11

## EUROPEAN HEALTH21 TARGET 11

### HEALTHIER LIVING

By the year 2015, people across society should have adopted healthier patterns of living

*(Adopted by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its forty-eighth session, Copenhagen, September 1998)*

#### ABSTRACT

Following a consultation in Malta in November 1999, attended by representatives of most of the 51 Member States of the WHO European Region, the Regional Office began a process to help develop food and nutrition action plans throughout the Region. The participants in the present workshop were from south-east Europe and neighbouring countries. They met to improve the skills needed to develop intersectoral policies in relation to food and nutrition, and to establish a food and nutrition network for south-east Europe. This will enable them to promote sustainable development as well as regional cohesion and stability through the development of food and nutrition action plans. The 35 participants, who came from 8 countries and represented 7 different sectors, expressed interest in and commitment to developing vital cross-sectoral links in the areas of nutrition, food safety and sustainable development. The workshop was based on a training manual entitled *Food and nutrition action plans. A manual for policy-makers*, which is being developed. The Workshop therefore served to test the training manual, and the participants provided useful feedback in this respect.

#### Keywords

NUTRITION POLICY  
REGIONAL HEALTH PLANNING  
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EUROPE, SOUTHERN  
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Dr Dunja Pičkur Kosmač, State Secretary for Health, Dr Anton Svetlin, State Secretary for Agriculture, Dr Dunja Sever, Ministry of Health, and Dr Liliana Vouk, Nutritionist, are all sincerely thanked for their participation and invaluable contribution to this initiative. Finally, the enthusiastic participation of all the professionals from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia who attended the workshop is greatly appreciated.



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## Foreword

This report summarizes a pilot workshop, designed to test workshop materials on food and nutrition policy, held in June 2000 at Hotel Kokra in Kranj, Slovenia. It was jointly organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe (the Food and Nutrition Policy unit, the Countrywide Integrated Noncommunicable Disease Intervention (CINDI) programme and the Child Health Development unit), Copenhagen, as well as the Centre for Food Policy at Thames Valley University, London. Arrangements at the course site were coordinated by the Ministry of Health of Slovenia, Vesna-Kerstin Petric, the WHO Liaison Officer for Slovenia, as well as Dr Jozica Mavcec Zakotnik, Director of CINDI-Slovenia.

The training manual *Food and nutrition action plans. A manual for policy-makers* is being developed by Professor Tim Lang, with the support of Dr Martin Caraher, Dr Charlie Clutterbuck and Ms Chizuru Nishida.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together participants from professional and organizational backgrounds to explore current policy related to food and nutrition; to develop an intersectoral food safety, nutrition and supply chain action plan; and to evaluate current policies in the light of new objectives and changing circumstances. The workshop sessions were accompanied by working groups at which participants were set a series of activities aimed at contributing to the elaboration of a strategy to develop and implement a national food and nutrition action plan.

The purpose of bringing together countries of south-east Europe and neighbours in this initiative was to:

- build on natural advantages and geo-economic position of south-east European countries in relation to food and nutrition policy;
- promote sustainable development in south-east Europe as well as regional cohesion and stability through development of food and nutrition and action plans;
- improve skills needed to develop intersectoral policies in relation to food and nutrition;
- establish a south-east European Food and Nutrition Network.

The 35 participants came from 8 different countries (see participants list, Annex 2) and represented 7 different sectors, thanks in particular to the tremendous efforts of the Slovenian hosts and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This show of interest and commitment across sectors was especially gratifying as it demonstrates that the vital cross-sectoral links on the topics of nutrition, food safety and sustainable development and social concerns are being recognized and acted upon at the policy level.

The majority of participants attended the whole workshop (see Programme, Annex 1) and completed pre-questionnaires before and evaluation forms at the end of the workshop. Everyone gave constructive and mainly positive feedback, both formally and informally, on the relevance, usefulness and quality of the workshop. The feedback from participants will be used to further develop and improve the tool “Intersectoral Policy Development for Decision-makers”.

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## Background

Since the report of the International Conference on Nutrition was launched in 1992, it has served as a motivating force around the world for helping countries to develop and implement food and nutrition policies.

The dynamic world food system makes it hard for national governments to keep pace of the changes and to enable legislation to tackle the global food system. Recent food scares such as the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis in the United Kingdom, the Asian flu crisis with the chickens in Hong Kong and China and the breakdown of the food supply system in the Russian Federation and the newly independent states highlight the importance of the need for global surveillance and response systems. Changes in health and health protection legislation can be difficult to achieve and slow to bring about at both international and national level. Enlightened administrators and policy-makers can play a pivotal role in enabling the transformation needed. Food and nutrition policy is important at all levels ranging from global/international through regional to the local level. Once higher level decision-makers have been sensitized to the importance of food and nutrition policies, the importance of an interagency approach and the changes necessary to attain it, they will be more likely to encourage and support the continuing education needs of mid-level and local professionals. Those who know how to work with personnel and budgets and how to initiate institutional change will need to be convinced of the long-term value and benefits to society.

This course has been designed as a multidisciplinary one intended for those able to influence policies related to food and nutrition. The participants can come from a range of backgrounds such as policy-making, health, academia, agriculture, environment, education, social welfare, finance, the food industry and the nongovernmental sector. Any healthy food and nutrition policy needs to involve all the sectors and key players in its remit, food policy is not just the concern of governments and health professionals, but also consumers and the food producers and industry. Because of the changing nature of food safety and security it is imperative that the participants represent as many sectors as possible. The course lasted 3 days and in a practical way addressed specific topics relevant to food policy, the public health implications of food security and safety, how to address common barriers to change, and how to develop a food and nutrition action plan.

## Introduction to the workshop

The WHO Regional Office for Europe began a process to help develop Food and Nutrition Action Plans throughout the Region following a consultation in Malta in November 1999<sup>1</sup> attended by most of the 51 Member States. This strategy is based upon WHO's policy and action plan of delivering food-related public health by using three core subjects: nutrition, food safety and sustainable development.

The objectives of this workshop were to:

- encourage debate over a range of issues related to food policy;
- identify local, national and international forces which are barriers to change and those which are helping forces;

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<sup>1</sup> *Consultation on the Development of the First Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the WHO European Region, Malta, 8–10 November 1999.*

- help participants gain knowledge, skills and confidence about latest developments in food and nutrition policy; and apply those to their situation;
- clarify directions for the future both for participants and the policy process;
- identify actions that the participants can take following the course to begin to influence food policy;
- begin to develop an intersectoral action plan and an agreed schedule of action which participants can go away with and begin to put into action;
- help participants identify missing gaps in their repertoire of skills, necessary to successfully implement such an action plan.

## Workshop description

The workshop comprised 10 sessions presented over a period of three days, prefaced by the completion of a pre-course questionnaire, which serves as baseline information to compare with the evaluation information given in the final session of the course.

In total, 30 pre-course questionnaires were completed, although several were returned on the second and third days. For detailed responses, please turn to Annex 3. Most participants came from organizations that had been officially designated responsible for developing a national food and nutrition action plan. Examples of positive initiatives towards food and nutrition action plan development included harmonization of legislation, health promotion and consumer protection programmes, and food safety analyses. The most common difficulty was said to be lack of resources; also included was lack of team work and cooperation, especially intersectoral.

Expectations from the workshop included:

- raising awareness among policy-makers and pushing the issue onto the political agenda;
- intersectoral collaboration;
- making links with other countries;
- network building among specialists;
- making comparisons with those countries already having experience in developing food and nutrition action plans.

Each session was organized using the same basic format, with a session cover sheet providing a quick overview of the whole session, namely:

- Aims of the session
- Time the session should last
- Teaching methods, such as activity, lecture, small group work
- Plan which provides an overview of what the session does
- Outcomes that will tell the course coordinator what participants should have by the end of the session.

The 10 sessions were the following:

1. Mapping yourself and work in the world of food.
2. The impact of food on public health.
3. The policy context: what is a food and nutrition policy? Why have one?
4. Links between nutrition and other international policy.
5. Examples of government food and nutrition policies in practice.



6. Campaigning for food and nutrition policy.
7. The WHO Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the European Region.
8. Identifying targets, actions and strategy.
9. Building partnerships for your new/existing food and nutrition action plan.
10. Review of course.

An informal, although important part of the workshop was social events, ranging from coffee breaks to receptions, during which participants met each other, exchanged ideas and information, and gave feedback to workshop facilitators. This was an integral part of the process to create dialogue between participants from different countries and sectors, and a sense of cohesion in the development of food and nutrition policy. The social and informal interaction is vital part of establishing and maintaining a sustainable food and nutrition network in south-east Europe. The creation of networks and team-building was also facilitated by the residential accommodations.

The programme of the workshop is provided in Annex 1.

## **DAY 1**

### **Opening speeches and presentation by Slovenian representatives**

Dr Dunja Pičkur Kosmač, State Secretary for Health, opened the workshop with the following words:

I would like to welcome all of you and in particular the organizer of this first Consultation on the Development of food and nutrition action plans in south-east Europe, the Regional WHO Office for Europe. It is an honour for me to be here with you while you are trying to do something as important as developing food and nutrition strategies for our countries.

I think we would all agree that the food in this part of the world is delicious. Mediterranean and oriental cuisines, Viennese and Italian influences, all mixed in different and unique combinations has resulted in a long tradition of indulging our love of good food and combining it with all important events of our life.

But there are other facts that speak for themselves. The data from a recent national survey show that in Slovenia nutrition habits of our population are not in terms of health as we would wish them to be. Our diet includes too much fat and too large a proportion consists of saturated fats, it includes too little composed carbohydrates and not enough fruit and vegetables.

We could also do much better concerning the regime of eating and the ways of preparing food. Food related risk factors are high and there is an increasing trend in cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

I perceive this meeting as an opportunity for our countries to tackle food and nutrition problems more actively and efficiently to establish stronger links between all responsible sectors. Health, a condition for sustainable development, is undoubtedly of common interest of all of us.

Dear participants, on behalf of the Ministry of Health and on my behalf I wish you a lot of inspiration while trying to develop a common framework for food and nutrition action plans in this part of Europe.

Dr Anton Svetlin, State Secretary for Food and Veterinary, welcomed the conference organizers and participants with the following words:

It is a great honour to be able to welcome this gathering of distinguished foreign and domestic guests and participants at this conference. I welcome you on behalf of the Minister, Mr Smrkolj, and in my name, as the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The conference, which will take three days, will address the topic of the First Food and Nutrition Action Plan for south-east Europe and countries within the Stability Pact.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food is the government authority providing the necessary framework for the national policy on agriculture, food and nutrition, with the aim of ensuring healthy, safe food. This is indicated by activities which follow the objective of producing healthier food and, in particular,

of protecting and maintaining special agri-foodstuffs of higher quality. In this way, protection of public health is indirectly ensured. The representatives of the Ministry will actively participate in the group working on the formulation of the national food and nutrition policy.

I hope that the organization of the conference will prove to be successful for the Ministry of Health and the other organizers. I also wish much success in their work to the government experts and other professionals who will actively take part in the conference.

Dr Robertson welcomed the workshop participants on behalf of the WHO Regional Director and in particular thanked the Slovenian government for hosting this event and gathering representatives from a wide range of sectors to take part in the workshop. She also thanked the FAO for supporting the participation of members of the Ministry of Agriculture. Dr Robertson spoke of the ongoing development of the Food and Nutrition Action Plan, now entitled *The impact of food and nutrition on public health: The case for a food and nutrition policy and action plan for the European Region of WHO 2000–2005* which will be presented to the Regional Committee of the WHO Regional Office for Europe in September 2000. This presents a unique opportunity to place food and nutrition firmly in the public health political agenda. This compliments and strengthens similar initiatives by the European Union, such as the White Paper on Food Safety<sup>2</sup> and the French Presidency initiative.<sup>3</sup> Before she introduced Professor Tim Lang and thanked him for his predominant role in developing the training materials, Dr Robertson summarized the main workshop objective: namely, for participating countries to begin developing a national food and nutrition action plan. A follow-up meeting will take place in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in April 2001, wherein countries will report back on their progress.

Dr Dunja Sever from the Ministry of Health spoke of the role of the State in the conduct of food and nutrition policy from the viewpoint of human health protection:

One of the basic social goals of each contemporary state is preserving, strengthening and restoring the health of its population. Health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but also the highest possible physical, mental and social well-being of an individual, or of the greatest possible number of people, balanced with the environment where they live and work. Health is closely linked with the nutritional habits of the population. Nutrition is a fundamental pillar of human life, health and development across the entire life span. From the earliest stages of foetal development, at birth, through infancy, childhood, adolescence and on into adulthood and old age, proper food and good nutrition are essential for survival, physical growth, mental development, performance and productivity, health and wellbeing.

The basis of healthy diets is safe food of reliable quality. Food is the major source of exposure to pathogenic agents – chemical, biological and physical. Foods contaminated with unacceptable levels of pathogenic agents impose substantial health risks to consumers and severe economic burdens on individual communities and nations. Food safety and quality control ensures that desirable characteristics of food are retained through all stages of food supply chain (“from farm to fork”). Good collaboration between nutrition and food safety is essential because the public and consumers perceive food in a holistic way. Consumers want good wholesome food they can enjoy without fear. Access to safe healthy food is a human right underpinned by HEALTH21.

Food is also a commodity that contributes to a country’s national economy. Food and food products have become commodities produced and traded in a market that has expanded from an essential local base to an increasingly global one. Changes in the world food economy contribute to shifting dietary patterns, for example increased consumption of an energy diet high in fat, particularly saturated fat, and low in carbohydrates. This combines with a decline in energy expenditure that is associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

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<sup>2</sup> *White Paper on Food Safety*, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, January 2000, COM (1999) 719 final.

<sup>3</sup> Société Française de Santé Publique. *Health and human nutrition: Elements for European action*. Draft Working Paper for the French Presidency of the European Union, July 2000.

Rapid changes in diet and lifestyles resulting from industrialization, urbanization, economic development and market globalization are having a significant impact on the nutritional status of populations. Because of these changes in dietary and lifestyle patterns, diet related diseases – including obesity, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and stroke, and various forms of cancer – are increasingly significant causes of disability and premature death in both developing and newly developing countries. They are taking over from more traditional health concerns like undernutrition and infectious disease, and placing additional burdens on national health budgets. Evidences suggest that many of these premature deaths and disabilities should be preventable by change in diet and in other aspects of lifestyle.

Health is such a vast concept that each political segment influences the state of health of the population. Consequently, health can only be ensured by the coordinated integration of health policy interest into politics. Among social entities, the state is the most accountable for the health condition of the population.

The state should:

- Be aware of the relation between the changes in nutrition (resulting from economic development) and the consequential modifications in the health of its population.
- Strive to achieve an optimal national diet in relation to the existing economic progress, which restricts the risks to health to the greatest possible extent.
- Develop the policy of healthy food and nutrition.

To be successful, food and nutrition policy in addition to being physiologically sound, must be politically viable, economically feasible and culturally acceptable. To achieve this food a nutrition policy must have the credibility provided by scientific and epidemiological evidence, have political and technical support, and be regarded as necessary and convenient by the consumer.

All this indicate that the development and implementation of food and nutrition policy require multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach:

- The development and implementation of food and nutrition policy require the participation of government sectors involved in health, agriculture, environment, economics, education, social welfare, planning and development, all of them with support from the highest levels of decision-making.
- Technical or operational assistance should be provided by the food and nutrition community, universities, nongovernmental organizations interested in health and social development, and also by food industry, retail, catering industry and others.
- Consumer representatives should be included at the earliest possible stage in the process of policy-making as well as in policy implementation.

In formulating specific nutrition and food policy, the details required to prevent chronic non communicable diseases and promote healthy nutrition vary according to a country's political, cultural, social and economic *circumstances, the health of its population, the possibilities of producing or importing foods and food ingredients, the diseases to be prevented and the characteristics of the target population groups.*

For formulating specific nutrition and food policy different types of information would be needed and should be collected:

- Three fundamental types of information which should be collected by the Ministry of Health are: the current of, and trends in, nutritional status of the population (nutritional surveillance); health statistics relating to nutritionally linked diseases; data on the current state and trends in food supply plus dietary survey data.
- Other types of information include: agricultural data, food production data, food production statistics, market structure, import/export policies, food security measures, public perception and economic evaluation of policy proposals.

Effective food and nutrition policy requires coordinated action by different ministries. These actions should involve the whole food chain, from the production or importation of food through to its consumption. There is a need for greater emphasis on health in the formulation of agricultural policies, and of economic, import/export, employment and education policies. The government processes relating to food production, distribution and sale, trade policies, economic policy, and educational systems should be integrated with health concern. A possible way to achieving this is to establish intersectoral food and nutrition councils or to install mechanisms to secure better coordination between different ministries.

The council should develop food and nutrition policy and national food and nutrition action plan based on HEALTH21. Food and nutrition action plan should be comprehensive and include policy elements of proven

effectiveness. The action plan should have a clear timetable for implementation and comprehensive food and nutrition policy needs to be adequately funded.

*Slovenia:*

In Slovenia two new bodies shall be established in accordance with the provisions of an Act regulating the Sanitary Suitability of Foodstuffs, Products and Materials Coming into Contact with Foodstuffs (adoption: by the end of June 2000).

The Slovene government shall establish the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Foodstuffs and Nutrition as an intergovernmental body for food and nutrition. The Foodstuffs and Nutrition Board shall be established within the Ministry of Health.

The aforementioned Office shall be established to survey problems arising in the area of food and nutrition and shall carry out the following tasks:

- Survey of nutritional habits of population;
- Draw up a national programme on the implementation of food and nutrition policy;
- Coordinate the activities of ministries in the field of food and nutrition policy;
- Direct the population in healthy nutrition habits;
- Propose methods of carrying out the national monitoring of health and hygiene safety of foods;
- Coordinate international cooperation and activities in the field of food and nutrition;
- Carry out other tasks determined by the Slovene government.

The Foodstuffs and Nutrition Board, consisting of experts from the areas of health, agriculture, food technology, veterinarian medicine, consumer protection, education and the protection of the environment, shall operate as an expert and advisory body in the area of doctrinal, methodological and expert tasks in connection with the implementation of national nutrition and food policy and health problems related to food and nutrition.

The modification of behavioural patterns which are harmful to health, and which also interfere with nutrition, through introduction of healthy and well balanced diet as an important priority objective of the development of health protection policy, as well as the need for the following activities to reach the objectives:

- Making the population aware of basic principles of healthy, well balanced nutrition and introducing nutritional habits in the sense of correct choice of foodstuffs and biological composition of food;
- Organizing continuous nutritional surveillance in order to study health and statistical data on morbidity and mortality which are directly or indirectly related to the dietary regimen and quality of nutrition;
- Assessing the nutritional condition, in particular of population groups at risk;
- Taking part in the conduct of a national nutritional policy;
- Directing the population in the production and range of healthy food;
- Establishing two aforementioned bodies (Office and Board).

... are also addressed in the National programme of the Republic of Slovenia – Health for All by 2004.

## **The training workshop**

Participants worked on sessions 1–3

### **Session 1. Mapping yourself and work in the world of food**

Participants worked both in plenary and in small groups to situate themselves in the food system and determine the actors and influences on the food supply chain (see Fig. 1, Annex 5). The goals of the session were for participants to get:

- an understanding of the food supply chain;
- a clear idea of where they and others fit into the supply chain;
- an understanding of the factors determining what people eat;
- a good idea of how participants can influence the food supply chain both in a professional capacity and as consumers.

## **Session 2. The impact of food on public health**

Participants considered how food impacts on public health and how a food and nutrition policy can limit the risks and damages, and support and promote the positive aspects. The goals of this session were for participants to:

- have an understanding of the impact of food and nutrition on health;
- be able to identify the need for a comprehensive food and nutrition policy;
- be aware that this policy has to operate within society-wide trends such as globalization.

Marketing was not brought up at all, but in view of its significant role in the food supply chain, this will be added to the revised manual.

## **Session 3. The policy context: What is a food and nutrition policy? Why have one?**

Participants were provided the international and national context for food and nutrition policy and action plans. Participants identified which experts/sectors need to be included in the development of food and nutrition policy. They were then grouped by country and each group was allocated a topic, namely, 1) nutrition, 2) food safety or 3) sustainable development. According to their respective topic, each group was given a document to consider (Food safety and hygiene, the FNAP or the Urban FNAP). They listed the key features of the area they were examining and identified what their government had done in relation to the policy document they were asked to discuss (see Examples 1 and 2, Annex 5).

## **DAY 2**

Participants worked on sessions 4–8.

## **Session 4. Links between nutrition and other international policy**

The aims of session 4 were to:

- link two strategies, food safety and nutrition, to a sustainable food supply;
- discuss the different settings where strategies can be implemented;
- consider what governmental structures exist locally, nationally, and internationally to support development and implementation.

The participants were grouped by country and asked to map the international dimensions of some food crises by drawing a list of organizations at local, national, regional and international level that should be consulted to tackle the food problem effectively (see Examples 3, 4 and 5, Annex 5). The groups also started cross-linking the three WHO policy areas – nutrition, food safety and environment/sustainable development – with the various sectors that make up the food supply chain (see Table 1, Annex 5).

Within the context of the need for better regional collaboration within south-east Europe, the Stability Pact was discussed. The WHO Regional office and the Bosnia and Herzegovina WHO Liaison Office have already drafted a paper<sup>4</sup> that will provide a basis for developing a proposal on how developing a regional food and nutrition policy would strengthen stability within the region and feed into the Stability Pact.

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<sup>4</sup> Haris Hajrulahovic, Nezahat Ruzdic, Aileen Robertson. Land of opportunities fostering health, local economy and peace through food and nutrition and nutrition policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other Balkans countries, in preparation.

## Session 5. Examples of government food and nutrition policies in practice

The aims of session 5 were to:

- demonstrate government (national and local) policies in practice
- explore good practice
- inform participants about the diversity of initiatives.

Four case studies of government food and nutrition policies in action were presented, namely, *Norway's national food policy*, *Heartbeat Wales*, *the Toronto Food Policy Council* and *Integrating national nutritional and environmental goals: Scandinavian lessons*. The main factors for success were described as the following:

1. New perspective
2. Information
3. Teamwork
4. Multisectorality
5. Learning from others
6. Clarifying food practice
7. Imagination and feasibility.

Scandinavian initiatives which make the link between the three “pillars”<sup>5</sup> of food and nutrition policy (for instance by establishing national, multisectoral food and nutrition councils) were also discussed. Finally, Dr Liliana Vouk, nutritionist, presented a case study on developing a five-year food and nutrition action plan in one region of Slovenia.<sup>6</sup>

## Session 6. Campaigning for food and nutrition policy

Participants examined:

- what nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can do to help develop and implement food and nutrition policy;
- what makes campaigns successful;
- potential barriers to success.

Each country group was assigned a particular NGO to examine its function and role, and some positive lessons and barriers to food and nutrition policy (see Example 6, Annex 5).

## Session 7. The WHO Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the European Region

Session 7 began with an introduction to the Food and Nutrition Action Plan (FNAP) and a discussion on how it can assist individual countries in formulating their own plan.

It has now been agreed that participating countries will report back in April 2001 at a workshop in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the development of initial national strategies/draft action plans. It was suggested that examples of successful initiatives by other countries (Africa, South America) be brought to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as case studies to demonstrate how other nations under duress have been able to design and implement food and nutrition action plans despite the multifaceted hardship they face. A high level official from the Ministry of Finance in Slovenia stressed the importance of introducing food and nutrition policy

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<sup>5</sup> Nutrition, food safety and sustainable food supply.

<sup>6</sup> Presentation available from WHO Regional Office for Europe upon request; will be included as a case study in the revised training manual.

in a broadly supported national programme to ensure its survival through political changes. It was added that the above-mentioned successes are being studied to see whether the survival of action plans across political lines is a mere fluke or whether there is a particular process which allows written government decrees to be honoured by new governments. Finally, it was recommended that examining the burden and costs of disease is a way to get all sectors interested and concerned.

### **Session 8. Identifying targets, actions and strategy**

The day closed with an introduction to session 8, the aims of which were to:

- develop a strategy for national food and nutrition action plan; and
- identify immediate actions by individuals.

## **DAY 3**

Each country group identified the necessary actions, timing and individuals/groups (see Example 7, Annex 5) as well as key structural/corporate partners needed in the development of the FNAP. Most groups identified the first step as being the development of an intersectoral committee, led by the Ministry of Health, to draft the FNAP. There was also consensus about the need for an intersectoral approach, (health, agriculture, and all other relevant sectors) as well as the inclusion of professional organizations and trade unions.

### **Session 9. Building partnerships for your new/existing food and nutrition action plan**

The aims of session 9 were to:

- identify key structural or corporate partners for your food and nutrition action plan;
- create strategies to implement the food and nutrition action plan;
- use or modify a checklist to help the process be successful.

In this session the participants had an opportunity to analyse their partnerships and develop or strengthen their national FNAP.

### **Session 10. Review of course**

The course was evaluated by round-table feedback and written evaluation forms at the end of the workshop (see Annex 4). On the last morning a session was held in which participants and facilitators were invited to describe their experience of the course. They were asked to give both positive and negative experiences of the course. In addition, participants were asked to complete a written questionnaire.

#### **Round-table evaluation**

Positive comments about the workshop included:

- The course materials were relevant, well structured and helpful.
- One of the most valuable aspects of the workshop was the contact participants made with each other, particular across sectors.
- The facilitators were successful in demonstrating the link between nutrition, food safety and sustainable development.

- The interactive nature of the workshop was conducive to reinforcing teamwork skills, as well as identifying the potential difficulties in holding such a workshop.
- The workshop was an effective and motivating first step to involve other sectors in developing a plan.

Some participants wished for:

- more clearly defined tasks;
- more feedback from facilitators after reporting back on activities;
- more time should have been allocated for each activity;
- case studies of successful examples from countries in similar situations;
- the training materials to be sent before the actual workshop;
- inclusion of training activities on resource allocation and budgeting;
- brief presentations on how far each represented country has come (if at all) in their FNAP development.

### **Written evaluation**

Twenty-six questionnaires were completed and the detailed results are given in Annex 4. The majority of participants were satisfied with the length of the workshop, but some would have preferred shorter days. Two-thirds thought the course content was extremely relevant, the rest considered it somewhat relevant.

The quality of teaching was considered very high by most, and somewhat high by eight respondents. On the whole, the consensus was that the training materials were carefully planned and the teaching performance was engaging and serious, although laced with a welcome dose of humour.

The quality of the facilitated discussion was rated very high by most (nine put down “somewhat high”). One written comment noted that despite the high level of expertise among participants, the workshop still presented a good opportunity for learning. Another mentioned that difficulties arose from political and cultural differences among participants.

Additional comments included the wish for more specific information about dealing with other sectors (such as the media), as well as inclusion in the workshop of experts on project management, budgeting and enlisting civil society in this process.



*Annex 1*

**Programme**

**Wednesday 31 May**

1700 Registration  
1900 Welcome reception

**DAY 1 – Thursday 1 June**

0830–0900 Official welcome and opening of the workshop  
Dr Dunja Piskur Kosmac, State Secretary for Health  
Dr Anton Svetlin, State Secretary for Food and Veterinary  
Dr Aileen Robertson, Programme for Nutrition Policy, Infant Feeding and Food  
Security, WHO Regional Office for Europe  
Dr Dunja Sever, Ministry of Health, Slovenia  
0900–1030 Session 1: Mapping yourself and work in the world of food  
1030–1100 *Coffee break*  
1100–1230 Session 1 (continued)  
1230–1400 *Lunch break*  
1400–1530 Session 2: The impact of food on public health  
1530–1600 *Coffee break*  
1600–1800 Session 3: The policy context: What is food and nutrition policy? Why have one?

**DAY 2 – Friday 2 June**

0830–1030 Session 4: Links between nutrition and other international policy  
1030–1100 *Coffee break*  
1100–1230 Session 5: Examples of government food and nutrition policies in practice  
1230–1400 *Lunch break*  
1400–1530 Session 6: Campaigning for food and nutrition policy  
1530–1600 *Coffee break*  
1600–1730 Session 7: The WHO Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the European Region  
1730–1830 Session 8: Identifying targets, actions and strategy

**DAY 3 – Saturday 3 June**

0830–1030 Session 9: Building partnerships for your new/existing food and nutrition action plan  
1030–1100 *Coffee break*  
1100–1230 Session 9 (continued)  
1230–1400 *Lunch break*  
1400–1500 Session 10: Review of course

## Annex 2

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### Annex 3

## Results from pre-course questionnaire

A total of 30 questionnaires were completed.

### **Fields/positions represented:**

Representatives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Physicians, hygienists, NEHAP and CINDI coordinators, veterinary inspectors, agro-economists and engineers, professors at institute of public health.

### **1. What is the status of your organization in relation to either the development or furthering the action of a national food and nutrition action plan? (Please check one of the following)?**

- [4] Has not been involved in either the developemnt or actioning of the food and nutrition initiative
- [0] Has not yet decided whether to become involved
- [12] Has received an invitation to become involved
- [16] Has been officially designated resonsibilities in realtion to the food and nutrition action plan.

#### *Comments included:*

- Involved in broad sense
- Leading role in implementing food and nutrition action plan
- Expert multisectoral group being established to develop food and nutrition action plan
- Responsible agency not yet designated

### **2. Please list and describe any positive changes that have been made by your organization to support the food and nutrition action plan.**

#### *Comments included:*

- National nutrition surveys
- Establishment of food industry department at the Ministry of Agriculture
- Agricultural strategy
- Harmonization of legislation with EU legislation on food processing
- Multisectoral involvement to improve food supply
- Training of health inspectors on food safety – emphasis on HACCP
- Preparation of NEHAP
- Guidelines for institutional nutrition programme
- Organization of food and nutrition conference
- Preparation of national programme of consumer protection

### **3. What are the most important difficulties/challenges your facility still faces in supporting the food and nutrition action plan?**

#### *Comments included:*

- Lack of resources (capital and human)
- Lack of coordination among institutions
- Intersectoral work insufficient
- Ensuring food security through local food production
- Enforcement of food law; poor knowledge of existing regulations
- Lack of competent staff
- Lack of interest from politicians and policy-makers

**4. How could this course be most useful in helping your address these difficulties/challenges and in assisting your organization to fully support the development or the actions outlined in the food and nutrition action plan?**

*Comments included:*

- Raise awareness among policy-makers
- Learn about others' nutrition priorities and results (including cost–effectiveness and benefit of programmes conducted)
- Identify role and responsibilities of different sectors
- Learning from developing countries
- Push issue in government

**5. Please list any other expectations you have of this course.**

*Comments included:*

- Personal acquaintance with representatives of other sectors and other countries for future work and collaboration
- Comparison to other food and nutrition action plans in Europe (positive and negative experiences during development phase)
- Start intersectoral cooperation
- Create networks
- Better cooperation between Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health
- Best practice examples.

*Annex 4*

**Course evaluation by participants**

Total evaluation forms completed and returned: 26

**1. The time allotted to the session was:**

Too short	About right	Too long	No answer
2	23	0	1

*Comments include:*

- Some of the evening sessions were too long.
- The workdays were too long, but the length of the entire workshop is fine.

**2. Was the course content relevant to your work? Will it help make a contribution to the development or furthering of your food and nutrition action plan?**

Extremely relevant	Somewhat relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant
17	8	1	

*Comments include:*

- The course will contribute to the next steps in developing a FNAP.

**3. The quality of teaching was:**

Very high	Somewhat high	Somewhat low	Very low
17	8	1	

*Comments include:*

- We were not taught, but only given guidance on how to think this process through.
- Excellent lecture and performance; good preparation of materials.
- Carefully prepared training materials.
- Motivating and eye-opening.
- Excellent teaching methods.
- Excellent combination of serious presentation skills with humour; it keeps the audience patient.

**4. The quality of the facilitated discussion was:**

Very high	Somewhat high	Somewhat low	Very low
16	9	1	

*Comments include:*

- All participants already have significant knowledge and experience, but the workshop was an additional place to really learn.
- There were some differences in the cultural and political background of participants, their level of standards, as well as some language barriers.



**5. Do you have any other comments and suggestions for improving the session?**

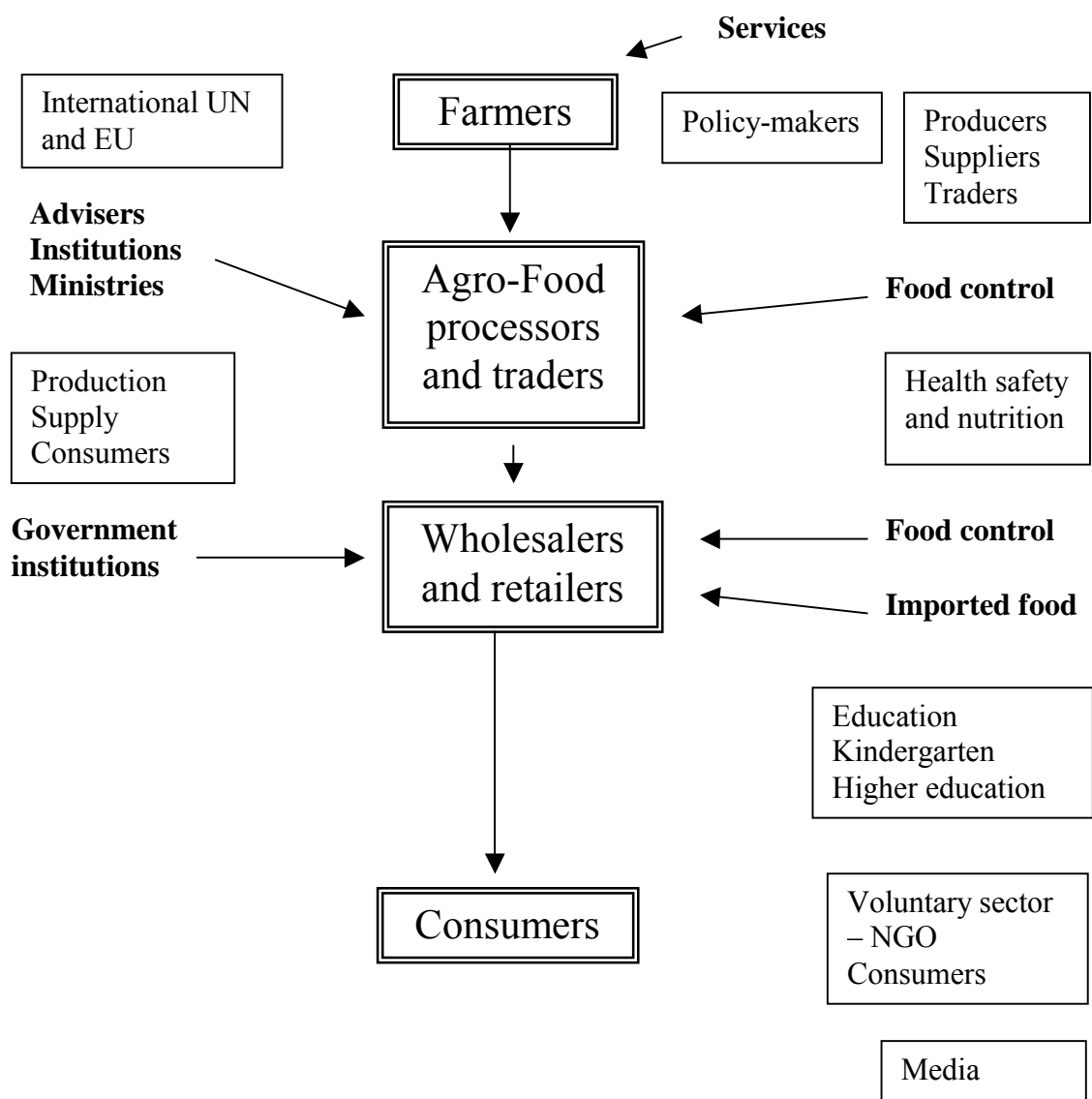
*Comments include:*

- I am sure the acquired knowledge will be crucial for my work in preparing the national food and nutrition action plan.
- Very well organized; everything was held at a very high level.
- (Needed) more direct information on dealing with specifics of other sectors (e.g. with media – study cases).
- Too many topics, too little information, not enough feedback. The only feedback from group work was “excellent”, “fabulous”, but no correction, no debate, no suggestion. I was expecting more formal presentations, detailed information, more time for studying the relevant and existing food and nutrition action plans of specific countries, their advantage and weaknesses.
- (Should have) more flexible discussion on a specific subject; some parts were very general and others too long.
- Most experts appeared to be experts in nutrition and medicine, but project management, budgeting, understanding how politics and civil society work is missing. This should be added for next similar conferences and workshops. Experts must learn how to prepare a competitive project and get it financed and politically supported.
- I liked the interactive approach and working in little groups but I think the tasks should be more clearly defined.

Annex 5

Several examples of the output from the working groups

Fig 1. The food supply chain



## EXAMPLES 1 AND 2

The participants were split up into groups and asked to consider the key features and existing national initiatives on either **food safety, nutrition or sustainable development** policies (Examples 1 and 2).

### Example 1

The group from Croatia addressed **sustainable development** in their country. They looked at the issue in terms of positive and negative trends.

Negatives	Positives
* Space problems	* New urban regulation about property construction
* Gardening near roads, leading to contamination: stricter traffic regulations needed	* Education at school on gardening
* Impossible to get permission to sell products at markets unless have over 2 hectares of land * Local shops need certificate of origin and compliance on food safety measures to sell produce originating from small gardens	* Open markets exist
* Less uncultivated arable land should be used	* Dietary habits are generally good (over 400g/d of F and V consumed); physical activity habits also satisfactory
* Organic waste composting is not habitual	* Credits for starting home gardens exist but are limited
* Greenhouses and irrigation schemes should be supported	* Strawberry Days are held annually whereby strawberries are sold at affordable prices, are widely available and are accompanied by dietary information for the public * Annual promotion of a variety of apples, a traditional fruit in Croatia
	* Positive re-enforcement of messages by media (TV, newspapers)

### Example 2

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia dealt with **food safety**. They spoke of the government-run Annual National Prevention Programme which is implemented by professional bodies and comprises:

1. *Surveillance and monitoring* of nutritional status, and analysis of statistical data on morbidity, mortality and foodborne diseases.
2. *Food control* relating to local production, trade, quality and contamination of export/import (microbiological pathogens, pests, heavy metals, residues, hormones, etc).
3. *Assessment of daily intake*.

The identified policy needs are:

1. Harmonized legislation with the EU.
2. The creation of an intersectoral committee on food safety.
3. Strengthening of infrastructure.

The following activities related to harmonization of the food control system are ongoing:

1. legislation
2. control regulation
3. national control laboratory
4. hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) system

5. establishment of a food safety agency
6. implementation of the Codex Alimentarius.

An annual report of activities is sent to consumer protection agencies and others for public information dissemination.

### EXAMPLES 3, 4 AND 5

Each group was allocated a **food problem** to analyse within an international framework, taking into consideration **actions and policy-making at four levels: local, national, regional and international**.

#### Example 3

Bosnia and Herzegovina dealt with a **food shortage**:

Short term solution	Donor organizations
International	UN (FAO, WHO, WFP, UNICEF) EU (ECHO, PHARE)
Regional	
National	Government, Ministries, expert teams
Local	Local authorities, local communities, humanitarian organizations, NGOs

#### Example 4

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia addressed a problem relating to the **health of young children**

International	Breastfeeding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF, WHO</li> <li>• support by making existing documents (declarations, etc) operational</li> <li>• intercountry networking</li> </ul>
Regional	Improving cooperation by implementing existing regulations
National	Regulatory instruments; training and education; health promotion; raising awareness on fund-raising.
Local	Research, food and nutrition action plan, media support, implementation and feedback, engaging NGOs

#### Example 5

Croatia considered a **food safety crisis**. The example they used was importing meat suspected of BSE contamination: what organizations should be contacted?

International	Embassies Foreign government bodies EU, WHO, WTO, FAO
Regional	
National	National Institute of Public Health Ministry of Health Veterinary Institute at the Ministry of Agriculture Border sanitary inspection Mass media
Local	County sanitary inspection County veterinary inspection

Table 1. Cross-linking WHO policy interests with sectors in the food supply chain

This table is a compilation of the different groups' results when cross-linking the three WHO policy areas – nutrition, food safety and sustainable food supply – with the various sectors that make up the food supply chain.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>Food safety</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	Local production Livestock, etc Security Seasonal variation	Use of pesticides Fertilization Transport Breeding practices Animal health	Reduction of pollution Appropriate technology and mechanization Urban planning Sustainable local development
<b>Food processing</b>	Healthy processing Production of food Labelling Low fat, sugar Fortification Dietary style	Hygiene Storage Transport GMP HACCP Quality assurance Food standards	Waste disposal Water contamination
<b>Retail and distribution</b>	Quantitative and qualitative redistribution Nutrient preservation Availability Freshness Accessibility Affordability	Hygiene Packaging Transport Storage Distribution	Waste disposal Transport Freons from cooling facilities Smooth border crossing
<b>Catering</b>	Healthy preparation Food variety Meal planning Proper technology Dietary habits	Hygiene Storage Transport Strengthening control and penalties	Waste disposal Anti smoking policy Organic waste Tourism regulation for waste disposal
<b>Consumers</b>	Health education Choice Knowledge Attitude Culture Awareness Fiscal policy	Hygiene Legal protection of consumers	Waste management Education Awareness of pollution Indoor air pollution
<b>Media</b>	Information Education Exchange of expertise Health promotion	Information Education	Information Recycling Education about proper waste management
<b>Other</b>	Promotion of healthy eating at all levels Obesity as a risk factor influencing health assurance Social and cultural aspect Migrant needs Tourism Exception situations...	Eating raw food of animal origin Condition of food preparation Inadequate food storage	

### Example 6

This exercise was aimed at exploring the contribution NGOs can make to food and nutrition policy.

Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland were assigned to work on **NGOs for urban agriculture**.

1. NGO function
  - Decision-makers may consult NGOs for the formulation of measures
  - However, when it is time to take concrete action, governments rarely get into contact with NGOs
  - Sometimes NGOs extend their mandate, redefine their objectives
  - Most work with international organizations than government level
2. Role
  - Promotion of interest of group
  - Provide the possibility for people to give feed back; unlike government's top-down approach
  - Lobbying
  - Economic growth and development
3. Positive outcomes
  - Improvement of the environment
  - Links between consumer and producer
  - Data and information
  - Assistance to policy-makers
  - Improved nutrition and food security
  - Social aspects
  - Economic aspects
  - Environment (waste)
  - Motivation
4. Barriers
  - Lack of good will
  - Lack of financial means
  - Lack of know-how
  - Lack of coordination
  - Lack of competition

### Example 7

In this activity participants worked on refining their action plans by outlining necessary actions, timing and who is responsible for them, as well as outlining the gaps.

Slovenia chose the following priorities for developing a food and nutrition policy:

- Legal basis
- Administrative basis (office and committee on food and nutrition policy)
- Targets:
  - to reduce the health, social, financial and other burdens of disease
  - to improve health, eating habits and healthy lifestyles
- Food safety
- Sustainable health-related food supply

Actions	Timing	Responsibility
Preparation of food-based dietary guidelines	Short term	Ministries of health, education, finance, MoEcon, CINDI-Slovenia
Preparation of food tables	Medium term	MAFF, MoH, MoSc, MoEd, MoFin
Promotion of physical activity	Short term	MoH, MoEd, Mlab, H.PPOF, Phys. Activity Prof, teachers, NGOs, media, local community
Nutritional labelling (information for consumers): geographical indication, bio products	Short term	MoH, MAFF
Raising awareness, knowledge and skills of consumers	Short term and permanent	All relevant ministries and professionals, media, NGO, CINDI-Slovenia
Nutritional education at all levels of schooling	Permanent	MoH, MoEd, MAFF, MoSc

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Nutritional education of professionals	Medium term and permanent	Universities, CINDI-Slovenia
Health education community actions	Short term and permanent	Local communities, mayors and other local authorities, media, NGOs, CINDI-Slovenia
Ensuring adequate quantities of safe and healthy foods through production and trade	Short term and permanent	MAFF, MoEnvi, MoEcon, MoFin.
Surveillance of health status	Permanent	MoH, CINDI
Surveillance of dietary habits	Permanent	MoH, MAFF, MoEd
Surveillance of food supply	Permanent	MAFF, MoEcon, Chamber of Commerce
Food safety legislation based on evidence-based findings	Short term	MoH, MAFF
Efficient food control	Permanent	MoH, MAFF, MoEcon
National monitoring of food contaminants	Short term and permanent	MoH, MAFF, MoEnvi
Surveillance of food-borne diseases	Permanent	MoH
Change and adaptation of agricultural policy	Medium term	MAFF, MoEcon, MoEnvi, MoFin, MoSc, farmers
Changes and adaptation of food processing industry	Medium term	MAFF, MoEcon, MoH, farmers, food industry, chamber of commerce
Protection of geographical names – protection of designation of origin and geographical indication, bio products, etc.		

**Gaps:** budget; professionals, experts; lack of time.

*Abbreviations:*

MAFF: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Econ.: Economics

Sc.: Science

Ed.: Education

Envi.: Environment

## Annex 6

### Documentation for participants

#### Nutrition

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Food consumption and exposure assessment of chemicals. (WHO/FSF/FOS/97.5) WHO/FAO 1997.

GEMS/FOOD Total Diet Studies. Report of a joint USFDA/WHO international workshop on total diet studies in cooperation with the Pan American Health Organization. WHO/SDE/PHE/FOS/99.9. 1999.



*Annex 7*

**Proposed Contents list of the  
National Food and Nutrition Policies and Action Plan**

- 1. Situation analysis**  
(using country report submitted at WHO Consultation in Malta, November 1999)
- 2. The goal and existing political commitments**
- 3. Social inequalities and the burden of food-related ill health**
  - 3.1 Foodborne diseases
  - 3.2 Malnutrition – poor feeding practices, nutrient deficiency and insufficient food
  - 3.3 Obesity and noncommunicable diseases
- 4. Food and nutrition strategies**
  - 4.1 A food safety strategy
  - 4.2 A nutrition strategy
  - 4.3 A sustainable food supply strategy (food security)
- 5. Proposed Action Plan 2000–2005**
  - 5.1 Suggested approaches
    - Developing a comprehensive approach – bringing the three strategies together
    - Monitoring health information
    - Improving knowledge
    - Mobilizing partners
    - Establishing a national advisory and coordination mechanisms with budget

**Refer also to the following:**

- **Developing national plans of action for nutrition. Guidelines.** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations FAO. Rome. 1993
- **Development of the first food and nutrition action plan for the WHO European Region.** Report on a WHO consultation, Malta, November 1999. EUR/ICP/LVNG 01 02 10. 2000.