



WHO

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FIRST ACTION PLAN FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY IN WHO EUROPEAN REGION 2000-2005

Progress Report for the period
2000-2002

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ABSTRACT

At the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2000, Member States (51) endorsed the First Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the WHO European Region. In collaboration with UNICEF, FAO and the European Commission, several workshops have been carried out to assist Member States in developing national food and nutrition action plans. A training manual has been developed to provide the framework for these workshops. A ministerial conference is planned in 2005 by which time it is hoped that all Member States will have national food and nutrition action plans. This report provides information on progress between 2000 and 2002 regarding implementation of the WHO Food and Nutrition Action Plan.

KEYWORDS

PROGRAMME EVALUATION
NUTRITION POLICY
FOOD HYGIENE
FOOD CONTAMINATION – prevention and control
EUROPE

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WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen

Contents

Introduction	4
Intersectoral Food and Nutrition Policy Development	4
National food and nutrition action plans	5
Southeast Europe.....	5
Baltic countries.....	5
Nordic countries	6
Southern Europe	6
Russian Federation	6
Central Asian Republics.....	6
European Food and Nutrition Task Force	6
WHO Regional Office for Europe	7
Meeting of all Member States, Greece, February 2003	8
Annex 1: WHO Regional Committee for Europe Resolution.....	9

Introduction

At the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2000, all Member States unanimously supported the First Food and Nutrition Action Plan for the WHO European Region. The session had to be extended to allow time for the many positive interventions. The Regional Committee endorsed Resolution No.8 (Annex 1) regarding *The Impact of Food and Nutrition on Public Health the case for a Food and Nutrition Policy and an Action Plan for the European Region of WHO, 2000–2005*, confirming that there will be a WHO ministerial conference in 2005. The ministerial conference will provide the opportunity to assess the progress made during 2000-2005 by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and Member States. UNICEF, FAO and the European Commission participated and commented on the Action Plan during the Regional Committee. Several WHO programmes, including those on food safety, child health and development, CINDI, national environmental health action plans (NEHAPs), country health and nutrition and food security, worked together to develop the Action Plan. This report provides information on progress between 2000 and 2002 regarding implementation of the Food and Nutrition Action Plan.

Intersectoral Food and Nutrition Policy Development

To assist Member States in developing and implementing national food and nutrition action plans, WHO developed a 3-day training manual “Intersectoral food and nutrition policy development – a training manual for decision makers”. Generally three workshops have been held in each sub-region, the first using this training manual as a basis, the second where countries present draft action plans and receive feedback and advice and the third where they present their final action plans and implementation is discussed. The political situation in member states varies a lot, therefore extra workshops and advice were provided in some cases.

This training manual has been used in the following sub-regions: southeast Europe, Baltic and Nordic countries and southern Europe. Up to September 2002, a total of 28 countries have participated in 7 workshops.

National food and nutrition action plans

The above training manual provided the framework for the workshops carried out in the following sub-regions, in collaboration with FAO, UNICEF and the European Commission.

Southeast Europe

The following countries are involved in development of national food and nutrition action plans in the sub-region of southeast Europe:

- Albania
- Bulgaria
- Bosnia & Hercegovina
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Yugoslavia

The first workshop on development of national Food and Nutrition Action Plans in southeast Europe was held in Slovenia, 1-3 June 2000, the second took place in Bulgaria, October 2001 and the third in Croatia, 12 September 2002.

Participants were national representatives from many different sectors including health and agriculture. At the third workshop, participants presented their progress on development of national action plans. Further assistance from WHO and possibly a fourth workshop will be necessary before final food and nutrition action plans can be presented. Full reports of all workshops are available. In these reports, the process of how Member States developed their food and nutrition action plans are explained in detail.

Baltic countries

Participants from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took part in three workshops on development of national food and nutrition action plans for the Baltic countries. Due to the close ties between Baltic and Nordic countries, WHO invited representatives from Nordic countries to participate in the workshops. They were able to provide advice and information from their own experiences in developing food and nutrition action plans. The first workshop took place in Latvia in August 2000, the second in Latvia in June 2001 and the third in Estonia in June 2002.

Participants were national representatives from different sectors including health and agriculture. At the third workshop, participants presented their final drafts of national food and nutrition action plans. Full reports of all workshops are available. In these reports, the process of how Member States developed their food and nutrition action plans are explained in detail.

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden participated in the Baltic workshops with the aim of supporting the Baltic countries and sharing their experiences in the field of nutrition policy development. A proposal was developed to set up a Nordic/Baltic Public Health Nutrition Network. This proposal was successfully submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers and funding is therefore secured for the first 3 years (2002-2005).

Nordic countries

See under Baltic countries.

Southern Europe

The following countries were invited to take part in the initiative to develop national food and nutrition action plans in the sub-region of southern Europe:

Andorra	Monaco
Greece	Portugal
Israel	San Marino
Italy	Spain
Malta	Turkey

A first workshop was held in Rome, 20-23 March 2002. Participants were national representatives from different sectors including health and agriculture. A full report of this workshop is available. A follow-up of this workshop will be carried out in Greece in February 2003.

Russian Federation

The Nutrition programme worked with the national authorities to develop a Russian Food and Nutrition Action Plan for different Regions of Russia. The "Arkhangelsk" declaration was endorsed by delegates from around 20 Regions in October 2000. Two Regions, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, have started to implement their Regional Food and Nutrition policy, assisted by funding from the Norwegian government (Barents Initiative). Full reports in Russian and English are available.

Central Asian Republics

A conference on Mother and Child Health and a workshop on micronutrient deficiencies (Iodine, Iron and Vitamin A) were held in Turkmenistan for the Central Asian Republics and Kazakhstan (CARK MCH) in November 2002. Several of these countries expressed interest in WHO providing technical assistance to develop national food and nutrition policies. These nutrition policies will prioritize the public health problems particularly related to the nutritional status of women and children including micronutrient deficiencies.

European Food and Nutrition Task Force

The Regional Committee resolution RC50/8 from September 2000 requested the RD to look into the possibility of setting up a European Food and Nutrition Task Force. A meeting with representatives from the European Commission, Council of Europe, UNICEF and FAO was held in EURO on 19 December 2000. Representatives recognized the ongoing collaboration between their organizations and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and concluded:

Quoted from the report:

“All agencies are positive and enthusiastic about continuing collaboration on the subject of food and nutrition policies. However, a task force of a political nature was not thought to be a good idea at the present time, although it could be considered at a later stage. In contrast, a smaller more focussed task force, consisting primarily of Member States was recommended. This could monitor and evaluate the development of national food and nutrition action plans. This would enable close follow-up before the Ministerial Conference in 2005. This more technical task force could be created with Member States. Different agencies could be invited to provide information on their specific areas when appropriate.”

Following this meeting with the European Commission, UNICEF and FAO, WHO have successfully encouraged interagency collaboration between all four organizations and all have been involved in the above-mentioned subregional workshops. This has created good interagency collaboration benefiting Member States because their interaction is taking place nearer the country level than had first been envisaged in the Action Plan.

WHO Regional Office for Europe

The WHO Food and Nutrition Action Plan outlines how the Regional Office contributes to the implementation of the Action Plan. This includes:

- collating existing knowledge and scientific evidence to support policy development and implementation;
- stimulating research in areas where evidence is lacking;
- developing innovative ways to communicate scientific knowledge and information;
- collaborating with countries in translating knowledge into action,
- working with national nutrition counterparts and providing information, experience and expertise as required;
- developing cost-effective indicators for surveillance;
- producing updated lists of new information, documents and training materials;
- facilitating information sharing, using modern communication tools, and maintain a mechanism for rapid updating.

Specifically the Regional Office has carried out/issued the following during 2000-2002:

- collaboration with the EU Commission and the French government during its presidency of the EU Council (July–December 2000) on the development of “Health and nutrition – elements for European action”;
- WHO training manual on intersectoral development of national food and nutrition action plans, in English and Russian.
- WHO training manual on healthy nutrition for women and their families, in English and Russian.
- CINDI Dietary Guide provides the basis for countries to develop national food based dietary guidelines.
- A Comparative analysis of nutrition policies and food-based dietary guidelines in WHO European Member States.
- A WHO/UNICEF publication Feeding and nutrition of infants and young children.
- Guidelines for local authorities on regional and urban food and nutrition action plans.
- Case studies on the development and implementation of local food and nutrition policies;
- The Regional Office helped to contribute to the new Global Burden of Disease regarding the number of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) related to diet, with the assistance of funding from RD Fund and UK government.
- Contributions to the European Health Report on obesity and nutrition.
- Close collaboration with the European Commission, FAO and UNICEF.
- Stimulating the development of new methods to assess the impact of agriculture policy on health (Health Impact Assessment).
- A WHO publication “Food and Health in Europe: a new basis for action” will be published in 2003, in English and Russian.
- A Meeting of Nutrition Counterparts supported by the Greek Ministry of Health in February 2003, during the Greek Presidency of the EU, will provide the opportunity to carry out a mid-term evaluation of progress in implementing the Action Plan.

Meeting of all Member States, Greece, February 2003

All national Nutrition Counterparts, officially nominated by their ministries of health, in the WHO European Region are invited to Greece in February 2003. Progress will be discussed regarding development of food and nutrition action plans in the European Region. This meeting will provide an opportunity to plan for the period up to the Ministerial Conference in 2006. In addition, a consultation on the WHO Global Strategy on Diet and Physical Activity will take place. Support from the Greek Ministry of Health and WHO Headquarters is gratefully acknowledged.

Annex 1: WHO Regional Committee for Europe Resolution

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Fiftieth session, Copenhagen, 11 – 14 September 2000

EUR/RC50/R8 14 September 2000 ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

RESOLUTION

THE IMPACT OF FOOD AND NUTRITION ON PUBLIC HEALTH THE CASE FOR A FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY AND AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE EUROPEAN REGION OF WHO 2000–2005

The Regional Committee,

Concerned by the threat to public health from the lack of safe and healthy food;

Recognizing the roles of other international organizations and sectors with an interest in food;

Recalling Health Assembly resolution WHA46.7, which called for implementation of comprehensive plans of action on nutrition and which endorsed the goals of the fourth United Nations Development Decade and the World Summit for Children;

Further recalling previous Health Assembly resolutions and particularly WHA49.15 on infant and young child nutrition and WHA52.24 on the prevention and control of iodine deficiency, which demonstrate the need for comprehensive food and nutrition policies;

Having considered document EUR/RC50/8, 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*;

1. ENDORSES the Action Plan for the European Region of WHO for 2000–2005;
2. RECOMMENDS that Member States take steps to carry out the Action Plan, taking account of differences in their cultural, social, legal and economic environments;
3. REQUESTS European integrational, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to undertake joint action with Member States and the Regional Office to maximize Region-wide efforts to promote public health through food and nutrition policy;
4. REQUESTS the Regional Director:
 - (a) to ensure appropriate support for the Action Plan from the WHO Regional Office for Europe;
 - (b) to cooperate with and support Member States and other organizations in comprehensive efforts to promote public health through appropriate food and nutrition policies;
 - (c) to examine the possibility of setting up, in collaboration with international agencies, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, a Task Force for Food and Nutrition Policies in the European Region of WHO;
 - (d) to organize a ministerial conference in 2005 to evaluate the implementation of comprehensive food and nutrition policies at regional and country levels;
5. URGES Member States to report on steps taken to promote the health of their population through a food and nutrition policy at the ministerial conference to be held in 2005;
6. REQUESTS the Regional Director to report to the Regional Committee in 2002 on the progress made in implementing the Action Plan.