



Address by
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WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
to the
INTERCOUNTRY MEETING ON NUTRITION

Amman, Jordan, 7–9 June 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Intercountry Meeting on Nutrition. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Jordan and Ministry of Health for hosting this meeting.

As you know, malnutrition contributes significantly to child mortality, being the main underlying cause of death in children under 5 years of age and the cause of 45% of all child deaths in the world in 2013. Nearly one-third of children under five in low- and middle-income countries of the Region are either underweight or stunted, and more than 30% of people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, including anaemia. The burden of obesity and noncommunicable diseases is alarming in the Region. Noncommunicable diseases contribute to about 57% of the deaths in the Region, while overweight and obesity among adults exceeds 50% in most of the middle- and high-income countries. Changing life style and nutrition transition are among the major immediate causes for obesity and noncommunicable diseases, including high intake of fat, salt and sugar.

During the sixty-fifth session of the World Health Assembly held in May 2012, Member States collectively endorsed the comprehensive implementation plan for maternal, infant and young child nutrition, targeting stunting, low birth weight, anaemia, overweight, childhood wasting, and exclusive breast-feeding. In addition, the 2011 Political Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases tasked WHO and Member States with developing an action plan to reduce exposure to risk factors, including reduction of salt intake by 30% and control and prevention of obesity.

The Rome Declaration of the Second International Conference in Nutrition (ICN-2) and its framework, which have been endorsed by all Member States, provide a good platform from which to start. I urge countries of the Region to adopt these and translate them into national plans

of action to achieve the global targets on infant and young child nutrition and noncommunicable diseases. Such action will contribute to early action on the post-2015 UN development agenda. WHO, together with FAO and other partners, such as UNICEF, and the World Food Programme will support countries to draw up a roadmap to implement the recommendations of ICN-2 including a monitoring and evaluation framework.

UNICEF, WFP and FAO, together with WHO, are committed to supporting all Member States to achieve the global, regional and national nutrition targets. This meeting will review the current nutrition situation and identify key challenges, as well as the current global, regional and national nutrition strategies and policies. We expect by the end of the meeting, to have developed a framework for action to implement the global strategy on infant young child nutrition, with a clear roadmap for implementing the ICN-2 recommendations to address the double burden of malnutrition in the Region.

UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO and other UN agencies will continue working with you to develop or review current nutrition policies and frameworks in line with ICN-2 recommendations, in order to scale up interventions to improve infant and young child nutrition and reduce the risk factors for noncommunicable diseases.

I wish you a very successful and productive meeting.