

# FROM POLICY TO PLATE

An advocacy guide to turn global food and nutrition commitments into action to prevent diet-related NCDs



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These icons signpost the following throughout the guide:



**UPCOMING  
OPPORTUNITIES**



**USEFUL  
RESOURCES**



**MAJOR  
CHALLENGES**

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## Acronyms

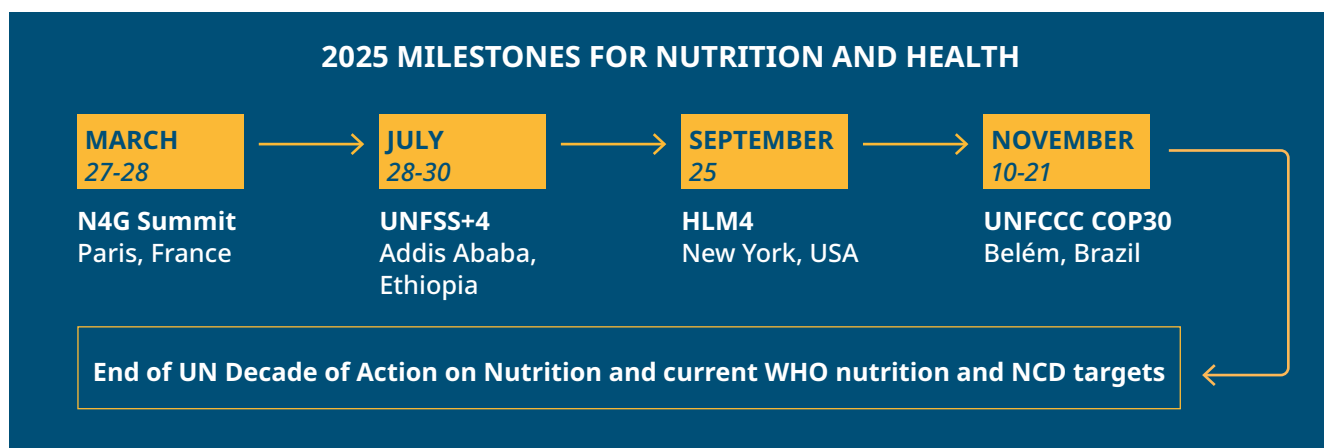
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CAC</b>	Codex Alimentarius Commission
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate social responsibility
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FCTC</b>	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
<b>FSCI</b>	Food Systems Countdown Initiative
<b>GNR</b>	Global Nutrition Report
<b>HDSFS</b>	Coalition of Action for Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All
<b>HFSS</b>	High in fats, sugars and/or salt
<b>HLM4</b>	Fourth High-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health and well-being
<b>ICN2</b>	Second International Conference on Nutrition
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>N4G</b>	Nutrition for Growth
<b>NCD</b>	Noncommunicable disease
<b>LMICs</b>	Low- and middle-income countries
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
<b>SMC</b>	School Meals Coalition
<b>SSB</b>	Sugar-sweetened beverages
<b>SUN</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition
<b>TFA</b>	Trans-fatty acids
<b>UHC</b>	Universal Health Coverage
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNFSS</b>	United Nations Food Systems Summit
<b>UNFSS+2</b>	United Nations Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktake
<b>UNFSS+4</b>	United Nations Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake
<b>UNFCCC COP28</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNFCCC COP30</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHA</b>	World Health Assembly
<b>WHA78</b>	78 <sup>th</sup> session of the World Health Assembly
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global food systems are crucial to the health of people and the planet; however, their current unsustainability is fueling many of the world's most pressing challenges: malnutrition, the climate crisis, and excessive waste.

Malnutrition in all its forms including undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart diseases and stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancers, must be addressed by **making our food systems healthier and more sustainable through the provision of primarily nutritious, safe foods, while reducing waste**. This will increase productivity, reduce healthcare costs, and improve and save the lives of billions in future years<sup>1</sup>.

**2025 is a turning point to advance the global nutrition policy agenda from a health perspective.** It marks the end of United Nations (UN) Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025); the deadline for World Health Organization (WHO) targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition, which are expected to be extended to 2030 at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the World Health Assembly (WHA78);<sup>2</sup> and the nutrition-related targets within WHO's NCD Global Monitoring Framework, which is expected to be extended to 2050 through a separate process.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it is a year of major global health and nutrition events: the Paris Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, the UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake (UNFSS+4), the fourth High-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health and well-being (HLM4), and the 30<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP30). It will be crucial that the outcomes from these meetings aim to address malnutrition in all its forms, including the adoption of commitments to prevent diet-related NCDs.





**In light of these upcoming opportunities, this document aims to guide advocacy and accountability efforts from civil society organizations (CSOs) and inform how they can mobilize other stakeholders in these food and nutrition policy processes from a health perspective to ensure food systems are effectively transformed.**

Major concerns have been identified by CSOs regarding a lack of transparency, appropriate governance and rules of engagement around some of these events hosted in previous years. Therefore, it is crucial to safeguard current and future food systems transformation efforts against the undue influence of industry actors with conflicts of interest. Clear, transparent governance mechanisms and a stronger focus on nutrition considerations should be advocated for and addressed in policymaking.

To support all of these efforts, this guide provides:

- An overview of the global burden of malnutrition, current global targets, and existing solutions to promote healthy diets;
- A brief review of the main outcomes, challenges and opportunities around the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and N4G Summit processes; and
- A call to action and recommendations which can be used by civil society to advance diet-related NCD prevention.

### **NCD Alliance's call to action for 2025 and beyond**

To foster effective food systems transformation, building on NCD Alliance's advocacy priorities for the HLM4 on NCDs and Mental Health, we urge governments to:

1. Accelerate implementation by translating global food and nutrition commitments into effective policy actions aimed at preventing and managing diet-related NCDs.
2. Break down siloes by promoting a stronger focus on healthy diets in global and national policymaking, ensuring that nutrition considerations are at the forefront of food system reforms and bridging the divide between malnutrition in all its forms and diet-related NCD concerns.
3. Mobilise investment for food and nutrition policies that integrate health considerations,, providing sustainable financing that is sufficient to match the food system transformation needs.
4. Delivering accountability by monitoring global food and nutrition commitments rigorously to uphold accountability and drive meaningful progress.
5. Engaging civil society including people living with diet-related NCDs in supporting the development and implementation of policy actions for healthy food systems at all levels.
6. Developing transparent governance mechanisms that prioritise public health, ensuring policymaking processes are open, accountable, and free from conflicts of interest.

This document aims to shed light on these food, nutrition and broader policy processes and how CSOs can leverage this call to action and engage in these processes not only globally, but also nationally and regionally. That said, this document is not an exhaustive preparatory guide on the aforementioned meetings (e.g., information on the programme and other practical details). The guide includes recommendations intended for CSOs to apply directly to their advocacy work, as well as asks that they can take to their national governments and UN agencies. Finally, this guide includes an annex outlining who's who is the UN nutrition space.



## SECTION 1

# RESPONDING TO THE GLOBAL BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION

Current targets and existing solutions to promote healthy diets

# 1. Responding to the global burden of malnutrition — current targets and existing solutions to promote healthy diets

The global burden of malnutrition includes overweight and obesity, undernutrition, and the resulting diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart diseases and stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancers.

## 1.1. Unhealthy diets, a major NCD risk factor

Unhealthy diets are diets high in critical nutrients of concern such as trans-fats, saturated fats, free sugars, and sodium, which often come from ultra-processed products, and are low in wholegrains, legumes, vegetables and fruits<sup>4</sup>.

Unhealthy diets and their resulting malnutrition are estimated to cause over seven million deaths annually<sup>1</sup>. Over 99% of these deaths are associated with NCDs and, between 2010 and 2021, the number of deaths attributable to unhealthy diets grew by 19% globally<sup>5</sup>.



© Credit: Sorbis/Shutterstock

<sup>1</sup> This number is even higher when considering deaths associated with diet- and weight-related risks. Under this assumption, the Global Nutrition Report (GNR) 2021 estimated that 12 million deaths could be associated with unhealthy diets in 2018.

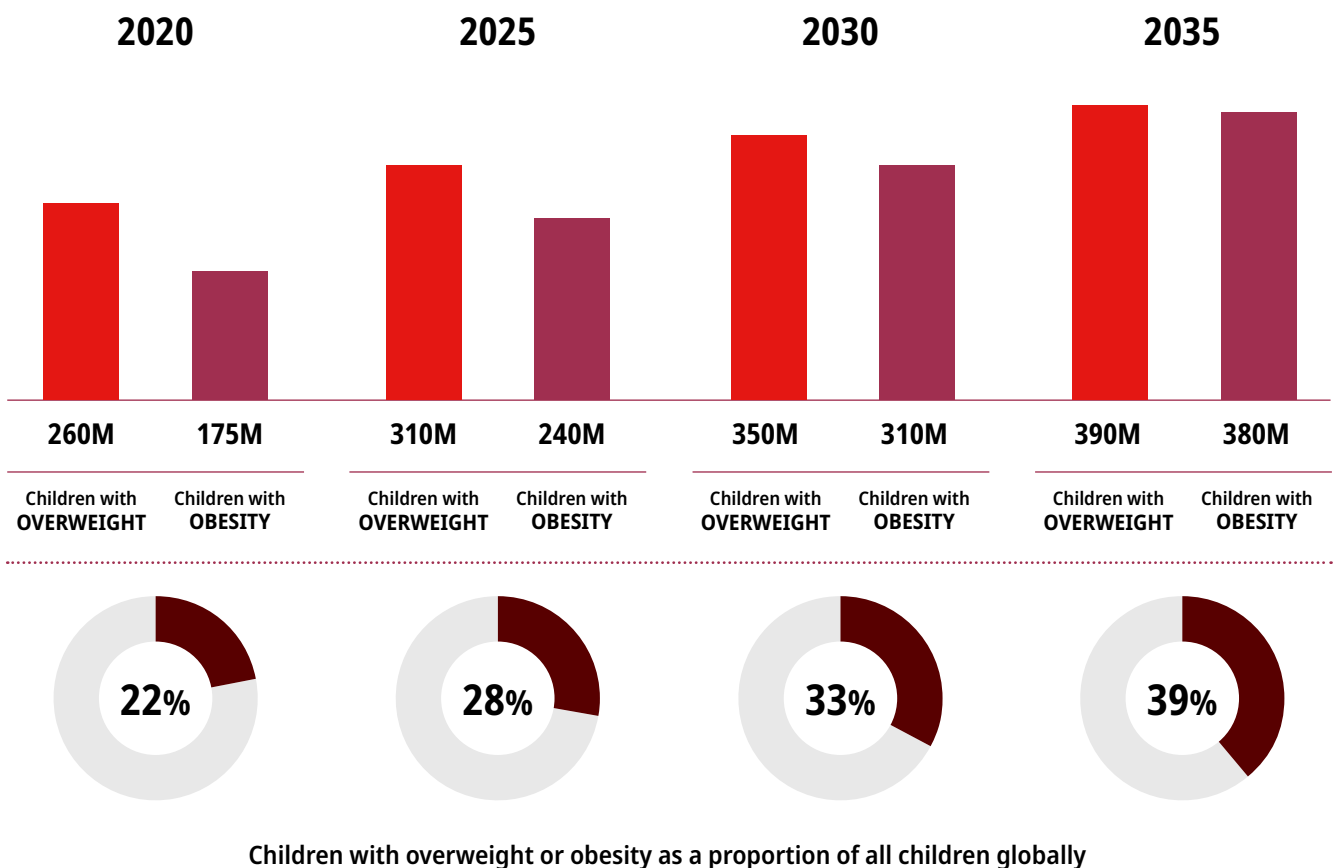


## Overweight and obesity

More than **one in 20 children under five years of age live with overweight or obesity** (37 million children in 2022) while these numbers increase in adulthood to **two in five adults living with overweight or obesity** (2.5 billion adults in 2022)<sup>7</sup>.

The prevalence of both childhood and adult overweight and obesity is on the rise, despite current global targets to halt them<sup>6</sup>. This is of great concern as **overweight and obesity are linked with developing NCDs**<sup>7</sup>. This increase is also a trend in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) due to a rapid transformation in the way people eat and drink, which is driven by shifts in food systems including an increased availability of ultra-processed foods. LMICs now face a double burden of malnutrition: the twin presence of obesity and undernutrition<sup>8</sup>.

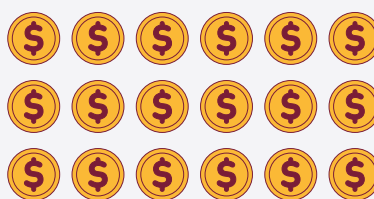
### Global estimate (2020) and projected numbers (2025-2035) of children between the ages of five and 19 with overweight and obesity<sup>9</sup>



Source: World Obesity Atlas. London: World Obesity Federation; 2023.

### When it comes to costs, THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC BURDEN of overweight and obesity

is EXPECTED to reach  
**US\$ 3 TRILLION**  
annually by **2030**



and EXCEED  
**US\$ 18 TRILLION**  
annually by **2060**<sup>10</sup>

## Small Island Developing States and food systems

Half of the top 24 countries with the highest prevalence of childhood obesity are Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the ten countries with the highest adult obesity prevalence in the world are Pacific islands. SIDS face specific challenges related to their size, geography, and small populations, including constraints for achieving economies of scale due to their small domestic markets, limited resources and undiversified economies, while they have a greater exposure to the impacts of the climate crisis, all having negative implications on their food systems. In many SIDS, over 80% of the food is imported, comprised mostly of ultra-processed foods that are high in fats, sugars, and/or salt (HFSS), which is a result of trade and investment agreements often favoring multinational commercial actors over SIDS food security, NCD prevention and climate resilience.

Despite the scarcity of SIDS' financial resources relative to the magnitude of their challenges (e.g., high transactional costs, high import and export costs, supply chain constraints and market monopolisation), the classification of SIDS as middle- and high-income countries prevents their much-needed access to international development assistance and concessional financing. This makes it harder for SIDS to fund actions on preventing NCDs and meeting their health needs<sup>11</sup>.

In order to address and overcome these specific challenges, community-led engagement is critical, including privileging the voices of SIDS in global platforms<sup>12</sup>. The 2023 Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health that was launched during the 2023 **SIDS Ministerial Conference on NCDs and Mental Health** and the **SIDS commitments for NCDs and mental health** that emerged from this, are examples of calls to action that have recently been made by SIDS to accelerate action on NCD prevention and control in their regions.

## Undernutrition

Undernutrition, including wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age), is linked to nearly half of all deaths among children under five years of age<sup>13</sup>. Exposure to **undernutrition in early life has also been linked to a greater risk of NCDs later in life**<sup>14</sup>. Despite progress in reducing child undernutrition over the last few decades, the world is not on track to achieve the associated 2025 targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition<sup>15</sup>.

## Diet-related NCDs

NCDs are the number one cause of death and disability worldwide, accounting for over 74% of all deaths annually, approximately 41 million deaths each year<sup>16</sup>. Approximately 80% of some major NCDs, including cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and type 2 diabetes are preventable, and are driven by five main modifiable risk factors: tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and air pollution<sup>16</sup>. NCDs that are impacted by unhealthy diets are referred to as diet-related NCDs.

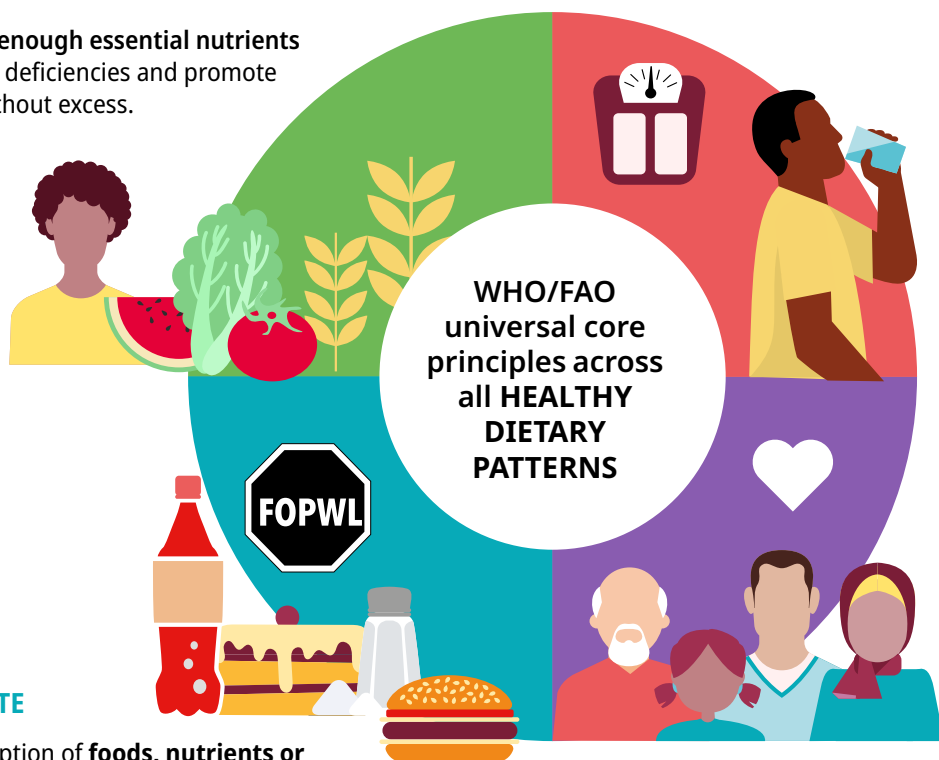
The widespread availability, affordability, and promotion of unhealthy food and drink products that contribute to unhealthy diets are a major driver of the high rates of diet-related NCDs. The policies that shape **our food systems must promote health and prevent NCDs, in addition to increasing food security and reducing malnutrition in all its forms**, with a comprehensive and coherent package of tried-and-tested cost-effective policies, including fiscal policies, marketing restrictions, front-of-pack nutrition labelling and measures to protect and promote optimal breastfeeding practices.

## 1. 2. Defining healthy diets

WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have formulated principles of what constitutes a healthy diet, recognising that there are multiple dietary patterns that meet these principles. It also recognises the association of highly processed or “ultra-processed” foods with negative health outcomes, and the critical role of healthy diets in the prevention of all forms of malnutrition and the interconnections between food production, diets and the environment<sup>17</sup>.

### ADEQUATE

Providing enough essential nutrients to prevent deficiencies and promote health, without excess.



### BALANCED

In energy intake, and energy sources (i.e., fats, carbohydrates and proteins) to promote healthy weight, growth and disease prevention.

### MODERATE

In consumption of foods, nutrients or other compounds associated with detrimental health effects.

### DIVERSE

Including a wide variety of nutritious foods within and across food groups to favour nutrient adequacy and consumption of other health promoting substances.

Source: What are healthy diets? Joint statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization. Geneva: World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2024.

In 2022, 2.83 billion people (35.4% of the world population) were unable to afford a healthy diet; and in 2023, approximately 2.33 billion people (28.9% of the world population) were moderately or severely food insecure<sup>18</sup>. The current unsustainability of global food systems has resulted in billions of people lacking access to nutritious, safe and sufficient food, highlighting the **need to accelerate the transformation of our food systems to strengthen their resilience and address inequalities** to ensure that healthy diets are affordable for and available to all<sup>19</sup>.

## The climate crisis, agriculture, healthy diets and NCDs

Actions to address the current climate crisis offer co-benefits for our food and health systems. Promoting plant-rich diets with a lower carbon footprint can increase the consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits, reducing the risk of diet-related NCDs, while building climate-resilient food systems improves nutrition security. This is in alignment with the [UNFCCC COP28 declaration on climate and health](#) (2023), which refers to the need to shift to healthy and sustainable diets<sup>20</sup>, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) recommendation to shift towards healthy and sustainable diets as a mitigation strategy for climate change<sup>21</sup>.

Furthermore, more diverse, sustainable farming solutions can also **contribute to reducing the impact of agriculture on air pollution**, another major NCD risk factor<sup>22,23</sup>. Together with the use of fossil fuels, unsustainable agriculture activities (such as intensive animal farming and the use of nitrogen fertilizers) can be major sources of carbon, methane and ammonia emissions, which are linked to air pollution<sup>24</sup>.

**The Health and Climate Network released a call for healthy, sustainable diets for all** to challenge the prevailing focus of food systems on production and output to ensure that everyone is not only able to access enough calories, but also to eat healthy, sustainable diets. The call focuses on building the political will for diverse farming systems, providing supportive policies and finance, increasing knowledge-sharing, and ensuring decision-making is inclusive, engaging youth, women, Indigenous peoples, small scale farmers and consumers.



**Governments must act upon these recommendations, and the UNFCCC COP30 to take place in Belém, Brazil on 10-21 November 2025** provides such an opportunity in a pivotal year for nutrition policy.





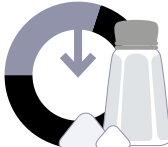

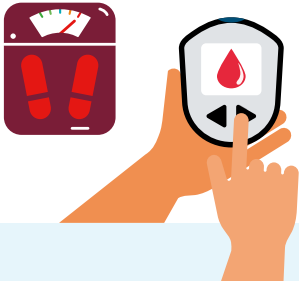





### 1. 3. Current global targets

In response to these challenges, there is a set of global voluntary targets focused on nutrition and preventing and managing diet-related NCDs within the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015–2030, WHO's NCD Global Monitoring Framework, and WHO's targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition. The 2014 [FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition's \(ICN2\) Rome Declaration](#) and its [Framework for Action](#) integrated these existing WHO global targets to eradicate all forms of malnutrition, adding them to a series of overall commitments and recommended actions as well.

#### UN and WHO targets most relevant for diet-related NCD prevention

<b>UN SDG TARGETS</b> by 2030 	<b>WHO TARGETS</b> by 2025 
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="172 824 352 1010"> <p><b>REDUCE BY ONE THIRD NCD PREMATURE MORTALITY</b> (SDG 3.4)</p> <p>TARGET 3-4</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="384 824 564 1010"> <p><b>END ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION</b> (SDG 2.2)</p> <p>TARGET 2-2</p>  </div> </div> <p><b>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="632 824 997 1099"> <p><b>Within the NCD Global Monitoring Framework<sup>II</sup></b></p> <p><b>REDUCE SALT INTAKE by 30%</b></p>  </div> <div data-bbox="1043 824 1457 1267"> <p><b>For improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition</b></p> <p><b>INCREASE EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING RATES in the first six months to at least 50%</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"> <div data-bbox="632 1122 997 1570"> <p><b>HALT THE RISE OF DIABETES in adults and OBESITY in adolescents and adults<sup>III</sup></b></p>  </div> <div data-bbox="1043 1335 1457 1570"> <p><b>NO INCREASE in childhood OVERWEIGHT</b></p>  </div> </div>

The current progress of the UN and WHO targets is sobering; when assessing the overall progress of the above targets, the world is currently off track<sup>15, 25, 26, 27</sup>. Thus, the WHO targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition are expected to be updated and extended to 2030 at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the World Health Assembly (WHA78)<sup>28</sup>, and the WHO's NCD Global Monitoring Framework is expected to be revised and extended to 2050 through a separate process<sup>29</sup>.

II The NCD Global Monitoring Framework's premature mortality target by 2025 was aligned to SDG target 3.4 via [A75/10 Add.8](#) and [WHA75\(11\)](#).

III In addition to condition prevalence indicators, this target includes as indicators: age-standardised mean proportion of total energy intake from saturated fatty acids in persons aged 18+ years; and age-standardised prevalence of persons (aged 18+ years) consuming less than five total servings (400 grams) of fruit and vegetables per day.

## Nutrition security is health security

COVID-19 exacerbated the vulnerability of food and health systems. **People living with NCDs were disproportionately impacted** due to disruptions to essential health services, and people living with obesity and diet-related NCDs were at a higher risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19<sup>30</sup>. The pandemic showed that nutrition security is crucial for health security, and that health and nutrition security are vulnerable to food system shocks.

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to a healthy diet was affected**<sup>31</sup>. NCD Alliance and the SPECTRUM Consortium published [Signalling Virtue, Promoting Harm](#) to illustrate how health-harming industries, including the ultra-processed food and beverage industry producing HFSS products pivoted corporate social responsibility (CSR) and marketing activities to leverage the pandemic for self-serving commercial interests, often targeting youth and other marginalised groups.

**COVID-19 must be seen as a wake-up call for governments to value and invest in health and food systems, NCD prevention, and nutrition security as important elements of preparedness and resilience against future health emergencies.** Sweeping changes, including legislation, were made in a matter of weeks to protect the public from COVID-19. The same urgency and action are needed to halt the rise in obesity and diet-related NCDs by stopping the displacement of and increasing access to healthy and affordable foods.

## 1. 4. Existing policy solutions

Unhealthy diets and the rising prevalence of diet-related NCDs worldwide should be seen as a political choice rather than a personal failing, as they are a consequence of multiple broken and unequal systems (food, economic, social, environmental, urban and others) that fail to make healthy options available, affordable and attractive. The pandemic has shown the need to reshape and invest more in resilient, sustainable, healthy and diverse food systems and environments, via **budget decisions and coherent policy packages that increase the accessibility, availability and affordability of nutritious products**. Moreover, it is essential to understand the full picture of people's realities in accessing food to develop policies that effectively promote healthy diets<sup>32</sup>.

As endorsed by the World Health Assembly (WHA) at its 76<sup>th</sup> session in 2023, WHO updated the Appendix 3 of the Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2030 (also known as the **NCD 'best buys'**<sup>IV</sup> and **other recommended interventions**) to support governments in prioritizing the implementation of highly cost-effective interventions to progress towards the NCD targets. In this update, the most cost-effective interventions to promote healthy diets were formulated to address other unhealthy nutrients beyond salt (sugars, trans-fats, saturated fats)<sup>33</sup>.

To optimise impact and accelerate action to prevent and control diet-related NCDs, it is important that these tried-and-tested NCD 'best buys' are implemented as a comprehensive package of measures that tackle different aspects that support behaviour change towards healthier diets, such as the availability, affordability, attractiveness and awareness of nutritious foods. However, countries' food systems transformation plans relating to the NCD 'best buys' on healthy diets tend to be more focused on awareness-raising and healthy public procurement, rather than around creating supportive environments that address the accessibility and affordability of HFSS through actions such as nutrition labelling, product reformulation, marketing restrictions, or fiscal policies<sup>34</sup>.

IV Term used to describe NCD interventions with a cost-effectiveness ratio below or equal to US\$100 per healthy life year gained.

The NCD 'best buys' and other recommended interventions on healthy diets <sup>V</sup>	
RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS with a cost-effectiveness analysis	EXAMPLES OF COUNTRIES championing these policies <sup>35,36,37</sup>
<b>Reformulation policies for healthier food and beverage products</b> (for example, elimination of trans-fatty acids [TFA] and/or reduction of saturated fats, free sugars and/or sodium)	<b>TFA bans in line with WHO best practices</b> have been recently passed in Mexico, India, Egypt, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Argentina. Colombia and Argentina have mandatory maximum sodium levels in processed foods.
<b>Front-of-pack labelling</b> as part of comprehensive nutrition labelling policies for facilitating consumers' understanding and choice of food for healthy diets	<b>Mandatory front-of-package</b> nutrient warning labelling regulations have been passed in Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Chile and other countries. See <a href="#">NCD Alliance's Warning Against Harm report</a> to learn more about these examples.
<b>Public food procurement and service policies for healthy diets</b> (for example, to reduce the intake of free sugars, sodium and unhealthy fats, and to increase the consumption of legumes, wholegrains, fruits and vegetables)	<b>Brazil</b> <sup>38</sup> and <b>Argentina</b> have comprehensive food public procurement and service policies for healthy diets. <b>Barbados</b> and <b>Jamaica</b> have recently finalized extensive national school nutrition policies.
<b>Behaviour change communication</b> and mass media campaigns for healthy diets	Successful communication and mass media campaigns for healthy diets have been implemented in <b>Barbados</b> , <b>Grenada</b> <sup>39</sup> , and the <b>United Kingdom</b> , specifically <b>Wales</b> <sup>40</sup> .
<b>Policies to protect children</b> from the harmful impact of food marketing on diet	<b>Chile</b> and <b>Portugal</b> have the most comprehensive restrictions on food marketing to children (across broadcast and non-broadcast channels and with limits on persuasive techniques). In the <b>United Kingdom</b> , the <b>recent marketing ban</b> includes packaged foods, ready-to-eat and out-of-home products. See <a href="#">WHO's guideline on policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing</a> and <a href="#">NCD Alliance's Selling a Sick Future report</a> for other examples.
<b>Protection, promotion and support</b> of optimal breastfeeding practices	Practices that protect, promote and support optimal breastfeeding are supported in <b>Kenya</b> , <b>Cuba</b> , <b>Brazil</b> , <b>Thailand</b> and the <b>Philippines</b> <sup>41,42</sup> .
<b>Taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages</b> [SSBs] as part of fiscal policies for healthy diets	<b>Barbados</b> <sup>43</sup> , <b>Philippines</b> , <b>South Africa</b> , <b>United Kingdom</b> and <b>Mexico</b> have successfully implemented SSB taxes <sup>44</sup> . Additionally, <b>Colombia</b> taxes both SSBs and ultra-processed foods <sup>45</sup> . See <a href="#">WHO's guideline on fiscal policies to promote healthy diets</a> and <a href="#">NCDA's Getting Fiscal Policies Right report</a> for other examples.

See NCD Alliance's [From Policy to Plate: A collection of case studies on the implementation of healthy diets 'best buys' and other recommended interventions](#), which explores the rationale and process by Argentina, Barbados, Jamaica, India and Philippines to implement some of these policies to protect the health of their populations.

<sup>V</sup> In the updated menu of 2023, other recommended interventions by WHO on healthy diets without a cost-effectiveness analysis include: subsidies on healthy foods and beverages; menu labelling in food service for healthy diets; limiting portion and package size for healthy diets; and nutrition education and counselling for healthy diets in different settings.

## 1. 5. The cost of inaction versus action

The current global agrifood systems lead to hidden costs of approximately US\$12 trillion every year, of which 70% arise from unhealthy dietary patterns and NCDs, exceeding the costs of agrifood systems on the environment and social inequalities<sup>46</sup>. Despite a broad agreement on the urgent need to increase the investment in addressing the major drivers of food security and nutrition, significant gaps in financing remain.

If this financial gap is not resolved by 2030, millions of people will remain undernourished, millions will have been pushed into more extreme levels of food insecurity, and insufficient progress will have been made to meet all global nutrition targets<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, addressing the social, economic and environmental repercussions of this failure to act will also cost several trillion US dollars,<sup>18</sup> while **investing in healthier and more sustainable food systems would increase productivity, reduce healthcare costs, and improve and save the lives of billions in future years<sup>1</sup>.**

Such an investment is within the reach of all countries. **The cost of implementing the NCD ‘best buys’ in LMICs is less than US\$1 per person per year**, while the economic gains from implementing these interventions could amount to more than US\$230 billion by 2030 in these countries when individual, economic and social benefits are factored in<sup>47</sup>.



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### Need for urgent action: The important role of civil society

Governments are currently off-track to meeting global diet-related NCD targets<sup>48</sup> and urgently need to prioritise and invest in healthy diets for all to achieve long-term health and resilience. Comprehensive action and follow-up must be taken at national levels to accelerate progress towards achieving the current nutrition and health targets by 2025 and 2030.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have a key role to play, including monitoring commitments made by their government leaders<sup>49</sup> in global platforms such as the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summits as explained next in Section 2. But most importantly, **CSOs have an essential role to strengthen efforts at national levels to advocate for these policies and oversee that the political processes for food systems transformation are health-driven, transparent and free from conflicts of interests or other types of undue influence from the ultra-processed food and beverage industry producing HFSS products.**





## **SECTION 2**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE UNFSS AND N4G SUMMIT PROCESSES**

## 2. Understanding the UNFSS and N4G Summit processes

Due to the effects of the pandemic and to ensure crucial momentum was maintained right in the middle of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), a “Nutrition for Growth Year of Action” was launched in 2021. The year resulted in two events during which many important food system and nutrition commitments were made: the **UNFSS** and **Tokyo’s N4G Summit**.

The UNFSS and N4G Summit intended to be a turning point in taking and accelerating action and providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to address food system challenges. However, there have been limitations to these Summits—especially the UNFSS—in addressing conflicts of interest, corporate capture, power imbalances, transparency and including all relevant stakeholders involved in food system transformation. **This section provides a review of the main outcomes, challenges and opportunities around the UNFSS and N4G Summit processes.**



Overall, according to a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) that reviewed commitments made by national governments on food security and diets since 2015, these often lack specificity regarding what and how policy interventions should be scaled up for greater action or the ways to enhance different stakeholders’ capacities to implement them. Additionally, IFPRI identified that although national governments globally acknowledged the importance of accountability and monitoring, there are few consequences for governments that do not act on commitments made in global fora<sup>50</sup>.

## 2. 1. THE UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

The **UN Food System Summit (UNFSS) took place in New York (virtually) on 23–24 September 2021** with the aim to accelerate action for more inclusive, resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030. It was organised around five Action Tracks that convened actors with expertise on different elements of food systems<sup>VI</sup>.

### The lead-up to the UNFSS

A Pre-Summit was convened virtually in July 2021. It set the stage by bringing together diverse actors from around the world to set out their commitments and actions ahead of the UNFSS. Although no agribusiness nor food and beverage industry actor led any work, private sector engagement was encouraged and deemed to be important to creating a momentum of change. This was strongly criticised by a broad coalition of organisations, including members of the UNFSS Action Tracks<sup>51</sup>.

The **Dialogues** were the key participatory aspect of the UNFSS, which took place from November 2020 and continued after the Summit into 2022. Over 100,000 people participated in the 11 Global Dialogues, 550+ Member State Dialogues and 900+ Independent Dialogues<sup>VII</sup> that were organised. The **National Pathways** were outcomes of the Dialogues intended to help countries develop context-specific, equitable and sustainable food system transformation pathways. While a **list of National Pathways** was made available, there were no mandatory accountability measures put in place to ensure country commitments are upheld, and not all countries have developed National Pathways.

### Main outcomes from the Summit

By the time of the Summit, **218 global commitments** were shared by different stakeholders including governments, civil society and the private sector, in addition to **collective commitments** for multi-country and multi-stakeholder initiatives<sup>52</sup>. Some non-State stakeholder groups also made statements or pledges, including consumer and faith-based organisations, youth and Indigenous peoples, although many came from the food industry. Additional commitments were submitted after the Summit.

### Assessing shortcomings from the commitments process



Although the Summit generated many commitments, it is important to recognise the inadequacy of the commitments overall, considering **the Summit failed to address the issue of corporate power<sup>VIII</sup>** in food systems in a meaningful way:

- The Summit was ‘strategically silent’ on the issue of corporate power and interference.
- It mostly advanced technology and innovation-based solutions that benefit profit-driven industry<sup>53</sup>, without prioritising human and planetary health.
- The UNFSS did not result in an agreed upon scientific-based monitoring system to track progress in the implementation of these commitments, nor for national pathway strategies<sup>54</sup>.

VI The five Action Tracks of the UNFSS were: 1) Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All; 2) Shift to Healthy and Sustainable Consumption Patterns; 3) Boost Nature-Positive Food Production at Scale; 4) Advance Equitable Livelihoods and Value Distribution; 5) Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stresses.

VII The NCD Alliance organised two Independent Dialogues on “Coherent Policy for Healthy Diets” in June 2021 with support from Resolve to Save Lives and WHO.

VIII **Corporate power** in the food system is when a concentrated number of large corporations dominate the food and agricultural sector enabling them to exert more power to control the ways in which food and agricultural commodities and inputs are handled (i.e., how commodities are grown, at what price they exchange hands, the methods by which they are processed, and how they are marketed)<sup>53</sup>.

Due to the lack of a relevant monitoring framework, the **Food System Countdown Initiative (FSCI)** was formed in 2021, emerging from the UNFSS as an interdisciplinary collaboration of dozens of scientists with an aim to provide actionable evidence to track progress, guide decision-makers, and inform transformation<sup>55</sup>. The FSCI developed a **food system monitoring framework** as a point of reference for the development of national monitoring systems to track the National Pathways<sup>56</sup>.

The UNFSS also resulted in **coalitions of action**, which aim to coordinate State and/or non-State actors on specific issues related to food systems to reduce duplication of efforts and investment, encouraging collective action and joint mobilisation of resources, and promoting knowledge exchange.



**Concerns about the accountability mechanisms and private sector engagement within these coalitions remain and for some coalitions, it is unclear how policy action will be translated nationally.**

The most relevant coalitions to address diet-related NCDs are:

- The **School Meals Coalition (SMC)**, focused on supporting governments to improve the quality of school meals, strengthen school meal procurement and programmes worldwide, and promote the sharing of best practices across the globe. The World Food Programme (WFP) is its coordinating body and works closely on country-level guidance with the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition, the Education Commission, and the African Union (AU). In October 2023, France hosted the Coalition's first Global Ministerial Meeting.
- The **Coalition of Action for Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS)**, focused on accelerating impactful actions by stakeholders across food systems so that healthy diets from sustainable food systems are available, affordable, accessible and appealing to all<sup>57</sup>. The HDSFS Coalition focuses on aligning country-level action across food systems for collective impact; facilitating peer-to-peer learnings on effective actions; and managing special projects. The Coalition has developed Principles of Engagement for new members, including mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflict of interest.

The **UN Food Systems Coordination Hub** (the Hub) was also established following the UNFSS and is hosted by FAO on behalf of the UN system. It acts as the catalyst inside the UN system in relation to food systems transformation and the 2030 Agenda and is a one-stop-shop for all the post-UNFSS solutions databases, dialogues, webinars and initiatives. The Hub aims to promote peer-to-peer learning, exchange feedback between coalitions and countries, and match demands from countries that are not yet met with the offers of support from coalitions<sup>58</sup>.

## The UNFSS +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) in 2023

To review the progress following the 2021 UNFSS, the UN-Secretary General committed to convening **UNFSS Stocktaking Moments** every two years<sup>59</sup>, starting with the UNFSS+2 that took place in Rome, Italy from 24-26 July 2023. The event served as a key moment to generate further momentum on action for food systems transformation in support of the acceleration of the sustainable development agenda ahead of the SDG Summit. It was hosted by Italy, in collaboration with the Rome-based UN Agencies [FAO, The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), WFP], the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the wider UN system.

Ahead of the UNFSS+2, the Hub, in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions and other regional partners, organised five **Regional Preparatory Meetings**. These meetings served as a platform for the sharing of experiences, good practices, and lessons learned by each region's **National Convenors**<sup>IX</sup> to follow up on the UNFSS, including through the operationalisation and implementation of their National Pathways.

Additionally, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other Heads of Delegation were encouraged to assess progress, address challenges, and prioritise actions for sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems. **108 countries submitted voluntary country progress reports**, contributing to an understanding of what transformational changes are still needed in the lead up to 2030 and providing an important mechanism for tracking progress and identifying gaps<sup>60</sup>.

IX National Convenors are appointed by UN Member States and are responsible for organizing a Dialogues programme which focuses on the transformation of national food systems so that by 2030 they are aligned with (and making significant contributions to) the SDGs.



## Main concerns around the UNFSS and UNFSS+2 processes from civil society<sup>61</sup>



### The impact of diet-related NCDs has been largely overlooked

Despite active engagement by WHO's Nutrition and Food Safety Department, NCD Alliance and broader NCD civil society in the participatory processes for the UNFSS and the UNFSS+2, the Summits largely sidelined the enormous and growing global impact of diet-related NCDs. Instead, discussion of financial commitments centred on agriculture and food security, and only a few country leaders addressed the relationship between sustainable food systems, healthy diets and NCDs, recognising the burden they bear on populations.

### Lack of transparency, appropriate governance and rules of engagement

Throughout the UNFSS process, including the Pre-Summit, the Summit and UNFSS+2, concerns were raised by civil society around a lack of transparency, appropriate governance, and the rules of engagement, such as the risk of food industry interests undermining efforts to achieve more equitable, healthy and sustainable food systems.

### The establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance

During the UNFSS preparatory process, these concerns led to the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance, which, along with other UNFSS Action Track members, representatives of academia, international agencies and non-governmental organizations, [developed a letter to the UNFSS leadership](#)<sup>62</sup>. In addition to addressing topics such as a lack of transparency and clearly documented procedures within the UNFSS process, the letter included a set of recommendations around the need for the Summit to:

- Include a human rights perspective;
- Manage conflicts of interest;
- Identify corporations that should not be included in Summits' pledges or be part of the resulting Coalitions of Action;
- Ensure transparency by explaining who is helping plan the Summit and why;
- Allow for a public input and scientific review;
- Post all sources of funding;
- Provide more clarity on post-Summit plans; and
- Identify how governments are going to be accountable for their commitments<sup>62</sup>.

Similar concerns were raised by several human rights experts. However, there was no response to the letter or concerns raised from UNFSS leaders.

Additionally, the lack of transparency, appropriate governance and the rules of engagement led some CSOs to boycott these Summits and organise counter events, including [The People's counter mobilization to transform corporate food systems in 2021](#) and the [Food Systems 4 People in 2023](#), which focused on amplifying unheard voices against the entrenchment of corporate power in the process and discussing solutions such as food sovereignty, strengthened democratic multilateralism within the UN44, and agroecology<sup>63,64,65</sup>.

### Lack of accountability promotion, social participation and corporate capture prevention

Although the UNFSS events elevated the need for food system transformation to the global level and engaged countries in this discussion, the Summit and UNFSS+2 fell short on linking food systems transformation to better health outcomes, promoting accountability, protecting against corporate capture, and ensuring governance mechanisms promoted meaningful engagement of communities, self-determination, and rights-based approaches<sup>51</sup>. **It is essential for civil society free from conflicts of interest to ensure that commitments from future UNFSS events, along with outcomes from the coalitions and other UNFSS initiatives, genuinely reflect diverse global voices.** This includes voices from youth, women, Indigenous peoples, small-scale farmers, and consumers. **Commitments also must translate into bold, effective, and coherent national policies that deliver measurable health benefits.**

## UNICEF's guidance on food and beverage industry engagement

A high proportion—89%—of the global top 20 food and beverage companies' revenue is dependent on ultra-processed foods that are HFSS, posing a risk to children's health<sup>66</sup>. In line with the Ad Hoc Committee on UNFSS Governance's recommendation that UN agencies should recognise that the interests of the ultra-processed food and beverage industry producing HFSS products are irreconcilable from public health interests, UNICEF's **Programme Guidance on Engagement with the Food and Beverage Industry** (2023) represents an initial positive step towards this direction.

The guidance aims to ensure the effectiveness of all UNICEF programmes to advance children's rights, while preventing conflicts of interest and protecting the credibility of UNICEF. The agency's programmes should contribute to ensuring that the policies, practices and products of the food and beverage industry are aligned with children's right to food, nutrition, health, information, protection, and a sustainable planet.

The programme guidance outlines 10 parameters for UNICEF's engagement on and with the food and beverage industry. Drawing on principled and strategic considerations, they are intended to be applied as a minimum common standard across all UNICEF programmes. The parameters include UNICEF's primary strategy to transform food systems for children by strengthening public policy and advocating for improved practices and products by the food and beverage industry; avoidance of all partnerships with the ultra-processed food and beverage industries; and responsible engagement with multi-stakeholder platforms involving the food and beverage industry<sup>67</sup>.



## The UNFSS +4 Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in 2025

The next **UNFSS Stocktake (UNFSS+4)** is **taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 28-30 July 2025**. It aims to reflect on progress, strengthen accountability and unlock investment for food systems transformation. Considering it will take place only five years before the 2030 targets expire, it is imperative that significant acceleration takes place over the next biennium. Engagement with countries is being facilitated through the continuation of the **Food Systems Solutions Dialogues**, the **Regional Preparatory Meetings**, and other activities<sup>68</sup>.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action from the UNFSS+2, the Hub has developed a **roadmap for "corporate accountability"**, engaging a group of stakeholders that includes private sector entities, such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development<sup>69</sup>, whose membership includes actors from the tobacco, alcohol and food industry. Therefore, concerns remain regarding the UNFSS+4's rules of engagement and the inadequacy of conflict-of-interest prevention and management.

Regardless of the current gaps in the rules of engagement, the UNFSS+4 is taking place, is receiving a high level of political attention, and will have a strong impact at national level. This presents an **opportunity for civil society to engage with their national governments** to monitor progress on the implementation of their National Pathways, to advocate for nutrition- and health-sensitive programmes and regulations, and encourage more clear, coherent and transparent governance mechanisms.

*Further advocacy recommendations and asks supporting this work can be found in **Section 3** of the guide.*



Mexico's law for the elimination of industrially-produced trans fatty acids entered into force in 2023, as a result of the México SaludHable coalition campaign to eliminate them from the food supply.

## 2. 2. THE NUTRITION FOR GROWTH (N4G) SUMMITS

The Nutrition for Growth (N4G) is a global pledge to drive greater action toward ending malnutrition in all its forms. Prompted by the 2012 London Olympics, the N4G Summits are hosted every four years by the Paralympic/Olympic host country with **the last Summit taking place in Tokyo on 7-8 December 2021**<sup>70</sup>. With each N4G Summit, the opportunity has increased for CSOs working on NCDs, nutrition and food policy to highlight the need for governments and other stakeholders to address diet-related NCDs within the context of nutrition policy. But private sector involvement has remained a challenge.

### Tokyo's N4G Summit in 2021

Three priorities were set for the Tokyo's N4G Summit in 2021: 1) nutrition and universal health coverage; 2) food systems for healthy diets and nutrition; and 3) nutrition resilience in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

In total, 396 new commitments on nutrition were made by a total of 181 stakeholders across 78 countries, of which 42% were joint commitments made on behalf of multiple stakeholders and 56% of commitments came from or included governments (mostly from LMICs). Commitments covered all five thematic areas of the N4G Summit: Health (67%), Food (63%), Resilience (41%), Data (27%) and Financing (27%)<sup>71</sup>.

Donor governments and organisations committed to new nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive financing to tackle malnutrition. According to the Japanese government, the funding amounted to over US\$27 billion (although the Nutrition Accountability Framework platform calculated over US\$23 billion of committed funding)<sup>71</sup>.

### The Nutrition Accountability Framework

The **Nutrition Accountability Framework** was developed and launched by the Global Nutrition Report (GNR) in 2022 as the world's first independent and comprehensive platform for making specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments on nutrition and monitoring nutrition action<sup>x</sup>. It is a tool to strengthen accountability for nutrition commitments and assess the collective impact of our actions.



In preparation for the Tokyo's N4G summit, the WHO produced two publications on **nutrition in UHC** and **mobilizing ambitious and impactful commitments for mainstreaming nutrition in health systems** through universal health coverage. Additionally, NCD Alliance developed a **N4G Summit Commitment Guide** for civil society to support them in advocating for new SMART commitments to promote healthy diets for all, in line with 2021 N4G priorities and the global NCD targets.

Commitments made in 2021 and later have been recorded, tracked and publicly shared through the Nutrition Accountability Framework, including N4G commitments. The Nutrition Accountability Framework is now focused on receiving progress reports of previous commitments to provide an accounting of progress leading into the 2025 Paris' N4G Summit. Therefore, CSOs have a monitoring tool to ensure relevant stakeholders (e.g., governments and businesses) are held accountable for delivered commitments and progress is achieved.

X Before that, the N4G Tracker survey has been implemented annually since 2014, to assess progress towards commitments made by stakeholders at the 2013 and the 2017 N4G Summits; and details on progress for each stakeholder have been recorded on the GNR's Nutrition for Growth Commitment Tracker.



## Paris' N4G Summit in 2025

The next N4G Summit will be hosted by France and **take place in Paris on 27-28 March 2025**. The **four aims** of the Summit are to 1) put nutrition at the center of the sustainable development agenda; 2) **make the fight against all forms of malnutrition a universal cause**; 3) create continuity between N4G Summits and in the commitments for good nutrition; and 4) maintain a high-level of political and financial engagement for nutrition<sup>72</sup>. It will be an opportunity to review progress and hold governments accountable for the previously delivered commitments and to present new commitments to combat malnutrition in the final five years of the SDGs.

An **International Advisory Group** has been set up for the Paris' N4G Summit, which is co-led by the Ivory Coast and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. It involves a series of non-State actors, including business organisations, and many countries, including a Troika made up of the last, current, and future N4G hosts, G7 and G20 host countries in 2025 and 2026, and other countries<sup>73</sup>.

The commitment and accountability frameworks that will be used at the upcoming Summit will build upon the previous N4G Summit, including the **Nutrition Accountability Framework** by GNR<sup>73</sup>. The **SUN Global Gathering**, scheduled on 4-6 November 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda, will also take stock of all the Paris' N4G commitments that will be submitted before and after the Summit<sup>74</sup>.

**Principles of engagement** have been developed to determine who can contribute and participate in the upcoming Summit including eligibility criteria specific to the food and beverage industry companies and a requirement for potential conflicts of interest incompatible with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda to be declared. Although this is progress compared to previous N4G Summits, it is concerning that business associations, even with a track record of policy interference, are able to participate<sup>74</sup>, and there have been discussions on hosting a private sector dialogue on the sideline of the N4G Summit with actors that would not necessarily need to meet these criteria.

With this being said, the 2025 Summit's focus on ending malnutrition in all its forms is encouraging. However, the engagement of health-focused civil society remains very limited<sup>74</sup>. Nonetheless, **there are still opportunities to influence outcomes through national advocacy efforts and by encouraging and holding governments accountable for their commitments.**







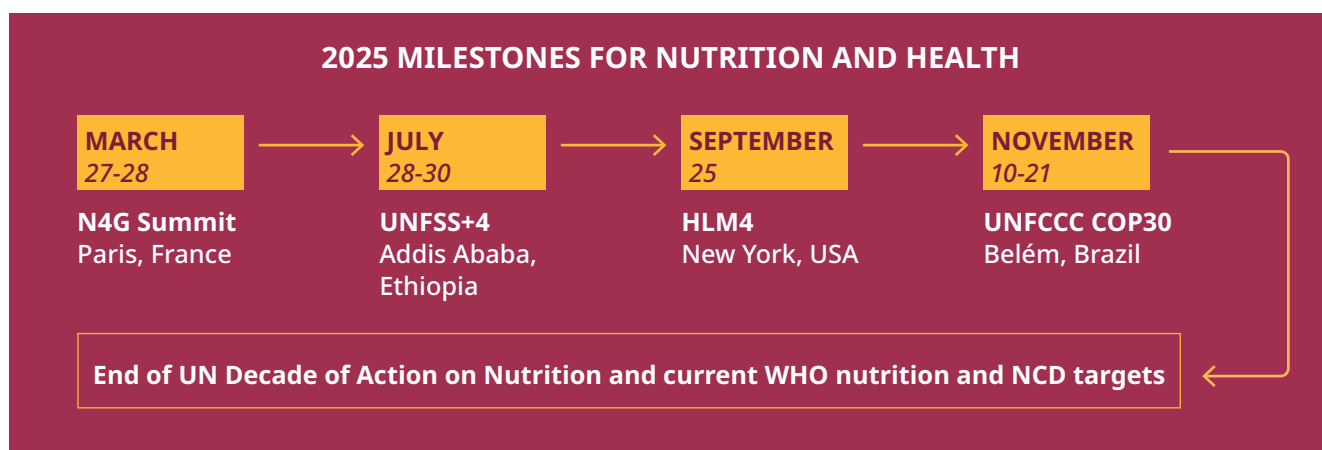
## **SECTION 3**

# **A CALL TO ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE DIET-RELATED NCD PREVENTION**

### 3. A call to action and recommendations to advance diet-related NCD prevention

Unhealthy diets and the rising prevalence of diet-related NCDs worldwide have highlighted the need to realise sustainable, healthy and diverse food systems that increase the access, availability and affordability of nutritious foods. **The policies that shape our food systems must be safeguarded from the undue influence of industry actors with conflicts of interest** and focus on promoting health and preventing diet-related NCDs, while also increasing food security and reducing malnutrition in all its forms.

Key public health and nutrition stakeholders will gather in 2025 for the Paris' N4G Summit, UNFSS+4, UNFCCC COP30 and the HLM4 on NCDs and Mental Health, in a landmark year for nutrition. 2025 also marks the end of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and the deadline for the WHO targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition and the nutrition-related targets within WHO's NCD Global Monitoring Framework.



The Paris' N4G Summit and UNFSS +4 will focus on nutrition and food policy action, where it will be imperative that the outcomes from these meetings aim to address malnutrition in all its forms, including the adoption of commitments to prevent diet-related NCDs.



On the other hand, **the HLM4 on NCDs and Mental Health (expected to take place 25 September 2025)** will present an opportunity to take stock of the progress in reducing the overall NCD burden; to adopt a new, ambitious and achievable Political Declaration on NCDs; and to connect the global nutrition and food policy processes explained in this guide with the NCD agenda.



For the **HLM4 on NCDs and Mental Health in 2025, NCD Alliance has developed a set of broader advocacy priorities**, including the ask for breaking the siloes between food systems and nutrition policy and NCD efforts to promote health and prevent NCDs.

UNFCCC COP30 presents an opportunity to advance international climate negotiations, connecting climate change, food systems and health policy considerations. For host country Brazil, it is a chance to highlight the Amazon's crucial role in regulating global warming and climate change and demonstrate its commitment to combating deforestation and protecting Indigenous rights<sup>75</sup>.

### NCD Alliance's call to action for 2025 and beyond

To foster effective food systems transformation, building on NCD Alliance's advocacy priorities for the HLM4 on NCDs and Mental Health, we urge governments to:

1. **Accelerate implementation by translating global food and nutrition commitments** into effective policy actions aimed at preventing and managing diet-related NCDs.
2. **Break down siloes by promoting a stronger focus on healthy diets** in global and national policymaking, ensuring that nutrition considerations are at the forefront of food system reforms and bridging the divide between malnutrition in all its forms and diet-related NCD concerns.
3. **Mobilise investment for food and nutrition policies that integrate health considerations**, providing sustainable financing that is sufficient to match the food system transformation needs.
4. **Delivering accountability by monitoring global food and nutrition commitments rigorously** to uphold accountability and drive meaningful progress.
5. **Engaging civil society including people living with diet-related NCDs** in supporting the development and implementation of policy actions for healthy food systems at all levels.
6. **Developing transparent governance mechanisms** that prioritise public health, ensuring policymaking processes are open, accountable, and free from conflicts of interest.

The following recommendations and asks aim to guide CSOs on how to leverage this call to action, encouraging their engagement in nutrition and food policy from a health perspective in 2025 and beyond. Recommendations are intended for CSOs to apply directly to their advocacy work, while the asks are messages that they can take to their national governments and UN agencies.

## 3. 1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

### Actions to engage in these upcoming policy processes

- 1. Raise awareness about food and nutrition-focused processes among your Ministry of Health and Foreign Affairs** (or equivalents), encouraging their engagement and support for coherent diet-related policies and nutrition and health considerations in the UNFSS process and N4G Summits, also providing recommendations on SMART commitments to put forward.<sup>XI</sup>
- 2. Inform other government sectors (such as your Ministry of Finance, Agriculture, Education, Trade, and Industry)** about your country's commitments for diet-related NCD prevention to break down siloes and create wider and deeper ownership<sup>XII</sup> of a food system transformation that integrates nutrition and health considerations.
- 3. Identify key actors from your government and call on them to accelerate implementation** of national pathways and nutrition commitments, closely monitoring the implementation of WHO's **NCD 'best buys' and other recommended interventions on healthy diets**.
- 4. Hold your government accountable for their progress** on implementing the **UNFSS national pathways** by monitoring its country voluntary progress report and its N4G commitments achievement based on the Nutrition Accountability Framework, and mobilise them ahead of future UNFSS Stocktaking Moments (expected to happen every two years) and N4G Summits (expected to happen every four years).
- 5. Call for your governments to safeguard against industry conflicts of interest in global and national policymaking**, demanding clear, coherent and transparent governance mechanisms around the UNFSS process and N4G Summits.

### Actions to build evidence and network of support

- 1. Encourage the involvement of relevant national and local actors in government plans** to achieve national commitments on nutrition and food systems, promoting the exchange and sharing of experiences in implementing the NCD 'best buys' and other recommended interventions, generating greater public demand and political support (e.g., see the **Video Stories of Change**).
- 2. Mobilise relevant actors in and beyond the health and agriculture sectors**, to promote policy coherence and multisectoral action for healthy and sustainable diets, including youth, women, small-scale producer and Indigenous peoples groups, people living with diet-related NCDs, and climate crisis, environmental, agroecology, anti-corruption and human rights organisations.
- 3. Ensure the meaningful engagement of people living with diet-related NCDs** (such as obesity, hypertension, heart diseases, stroke, cancers or diabetes) and other key groups such as young people and others listed above, to support the development and implementation of policy actions for healthy food systems at global, regional, national and local levels.
- 4. Collaborate in strengthening the evidence base of recommended interventions**, and mobilising resources for accelerated policy action, including through win-win fiscal policies (e.g., health taxes and health-promoting subsidies).
- 5. Identify global coordination mechanisms for corporate accountability of the food industry**, including learning from the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3 and its Guidelines on tobacco industry interference through national law and policies.

XI See for instance the **recommendations for the Paris' N4G Summit to UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) by the International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition (ICAN) UK**.

XII Some of these recommendations are inspired from the UN guidance on how to transform national commitments into action following the Transforming Education Summit in 2022, **available here**.



## Positions to advocate for

1. **Encourage the implementation of public policies and regulatory measures that improve food environments**, such as fiscal, marketing and labelling measures (see NCD Alliance's reports [Getting Fiscal Policies Right](#), [Selling a Sick Future](#), or [Warning Against Harm](#)), over self-regulation commitments from the ultra-processed foods and beverage industry producing products HFSS, as voluntary approaches have not proved effective in transforming food environments<sup>76</sup>.
2. **Promote a shift from prioritizing the financial returns of increasing the quantity of food production to focusing on the quality and accessibility of healthy diets**, through food production that prioritizes agroecological and diverse farming practices that provide sustainable and nutritious foods, while conserving biodiversity, addressing climate change and reducing air pollution.
3. **Use clear and unified definitions of "healthy" and "unhealthy" diets** at national, regional and global levels, considering the role of sustainable, plant-rich diets, in addition to cultural or religious foods, and social and cultural food safety.
4. **Establish a common definition of financing for food security and nutrition**, and methods for its tracking, measurement and implementation, such as the definition and mapping of financing for food security and nutrition seen in [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024](#).
5. **Promote good food governance** defined by strong accountability and transparency mechanisms at both global and national levels to prioritise public health interests over interests of private profit in health, nutrition and food policy processes.

**Good food governance** includes stricter principles of engagement (e.g., participants filing declarations on conflicts of interest), managing conflicts of interests, monitoring food industry interference, and countering undue influence so that commercial actors and interests cannot threaten or undermine global and national efforts towards the implementation of diet-related NCD prevention policies.

## 3. 2. ASKS FOR GOVERNMENTS

### Actions to engage in these upcoming policy processes

1. **Participate in the UNFSS process and N4G Summits**, ensuring nutrition considerations are at the forefront of food system reforms, and making SMART commitments on nutrition that encourage whole-of-government responses to promote healthy diets.
2. **Review and integrate national food system transformation pathways into existing national policies and plans** using a multisectoral approach to ensure there is coherence among stakeholders and alignment across all policy priorities and plans<sup>77</sup>.
3. **Create an effective governance structure** that holds different actors within the government accountable for playing their part in transforming food systems and achieving nutrition commitments<sup>78</sup>.
4. **Critically review and assess food industry commitments and actions** around diet-related NCD prevention, and protect the UNFSS process and N4G Summits from the influence of industry with conflicts of interest (including lobbying efforts) by advocating for and supporting comprehensive principles of engagement.

## Actions to further accelerate implementation at the national level

1. **Implement a coherent and comprehensive package of cost-effective food and nutrition policies (including regulatory measures)** at local and national level that generate multiple wins including reducing the burdens of malnutrition in all its forms and diet-related NCDs, improving planetary health, and saving money.
2. **Accompany regulatory measures with engaging and compelling mass media and behaviour change communication campaigns about healthy diets**<sup>79</sup>.
3. **Develop national Food-Based Dietary Guidelines** and ensure all national food systems policies and programmes are aligned with the guidelines<sup>79</sup>.
4. **Design trade policies that prioritise the supply of nutritious foods** over ultra-processed products HFSS, protecting small-scale producers<sup>79</sup>.
5. **Deliver agricultural development programmes, infrastructure and nutrition education to support producers (including young entrepreneurs) to grow and access markets for nutritious crops**<sup>79</sup>.
6. **Redirect public finance and subsidies away from unhealthy food and beverage commodities** to support access to diverse, nutritious, sustainable, and culturally appropriate whole-food diets produced through sustainable agroecological and Indigenous practices by small-scale producers<sup>79,80</sup>.
7. **Assess the country's access to financing to determine the most suitable financial instruments** for scaling up efforts to improve food security and address malnutrition, such as leveraging grants or concessional loans through collaborative financing partnerships in blended finance strategies for countries with limited financing access<sup>18</sup>.
8. **Increase the accessibility of innovative financial support instruments** (e.g., debt relief, domestic health tax revenues, and sustainability bonds) specific to food security and nutrition initiatives for population groups facing constraints with accessing financial services, such as women, Indigenous peoples, and small-scale producers.
9. **Improve food governance through the identification, prevention and mitigation of conflicts of interest** in food and nutrition policies at national and subnational levels, using tools such as the WHO's **Supporting member states in reaching informed decision-making on engaging with private sector entities for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: a practical tool**.

## Actions to build evidence and networks of support

1. **Ensure effective social participation mechanisms throughout the policy cycle** that engage communities, CSOs, people living with NCDs and other key actors who have a role in food systems and improving nutrition outcomes.
2. **Engage the protection of public health through the application of a human-rights based approach to food systems transformation while avoiding private sector lobbies that threaten the right to health of the population.**
3. **Invest in CSOs** to improve their capacity to monitor and denounce the interference of industry with conflicts of interest.
4. **Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of policies, programmes and mass media campaigns** to highlight and communicate about successes.

### 3. 3. ASKS FOR UN AGENCIES

#### Actions to support effective implementation

- 1. Support governments with policy development, investment cases and impact evaluation** of food and nutrition policies, sharing country success stories to encourage other countries on their paths towards food systems transformation.
- 2. Ensure governments apply a human-rights based approach to food systems** to address power imbalances and safeguard health and adequate nutrition for all, recognising that the interests of the ultra-processed food and beverage industry producing HFSS products are irreconcilable from public health interests and should not be part of decision-making processes.
- 3. Encourage a larger portion of international development funding flows** to support countries with the highest levels of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, such as those most affected by major drivers of these issues (i.e., conflict, climate variability and extremes, and economic slowdowns and downturns) and their underlying structural factors (i.e., a lack of access to and unaffordability of nutritious foods, unhealthy food environments, and high and persistent inequality)<sup>18</sup>.
- 4. Focus transparency and accountability mechanisms on real-world impact and public health results,** tracking the impact of policies and implementation enablers, and provide guidance, data and evidence in support of global targets that focus on improving nutrition outcomes.
- 5. Partner with relevant civil society as a key stakeholder** in supporting the development of guidance and implementation of programmes on healthy diets promotion, and ensure civil society free from conflicts of interest has mechanisms to meaningfully engage in international fora.
- 6. Define, manage and mitigate conflicts of interest with the food industry,** setting clear guidance to Member States on industry engagement in decision-making processes and acceptance of donations and resources.

## ANNEX

### Who's who is the UN nutrition space?

**WHO** is the UN agency leading and championing global efforts to achieve better health for all. In an effort to help prevent the double burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity and diet-related NCDs), lower health costs related to unhealthy diets and advance towards the SDGs, WHO is supporting Member States to advance its [acceleration plan on obesity](#) and the [7 'food system for health' priority policy actions](#); strengthening normative guidance and supporting countries in their implementation; and monitoring and reporting up-to-date nutrition, food safety and NCD data, among other efforts<sup>81</sup>.

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**UNICEF** is the UN agency responsible for protecting and promoting children's rights, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF works mainly with governments to improve public policies for children, and intends to strengthen five key systems – food, health, water and sanitation, education, and social protection, to prevent all forms of malnutrition among children, adolescents and women. UNICEF's Nutrition Strategy aims to protect and promote diets, services and practices that support optimal nutrition, growth and development for all children, adolescents and women<sup>82</sup>.

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**FAO** is the UN agency leading international efforts to achieve food security for all<sup>83</sup>, with a focus on advancing agricultural practices and working closely with related ministries. FAO also contributes to global efforts to reduce the prevalence of overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs through the support it provides to countries in reforming their food systems and its work with line ministries and other UN agencies<sup>84</sup>.

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**Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** is a joint UN body by FAO and WHO responsible for developing international food standards, guidelines, and codes of practice that contribute to the safety and quality of food and ensure fair practice in the international trade of food<sup>85</sup>. Over the past few decades, Codex's activities have increasingly started to include the development of standards that address diet-related NCDs. Codex standards have a strong influence on national nutrition policy and are linked to the World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations<sup>86</sup>.

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**WFP** is the food-assistance branch of the UN, with a core focus on improving nutrition and achieving food security. WFP works to ensure access to diverse, safe and nutritious food by supporting governments to implement a comprehensive multisectoral package of actions that address the triple burden of malnutrition and the prevention of diet-related NCDs<sup>87, XIII</sup>.

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**UN Nutrition** brings together UN agencies, programmes and funds with a mandate or interest in nutrition. It harnesses the collective strength of its members to effectively address malnutrition in all its forms by undertaking three interlinked areas of joint work: strategic supports for governments, joint advocacy and communication, and collective knowledge management<sup>88</sup>.

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The **Scaling up Nutrition (SUN)** Movement is a country-driven initiative to eliminate malnutrition in all its forms by 2030, based on the principle that everyone has a right to food and good nutrition. Each of the 65 SUN countries and four Indian states lead their own unique national SUN Movement with a focus on scaling up evidence-based, cost-effective interventions to prevent and treat malnutrition<sup>89</sup>. SUN consists of four networks, including a private sector and civil society branch. The SUN Movement Global Gathering convenes SUN Government Focal Points and members from these multistakeholder platforms.

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XIII WTO Member States are expected to align regulations with Codex texts except where inappropriate or ineffective in their national context, and measures which implement Codex texts are presumed to be consistent with WTO obligations unless shown otherwise.



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