

Guiding principles for sustainable healthy diets



Malnutrition and degradation of environmental and natural resources are major challenges to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Both challenges are affected by and in turn influence the food systems that enable availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability of food. In response to this problem, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the

World Health Organization (WHO) have released guiding principles for sustainable healthy diets. Sustainable healthy diets¹ are defined as “dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals’ health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable.” The guiding principles are the result of a robust review of evidence and an

international consultation held in July 2019 at FAO headquarters in Rome. The document includes a set of principles on what constitutes diets that are both healthy and sustainable, and non-technical information and messaging that can be used in policy-making and communications. The principles are food-based and take account of nutrient recommendations, while considering environmental, social/cultural and economic sustainability. The ultimate aim is to support countries to transform food systems to nourish both people and the planet.

¹ FAO and WHO. 2019. Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles. Rome. www.fao.org/3/ca6640en/ca6640en.pdf

Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition (GTAM) progress report



The Global Technical Assistance Mechanism for Nutrition (GTAM) is a common global mechanism endorsed by over 40 Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) partners to provide systematic, predictable, timely and coordinated nutrition technical assistance in order to meet the nutrition rights and needs of people affected by emergencies. It is co-led by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Vision International (WVI), in collaboration with additional members of a core team (GTAM-CT), including Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) as the knowledge management (KM) partner, the GNC and the Technical Rapid Response Team (Tech RRT).

During the period 1 August to 31 October 2019, the GTAM-CT continued to develop and document operational ways of working for the GTAM as part of the ‘build’ phase, further defining processes (particularly for the engagement of Global Technical Working Groups (GTWGs) in providing technical advice and consensus-driven guidance in gap areas).

The Nutrition Information Systems (NIS) GTWG and the Cash Reference Group were fully operationalised during this period. Membership and workplans were put in place and the development of specific guidance initiated (on “conducting nutrition analysis for Humanitarian Needs Overviews” by the NIS working group and “cash in emergencies for nutrition” by the Cash reference group). The Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) GTWG (operated by the IFE Core Group) developed a costed workplan to deliver on priority gaps identified in the GTAM baseline technical needs assessment¹, and several members contributed to a case study charting the experience and learning from their response to a request for technical advice which came through the GTAM.

The Inter-cluster Nutrition Working Group (ICNWG) took on the role of the nutrition-sensitive GTWG in June 2019 on a trial basis. During a meeting in Rome in August, the group discussed how best to support the GTAM. The acute malnutrition

GTWG is in the early stages of formation; a call for nominations for membership went out and World Vision and the GNC will take on the role of co-chairs on an interim basis while the process for allocating chairs is defined. A first meeting of the group is scheduled for the next quarter.

In terms of provision of technical expertise, 12 vetted consultants were added to the GTAM consultant roster. Six advisers were deployed (two assessment advisors to Central African Republic and Ethiopia; an IYCF-E adviser to Jordan; and a nutrition in emergencies adviser to Mexico, with two additional deployments underway to provide Community Management of Acute Malnutrition support in Ethiopia and Angola).

Download the full report from: www.ennonline.net/gtamquarterlydigest3
Read more about the GTAM at www.ennonline.net/ourwork/knowledgemanagement/gtam

¹ www.ennonline.net/fex/61/baselinetechneeds

Demographic and Health Survey update core questionnaires

In October 2019, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)¹ programme released updated DHS model questionnaires, which will be used during phase 8 of the global survey programme (2019-2023). Countries conducting DHS in phase 8 will collect significantly more data related to nutrition programmes and policies. This is a key achievement for the global nutrition community, given that DHS surveys are conducted in

over 90 countries and DHS is one of the most commonly accessed and used sources of nutrition data in the world. Data for Decisions to Expand Nutrition Transformation (DataDENT), an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, provided essential leadership to nutrition stakeholders in encouraging updates to the DHS nutrition content. This involved the development and submission of 11 nutrition recommendations

for consideration, which engendered a high level of engagement from the global nutrition community. As a result, changes have been made to questions in DHS questionnaires relating to breastfeeding counselling, food and cash support for pregnant women, infant and young child feeding counselling, growth monitoring and malnutrition screening, diets of women and young children, and food fortification and iron supplementation. A DataDENT brief² explains the process in full, changes made and potential impact on the nutrition community.

¹ <https://dhsprogram.com/>

² DataDENT (2019) Expanded nutrition content in the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)-8 core questionnaires. https://datadent.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DataDENT-DHS-8-outcome-brief_print_FINAL.pdf