

# DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2021



**D**espite the continued challenges faced from COVID-19 throughout the year, 2021 brought many opportunities for NFS to emphasize and progress its work on ensuring universal access to safe and sufficient nutritious food and effective nutrition actions. During the year, the department was able to refine its vision on food systems delivering safe, healthy and sustainable diets: to tackle all forms of malnutrition and diet-related NCDs; to improve nutrition, food safety and accelerate progress towards achieving the global nutrition targets; to align efforts around the One Health approach; to build forward better from COVID-19; and to achieve the triple billion targets and health for all.



## *2021 was the mid-term year of the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016 – 2025)*

*and indeed **was a year of commitment making to accelerate action on nutrition and food systems transformation.***

*Two major global summits were opportunistic that allowed NFS to contribute to the dialogue for accelerating action for the*

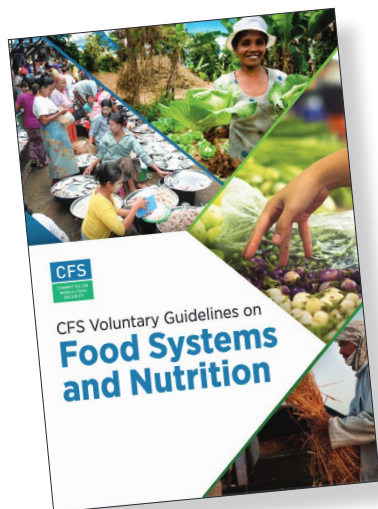


UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF  
**ACTION ON NUTRITION**  
2016-2025

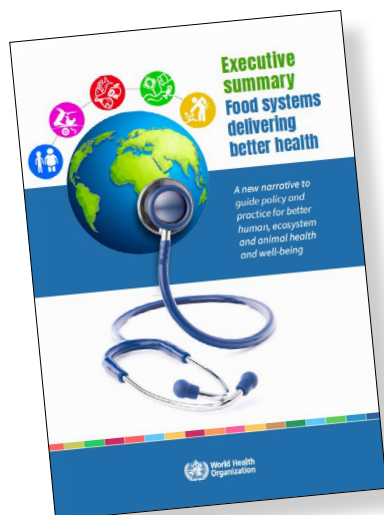
*and the  
**World Health Assembly 2025  
nutrition targets.***



# THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT



NFS led a global conversation on the integration of health throughout the food systems, with technical contributions to the [Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#) (VGFSyN) by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and most notably as a UN anchor agency of **Action Track 2: Shifting to Sustainable and Healthy Consumption Patterns**.



NFS was active by launching a series of publications related to **Food Systems for Health**: [an executive summary](#), an [information brief](#) and communication products, such as this [YouTube video](#) and a 'Menu of Action' presenting [7 policy actions to make diets safer, healthier and more equitable](#).

**\*\*IMPACT** [Support for two new coalitions](#) were also announced to increase access to healthy diets from sustainable food systems:

- 1) [on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems](#), and
- 2) [the School Meals Coalition](#).



## Food Systems for Health: The five pathways



**PATHWAY 1**  
Unhealthy diets and food insecurity



**PATHWAY 2**  
Zoonotic pathogens and antimicrobial resistance (AMR)



**PATHWAY 3**  
Unsafe and adulterated foods



**PATHWAY 4**  
Environmental contamination and degradation



**PATHWAY 5**  
Occupational hazards

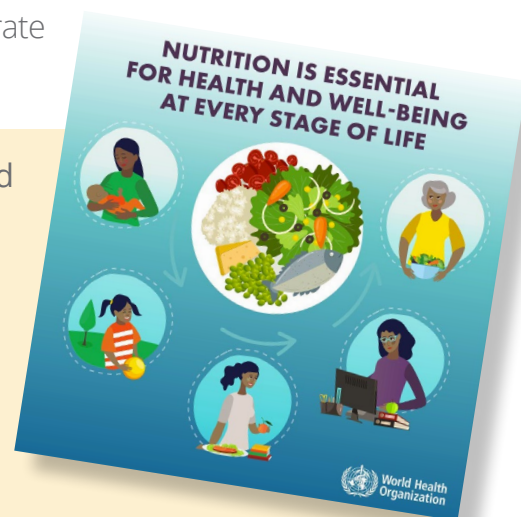
# NUTRITION FOR GROWTH SUMMIT

At the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#) in Tokyo on 7 – 8 December 2021, **396 new nutrition commitments were made by a total of 181 stakeholders across 78 countries.** The commitments are registered in the [Nutrition Accountability Framework \(NAF\)](#), hosted by the **Global Nutrition Report**.



**Six new commitments** from WHO were announced to accelerate progress on the 2025 nutrition targets. These include:

1. Expand initiatives to prevent and manage overweight and obesity;
2. Step up activities to create food environments that promote safe and healthy diets;
3. Support countries in addressing acute malnutrition;
4. Accelerate actions on anaemia reduction;
5. Scale up quality breastfeeding promotion and support; and
6. Strengthen nutrition data systems, data use and capacity.



**NFS made an impression! [WHO's nutrition tweets got over 350 000 views](#),** 3400 engagements, 270 retweets and 700 likes during the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo. Building on this significant momentum, NFS will actively support the commitments countries made under the summit's three important focus areas: health, food and resilience.

NFS led the technical working group on mobilizing nutrition in universal health coverage. With input from the technical working group, NFS led the session **“Mobilizing Nutrition in Universal Health Coverage”** during the thematic session day on day two of the summit. During the session, countries and stakeholders announced specific commitments to scale up nutrition in their respective health systems. The Nutrition for Growth summit was a success for scaling up nutrition in health systems. **The majority of the commitments (67%) were on the focus area of health.**



**Country impact achieved from N4G: [Tokyo Compact on Global Nutrition for Growth Commitments](#).**



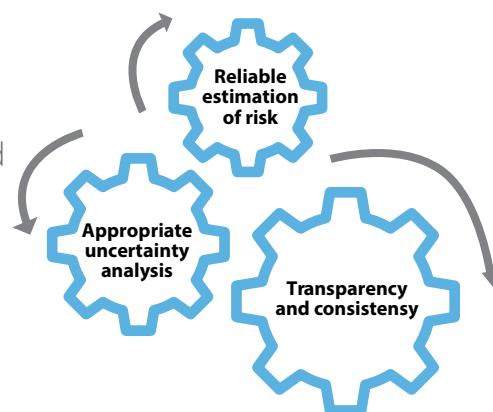
# KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

In 2021, NFS continued to work on providing nutrition and food safety guidance and advice for governments, food businesses, health workers and the general public, to maintain good health and prevent malnutrition in all its forms.



## Microbiological risk assessment guidance for food (MRA36)

The [Microbiological Risk Assessment Guidance for Food \(MRA 36\)](#) was published, providing a structured framework for assessing the risk of microbiological hazards in food. It updates three previous FAO and WHO guidance documents (MRA 3, MRA 7, and MRA 17) and brings them into a single volume, providing an overall umbrella for microbiological risk assessment. The Microbiological Risk Assessment Guidance for Food was developed for: i) identifying the key issues and features of a microbiological risk; ii) recognizing the properties of a best-practice risk assessment; iii) avoiding common pitfalls of risk assessment; and iv) performing risk assessments that are responsive to the needs of risk managers.



## Infant and Young Child Feeding

Breastfeeding and appropriate, safe, and timely complementary feeding are fundamental to the health and development of children and important for the health of their mothers. NFS published new work to continue supporting and protecting breastfeeding and good complementary feeding practices.

In 2021, NFS, together with the IFE Core Group, UNICEF, USAID published updated FAQ: [COVID-19 Vaccines and breastfeeding](#) to health care providers and the public, including mothers who are breastfeeding or expressing milk.





The Global Breastfeeding Collective has identified seven policy priorities for countries to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. For building **Better Breastfeeding Counselling Programmes**, new tools were developed for implementation to support implementation of recommendations on providing skilled breastfeeding counselling to all women during the first thousand days of their children's lives:

[Global Breastfeeding Scorecard 2021](#), [IYCF counselling course](#), [Implementation guidance on breastfeeding counselling](#).

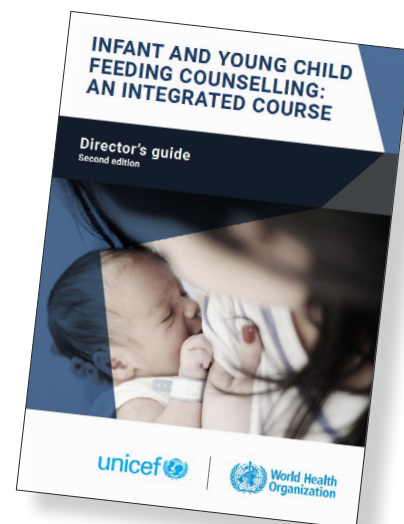
**\*\*IMPACT:** During the biennium, new legislation or regulations on the Code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes were enacted in eight countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Oman, Sao Tome and Principe, and Sierra Leone).

**At the N4G,** USAID committed to joining the WHO and UNICEF in a strategic partnership over the next five years to improve



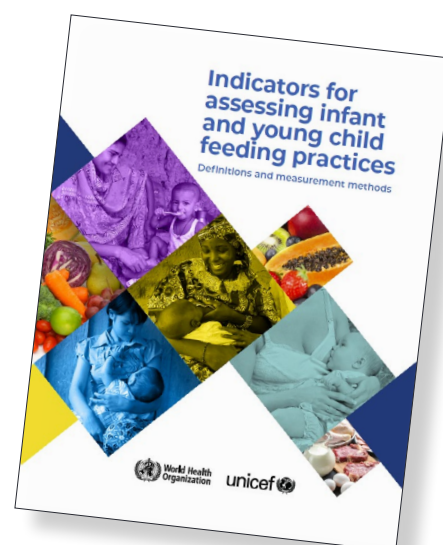
nutrition and health outcomes for mothers and newborns by scaling up quality breastfeeding promotion and support.

Through this partnership, technical assistance will be provided to at least 10 governments and local organizations, to support a country-led, comprehensive approach to increasing access to skilled breastfeeding counselling.



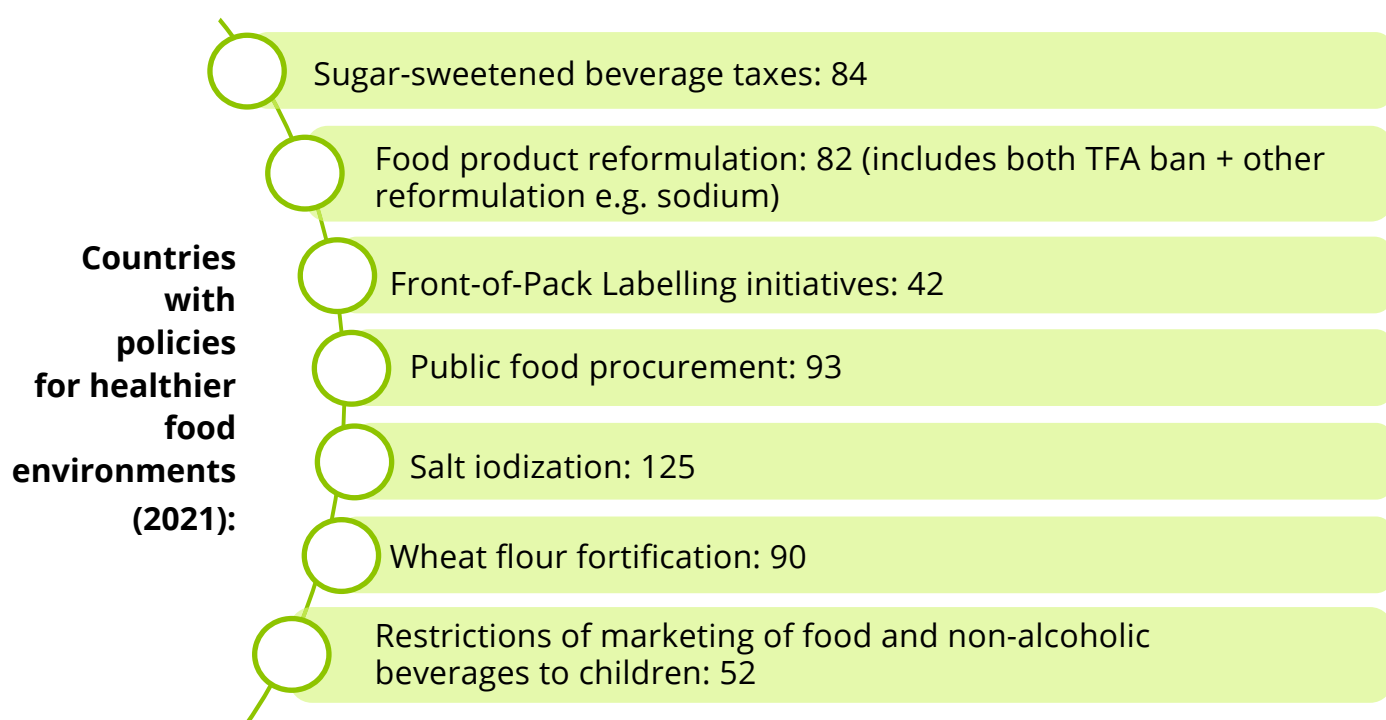
## [Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices: definitions and measurement methods](#)

Under the WHO/UNICEF Technical expert advisory group on nutrition monitoring (TEAM) umbrella, this report was developed to guide the setting of new and updated indicators to assess infant and young child feeding practices at the household level.



# INCREASING COUNTRY CAPACITIES TO MONITOR PROGRAMMES AND NATIONAL NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY TARGETS

The developmental, economic, social, and medical impacts of the global burden of malnutrition and unsafe food are serious and lasting, for individuals and their families, for communities and for countries. **WHO aims for a world free of all forms of malnutrition, where all people achieve health and wellbeing as per the 2016–2025 nutrition strategy.** Monitoring and surveillance are key for developing and implementing policies and programmes.



## Country capacity for reporting on nutrition and food safety indicators

- Five countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Laos, Uganda, Zambia) were supported to strengthen their national nutrition information system
- The development of the methodology for the implementation of sentinel sites was supported in Yemen
- Ministry of Health capacities to analyze anthropometry data and do quality assessment were built in Senegal and Panama, and on data analysis and monitoring the SDGs nutrition-related indicators in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ECSWA) region countries.

## Assessment of nutritional status



### WHO-UNICEF-WB Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates 2021 Edition

The key findings 2021 Edition includes global and regional trends and, for the first time, country-level estimates are also presented, with a summary of the enhanced methodology for deriving country-level model-based estimates for stunting and overweight. Country progress assessment towards the 2030 targets are provided with summaries by region.



\* Household survey data on child height and weight were not collected in 2020 due to physical distancing policies, with the exception of four surveys. These estimates are therefore based almost entirely on data collected before 2020 and do not take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### The WHO Global Anaemia estimates, 2021 Edition:

includes global anaemia estimates in women of reproductive age, by pregnancy status, and in children aged 6-59 months.



The Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and country roadmaps document was jointly published by FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO in November 2021. This Framework identifies four critical outcomes to achieving the SDG targets on child wasting and to improving early detection and treatment for those who need it. Under each of these outcomes, the Framework identifies proven pathways to accelerate the delivery of essential actions and to create a more enabling environment for their success. The goal of this Framework is to provide a common focus to guide individual and collective action to accelerate progress towards the SDGs on child wasting.



### Monitoring flour fortification to maximize health benefits: a manual for millers, regulators, and programme managers

This manual focuses primarily on wheat and maize flours in countries where these food staples are industrially processed. Stakeholders of the country's fortification programme who have interest in and/or authority for setting up monitoring, can use this manual as a guide for providing technical assistance to food and nutrition programmes.

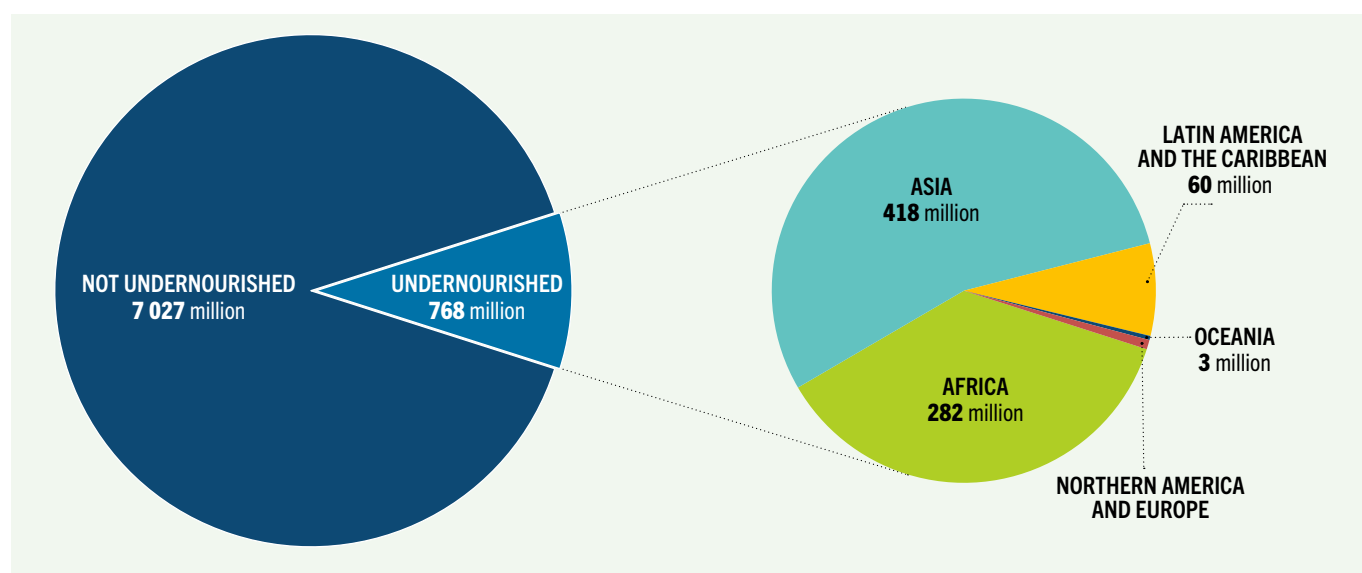
**\*\*IMPACT:** In Egypt, in preparation to restart a programme of fortifying wheat flour with iron and folic acid, capacity building training was recently provided to the milling industry and government officials.





The joint publication **The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2021** by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) presents the first global assessment of food insecurity and malnutrition for 2020 and offers some indication of what hunger might look like by 2030, in a scenario further complicated by the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also includes new estimates of the cost and affordability of healthy diets, which provide an important link between the food security and nutrition indicators and the analysis of their trends.

**MORE THAN HALF (418 MILLION) OF THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD AFFECTED BY HUNGER IN 2020 WERE IN ASIA AND MORE THAN ONE-THIRD (282 MILLION) IN AFRICA**



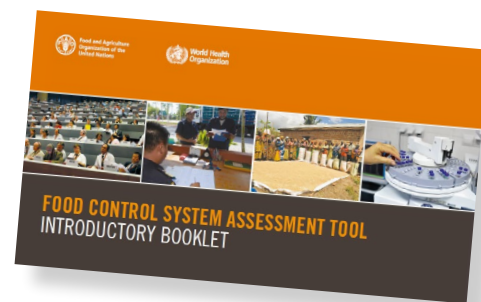
In 2013, the world committed to **reduce sodium intake by 30% by 2030**. In collaboration with partners, WHO has continued its technical support to Ethiopia, China, Viet Nam, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in their efforts to reduce sodium intake. More than a fifth of the world population lives in countries with mandatory measures towards sodium reduction, including mandatory declaration of sodium. WHO launched the **Sodium Country Score Card** to monitor countries' progress in implementing legislative and other voluntary or mandatory measures to reduce dietary intake of sodium.



## Nutrition and foodborne disease surveillance

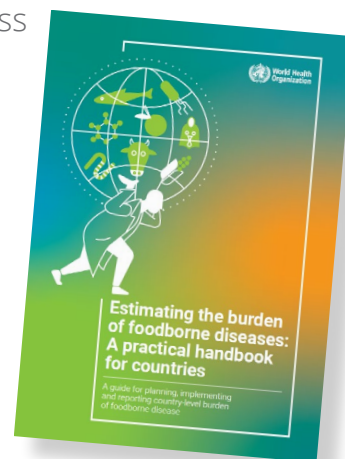
Co-authored with FAO, the **Food Control System Assessment Tool** was developed to assist Member states in assessing the effectiveness of national food control systems.

The companion **introductory booklet** with interactive functions makes easier for competent authorities to use the assessment tool and provides an overview of 162 assessment criteria under 25 system competencies.



**\*\*IMPACT:** This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date tool to assess systems and identify priority areas for improvement. This tool has been piloted in multiple countries (Indonesia, Malawi, Tunisia and Sudan) across regions.

A new handbook, **Estimating the burden of foodborne diseases: A practical handbook for countries**, helps countries assess causes, magnitude and distribution of foodborne diseases.

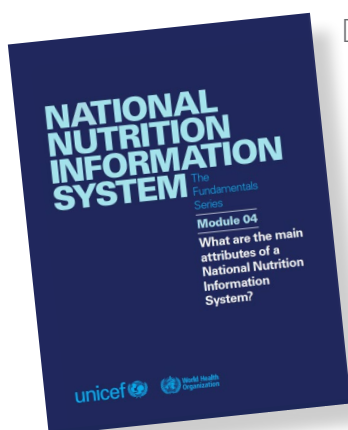


WHO appointed 26 international experts to the new version of the **Foodborne disease burden Epidemiology Reference Group** (WHO FERG, est 2007) to advise on the development of the estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases, to be published in 2025.



### **The FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network**

In 2021, the INFOSAN Community Website connecting Food Safety Authorities from all around the globe during food safety emergencies was updated and features enhanced. INFOSAN counts now with over 700 members from 187 Member States. More than 246 incidents were reported and attended for in 2021 (127 in 2020) and three regional INFOSAN members meetings carried out in Asia, Africa and the Americas.



Developed under the WHO/UNICEF Technical expert advisory group on nutrition monitoring (TEAM) umbrella, the **National nutrition information system (NNIS) guidance** consists of a five-module publication entitled “The Fundamentals Series” and covering the following topics:

**Module 1.** What is an NNIS? **Module 2.** How does an NNIS support a country's nutrition programmes? **Module 3.** What is needed to build a useful NNIS? **Module 4.** What are the main attributes of an NNIS? **Module 5.** What are the main types of data used in an NNIS?

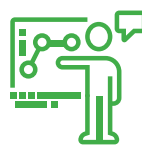
The **Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS)** / Food database received substantial upgrades, which better support the provision of scientific advice to Codex Alimentarius, including to the work of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods.



People



Data



Processes and procedures



Technology

## SETTING STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF DISEASES CAUSED BY UNSAFE FOOD, UNHEALTHY DIETS, AND MALNUTRITION



**Codex 2021: a year of virtual reality** with the Final adoption of more than 900 new and revised Codex standards (including numerical standards), guidelines and codes of practice.

### FAO/WHO Scientific Advice to the Codex Alimentarius:

NFS maintained commitments by evaluating most Codex priority list of chemicals through the involvement of JECFA (food additives, veterinary drugs residues in food and food contaminants), JEMRA (microbiological risk assessments of food allergens) and JMPR (pesticide residues in food) as well as supporting setting global nutrition standards through JEMNU.

**The Codex Trust Fund** with its explicit focus on supporting more effective engagement of developing and transition economy countries in the Codex system, and its regional FAO/WHO support structure completed the switch to fully functional and smooth virtual support to eligible countries, allowing easier access to support.

**IMPACT:** In 2021, five virtual training sessions were held for the benefit of CTF eligible countries in different regions, including on the application of the Codex Diagnostic Tool, the CTF application process and on the complementary funding opportunities available through CTF and STDF.

#### CODEx ALIMENTARIUS MANDATE



PROTECT the health of consumers

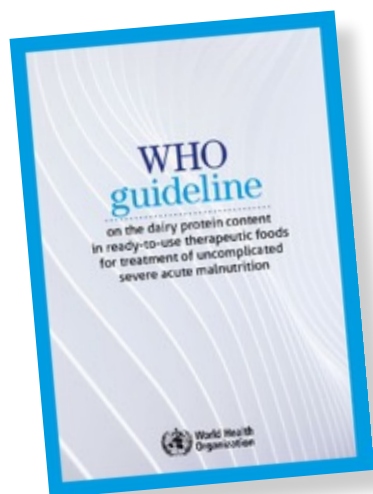


ENSURE fair practices in food trade



PROMOTE coordination of all food standards work





This **WHO guideline** published in April 2021 updates the specific recommendation in the technical annex of the **2007 Joint Statement** by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSSCN) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on community-based management of severe acute malnutrition. It provides global, evidence-informed recommendations focusing on whether reduced dairy or non-dairy RUTF should be used for treating uncomplicated severe acute malnutrition.

## WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks

**WHO's launch of the Global Sodium Benchmarks** harmonizes a set of benchmarks for more than 60 food categories that define the maximum levels of sodium that processed foods can contain. The setting of global sodium benchmarks is a very important step to facilitate reformulation of food products which contributes to drive progress in sodium reduction. These global benchmarks are intended to be complementary to ongoing national and regional efforts to set sodium targets.



**\*\*IMPACT:** 41 countries were identified as having national sodium maximum targets and the data from these 41 countries, as well as the WHO Region of the Americas and the Pacific Islands (a subregion of the WHO Western Pacific Region), served as the basis for setting up the global sodium benchmarks for different food categories. An additional 2 countries (i.e. Belarus and Denmark) with national sodium targets were identified and their data are also being added to develop the updated WHO global sodium benchmarks.\*\*

Furthermore, based on the information compiled in the **WHO Global database on the Implementation of Nutrition Actions (GINA)**, the following countries have set mandatory salt/sodium targets for a range of foods, such as bread, cereal products, processed meats, cheeses, crisps and snacks, soups and stocks, and tomato products: Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kiribati, Latvia, Malaysia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Oman, Paraguay, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, and Uzbekistan.

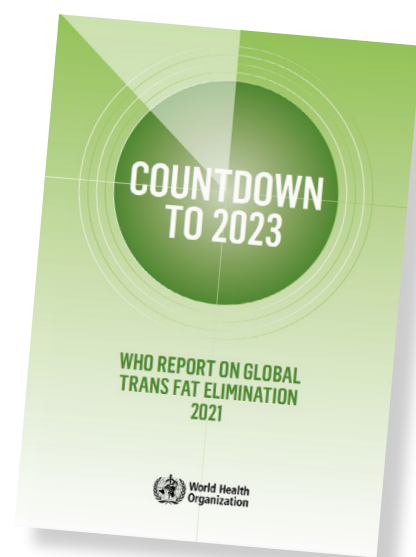




## One year to go! Progress towards the global elimination of industrially produced TFA by 2023

**The third annual report**, launched at a high-level event in December 2021, monitors global progress towards the 2023 target for global elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids (TFA), highlighting achievements from the past year.

**\*\*IMPACT:** Mandatory TFA policies are currently in effect in **57 countries covering 3.2 billion people**; of these, **40 countries have best-practice policies in effect to protect 1.4 billion people from industrially produced TFA** (18% of the global population). \*\*



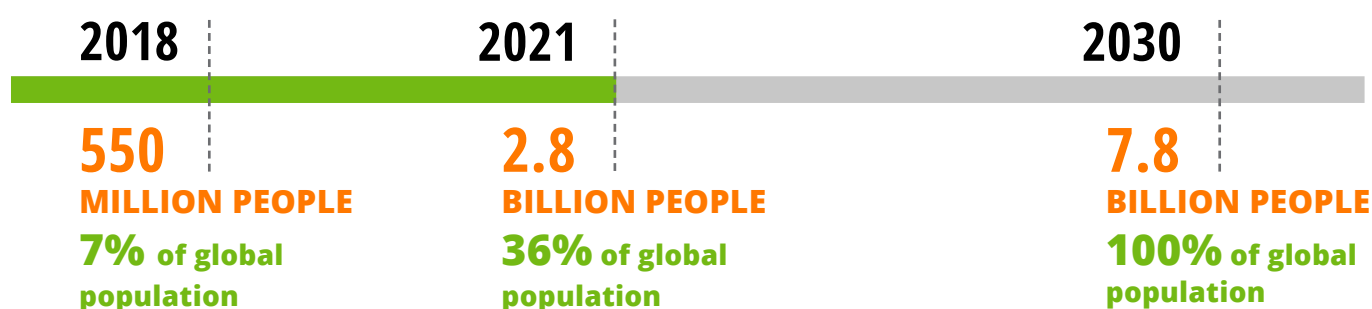
Since May 2020, there has been significant progress in TFA elimination around the world. Further updated information since the launching of the third annual report is provided below:

Jan 2021	April 2021	June 2021	July 2021	January 2022	2022-2024
Best-practice policies came into effect in Turkey	Best-practice policies came into effect in the EU	Best-practice policies came into effect in Singapore	Best-practice policies came into effect in Brazil and Peru; Passed in the Phillipines	Best-practice policies came into effect in India	Best-practice policies to come into effect: Bangladesh (2022) Uruguay (2022) Phillipines (2023) Ukraine (2023) Paraguay (2024)

## Reformulation of food products

According to the WHO Global database on the implementation of Nutrition Actions (GINA) 119 countries have expressed toward reformulation in their national policies, strategies and plans. Moreover, **72 countries have set mandatory limits or voluntary reformulation targets** Of these countries, 66 have set mandatory limits (18 of these also have voluntary targets) while six have voluntary targets only.

## Population coverage by best-practice policies passed or in effect, by the end of 2018 and 2021



# IMPROVING THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT TO ENABLE HEALTHIER DIETARY DECISIONS AND INFLUENCE HEALTH OUTCOMES

NFS works towards transforming environments to enable safe, healthy and sustainable diets.

## Policies to create enabling and healthy food environments

The WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) Subgroup on Policy Actions (est. 2018) is developing four evidence-informed guidelines on food environment policies. To inform the process, reviews on contextual factors influencing policy-making and implementation were conducted on **(1) protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing, (2) fiscal and pricing policies, (3) nutrition labelling policies and (4) school food and nutrition policies.**

**\*\*IMPACT:** Chile's Food Labelling and Advertising Regulation, for example, has a wide scope, is based on transparent nutrition criteria and has well-coordinated enforcement. Following implementation, pre-school children's and adolescents' exposure to advertising for restricted foods dropped and sales of these foods in schools dramatically decline.

## Supporting actions to improve public food procurement and service

In January 2021, WHO launched the **Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet**. It provides

an overview of how to develop or strengthen, implement, assess compliance with, and evaluate, the effectiveness of a healthy public food procurement and service policy.

**IMPACT:** In Sri Lanka, for example, the Ministry of Health, introduced procurement policies and guidance to ensure that meals provided to patients and employees in government-run hospitals and other medical institutions contribute to healthy diets.



# MOVING NUTRITION AND FOOD

## SAFETY PRIORITIES FORWARD GLOBALLY

NFS continues to advocate for priorities and policies that move nutrition forward globally, by convening with Member States, partners and the public.

### Promoting food safety

Over 300 events and activities were organized in at least 90 countries to observe the third **World Food Safety Day**, coordinated jointly with FAO, with a theme 'Safe food now for a healthy tomorrow'. An **overview of festivity and creativity around this day** is presented in this report.



A new **Food Safety Community of Practice**, created as a peer-to-peer online forum for global professionals working on and sharing

interest in food safety issues, counts 1,600 members to date.

### Celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes

The 40th anniversary of the adoption the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was an opportunity to mark the significant progress made in protecting and promoting the incomparable benefits of breastfeeding, but also a reminder of the work still to be done.

**The event recording is available**  
**7 languages** / **Joint WHO/UNICEF**  
**statement**





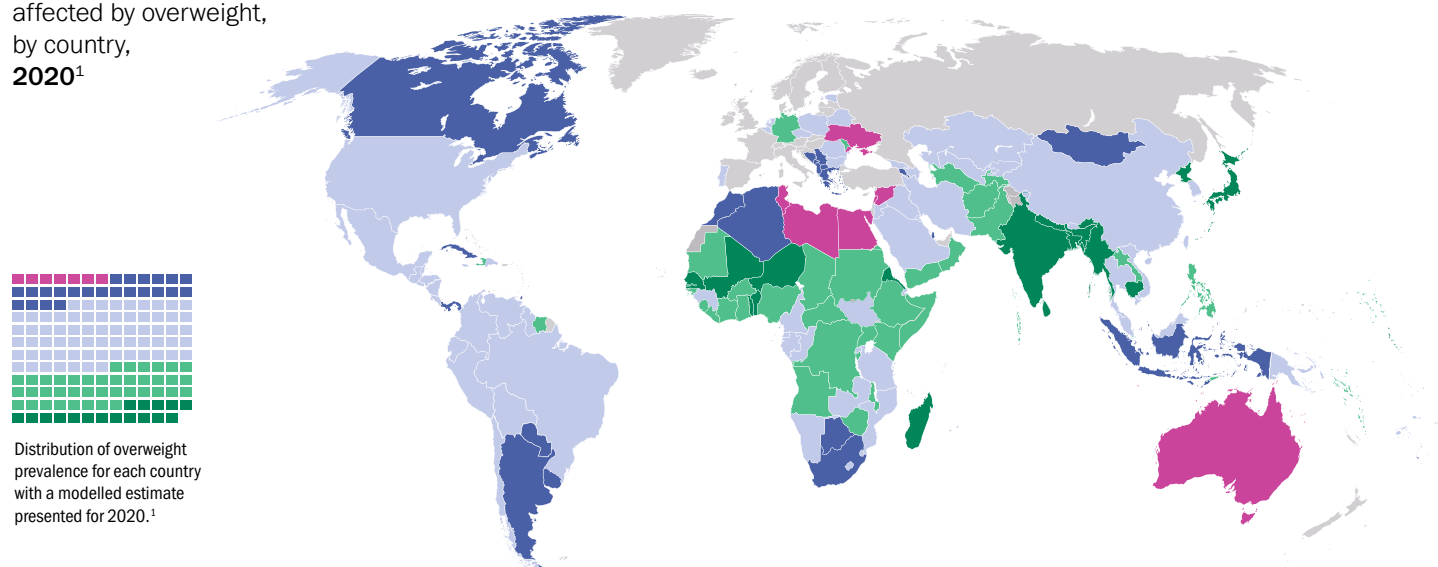
# OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT



## Factsheet on Obesity (June 2021)

On World Obesity Day, 4 March 2021, the World Obesity Federation and WHO convened key stakeholders to share perspectives and mobilize efforts towards coordinating a global response to the ongoing obesity pandemic. WHO, together with UNICEF and the World Obesity Federation launched on this occasion the Global Obesity Coalition which convened a first **Global Obesity Forum** event at the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Percentage of children under 5 affected by overweight, by country, 2020<sup>1</sup>



The number of countries with low and very low levels of overweight decreased from 64 countries in 2000 to 56 countries by 2020

## Editathon | Editathon 2021: Health for All

Health literacy is considered an essential stepping stone to make the Sustainable Development Goals SDG2 and SDG3 a reality: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” and “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. The Department of Nutrition and Food Safety provided in November 2021 technical expertise to a 4-day online pilot event called EDITATHON 2021, in collaboration with the Programme of International Nutrition at Cornell University, Wikimedia as well as Creative Commons Chapters Venezuela and Colombia, to edit, update, and create Wikipedia articles on nutrition and food safety.



Editathon to improve health knowledge				Home	Editors	Articles	Uploads	Activity
<b>22</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>94.2K</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>406K</b>	<b>4</b>	
Articles Created	Articles Edited	Total Edits	Editors	Words Added	References added	Article Views	Commons Uploads	



## DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

# ACHIEVEMENTS 2021



**World Health  
Organization**

**For more information, please contact:**

Department of Nutrition and Food Safety

[www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety](http://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety)

Email: [nutrition@who.int](mailto:nutrition@who.int)

[foodsafety@who.int](mailto:foodsafety@who.int)

**World Health Organization**

Avenue Appia 20, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland