United Nations System

Standing Committee on Nutrition

EN

Discussion Paper 1

Enhancing Coherence between Trade Policy and Nutrition Action

Implementing the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This paper was made possible through the inputs and comments by our colleagues from the Food and Agriculture Organization (Eleonora Canigiani, Ekateriana Krivonos), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Ebba Dohlman and Cristina Mendes), World Health Organization (Benn McGrady, Katrin Engelhardt) and World Trade Organization (Devin McDaniels, Evan Rogerson and Christiane Wolff). It also benefitted from comments generously provided by Vincent Atkins, Philip Baker, Jacques Berthelot, Kim Burnett, Jennifer Clapp, Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, Ian Gillson, Libby Hattersley, Lim Li Ching, Susanne Løgstrup, Peter Lunenborg, Brian Lutz, Graham MacDonald, Ahmad Mukhtar, Sophia Murphy, Rachel Nugent, Catherine McLean Pirkle, Stefano Prato, Ranja Sengupta, Marco Springmann, Richard Smith, Wendy Snowdon, Terence Stewart, Anne Marie Thow, Remco van de Pas, Barbara von Tigerstrom, Elvira Uccello, Patrick Webb and Helen Walls. The UNSCN Secretariat wishes to thank all for their support and advice.

The project is managed by Marzella Wüstefeld PhD, and Lina Mahy, UNSCN Secretariat. The funding support by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, through BMEL, is gratefully acknowledged.

This report is also available at the UNSCN website at *www.unscn.org*

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FOREWORD

Implementing the Framework for Action of the Second International Conference on Nutrition

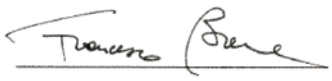
In November 2014, governments from around the world committed themselves to developing 'coherent public policies' to advance nutrition. The occasion was the FAO/WHO jointly organized Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). One year later, governments also called for 'policy coherence' – when policies in different sectors support common objectives – in the implementation of the new Agenda 2030 and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

One area, we believe, in which coherence is needed, is between trade policies and nutrition policies and programmes. This is a controversial area: some people are clearly worried about trade from a nutritional perspective; others view trade as an effective and efficient way to advance human development. Policy coherence between trade and nutrition can be achieved if deliberate effort is made to align trade policy actions to nutrition objectives. When policies from different sectors align, there are mutual benefits on both sides. For example trade policies that promote good nutritional outcomes, will result in healthy populations who can contribute to the economic development of nations. We believe that more focus is needed on making trade work for nutrition. We reiterate the call made in the Rome Declaration of the Second International Conference on Nutrition for trade policies that are 'conducive to fostering food security and nutrition for all'.

This discussion paper opens up space for constructive dialogue on the relationship between trade policy and nutrition. It shows that the links between trade policies and actions designed to address malnutrition are complex and generate considerable controversies. We need to acknowledge that currently trade liberalization has influenced the food systems in many countries towards increased availability and accessibility of more processed food and greater consumption of foods high in fat, sugars and salt, thus contributing to the emerging obesity epidemic. Yet there may be opportunities to leverage an important economic driver such as trade policy, towards achieving positive nutritional objectives.

We hope that trade policy makers learn more about nutrition from this discussion paper, and how trade can contribute to improving nutrition. Likewise we hope the nutrition community gains greater clarity about the opportunities presented by trade policies for addressing malnutrition.

The discussion paper makes eight recommendations to a range of actors involved in trade policy and nutrition action. We urge these actors to consider these recommendations as a way of taking forward the important commitment made at ICN2 to enhance policy coherence for nutrition.



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KEY MESSAGES

- **Despite progress, multiple forms of malnutrition remain pervasive around the world.** Attaining Target 2.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – ending malnutrition in all its forms – and World Health Organization nutrition and non-communicable disease targets will take more concerted action. While many nutrition actions are available to achieve nutrition objectives, further contributions are needed from sectors beyond nutrition/health.

- **The adoption of the SDGs in 2015 creates an important opportunity for greater coherence between economic and social development goals.** Target 17.14 of the SDGs is "enhance policy coherence for sustainable development."

- **The 2014 Rome Declaration of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) identified trade policy as one aspect of economic development** that could play a greater role in contributing to achieving nutrition objectives. Trade policy is included as a cross-cutting strategy for development throughout the SDGs.

- **Modern trade policy involves a huge array of different policy instruments designed to influence** not just the physical movement of products across national borders, but **the provision of services and economic exchange**. The general thrust of modern trade policy is to reduce barriers and otherwise facilitate trade in a process known as trade *liberalization*.

- **There is potential for both coherence and incoherence between trade policy and nutrition action.** Decisions made about trade policy can be supportive of nutrition objectives – but trade policies can also undermine nutrition objectives. The degree of coherence and/or incoherence between trade policy and nutrition action depends on a wide range of factors, including the forms of malnutrition and the foods affected; the characteristics of sub-populations and food systems in countries; and the trade reforms and existing policy and institutions in place in countries and trading partners.

- **The lack of generalizability in the relationship between trade policy and nutrition** means countries need to identify if there is coherence and/or incoherence between specific trade policies and nutritional policies and programmes in their own national and local contexts. To do so will require the development and implementation of appropriate analytical tools.

- **There are significant opportunities for countries to enhance coherence between trade policy and nutrition action** by implementing complementary policies to maximize synergies and minimize risks. In order to do so, sufficient policy space is needed in trade agreements. While for the most part trade agreements leave sufficient space for necessary nutrition actions, politically-motivated interest groups may inaccurately frame nutrition actions as counter to trade law.

- **Strengthening capacity for cross-sectoral coordination and improving governance of policy–making processes are essential** to enable and motivate enhanced coherence between trade policy and nutrition action.

- **The core of any strategy for policy coherence is to agree on common policy objectives aiming to address both trade and nutrition** related challenges in a coordinated and consistent manner. Motivating efforts to create greater coherence will therefore require countries to treat nutrition, as well as trade, as a top priority for sustainable development.

With a nutrition-centric perspective, this discussion paper takes a first step towards exploring the question: What actions do policy makers need to take next to enhance coherence between trade policy and nutrition action? Given the emphasis of recent and current trade policy on opening up trade, it focuses on policies to liberalize trade through global and regional agreements.

The context of the discussion paper is the call in the 2014 Rome Declaration of Nutrition of the Second International Conference on Nutrition for "trade policies to be conducive to fostering food security and nutrition for all." Trade policy is included as a cross-cutting element in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which also include the target of "Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development."

The paper provides an overview of the objectives of nutrition action and of modern trade policy and explores the potential for both coherence and incoherence between trade policy and nutrition action. It highlights four actions policy makers can take to enhance coherence between trade policy and nutrition action: 1) the development of analytical tools that countries can use to conduct context-specific analysis of coherence between trade policy and nutrition action as relevant to their own populations; (2) the identification and implementation of complementary policies to enhance synergies and manage risks between trade policy and nutrition action; (3) build stronger capacity for cross-sectoral coordination; and (4) improve governance of policy–making processes. The paper ends with eight specific recommendations for key actors relevant to trade and nutrition.

I - INTRODUCTION

Policy coherence for sustainable development

Target 17.14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 is "Enhance Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development." Policy coherence is generally understood as the "promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives" (OECD, 2003). The concept of "policy coherence for sustainable development" extends this definition to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making (OECD, 2014). Advanced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the concept aims to support sustainable development outcomes by breaking down the silos between policy communities and applying integrated, whole of government approaches to common global challenges. Policy coherence for sustainable development is an approach designed to help ensure that actions taken to achieve different policy objectives (e.g. in agriculture, nutrition, health) can support rather than undermine each other. It focuses particularly on ensuring that policies promoting economic growth are better linked with those focused on social welfare and environmental development.

Along these lines, one much discussed area of policy coherence for development is between trade policy and social aspects of development and human rights (e.g. Blouin, 2007; de Schutter, 2009; Smith et al, 2009; Liberman and Mitchell, 2010; Concord, 2013; Forster and Stokke, 2013). This includes nutrition. In 2014 the Rome Declaration of Nutrition called for "trade policies to be conducive to fostering food security and nutrition for all" (FAO/WHO, 2014a). It also called for "coherent public policies" to support the provision of healthy, nutritious diets. Both nutrition and trade are integrated into the SDGs. Goal 2 is "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture," with Target 2.2 being "end all forms of malnutrition." Trade policy is one of the cross-cutting elements of the SDGs. It is one of the "means of implementation" included in Goal 17, referenced in eight targets spread across four SDGs (Annex 1), and relevant to an even greater number of elements of the SDGs (Tipping and Wolfe, 2015).

In the context of the call for policy coherence for sustainable development, this discussion paper aims to identify actions policy makers can take to enhance coherence between trade policy and nutrition action. The paper first provides an overview of the types, level, and causes of the multiple forms of malnutrition and the nutrition actions available to address them. It then provides an overview of trade policy and illustrates the potential for both coherence and incoherence with nutrition action. It then identifies four key actions for policy makers to consider in order to enhance coherence: (1) develop analytical tools that countries can use to conduct context-specific analysis of coherence between trade policy and nutrition action as relevant to their own populations; (2) identify and implement complementary policies to enhance synergies and manage risks between trade policy and nutrition action; (3) build stronger capacity for cross-sectoral coordination; and (4) improve governance of policy–making processes. It ends with a set of eight specific recommendations for key actors.

II - NUTRITION AND NUTRITION ACTION[1]

2.1 Nutrition and sustainable development

Target 17.14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 is "Enhance Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development." Policy coherence is generally understood as the "promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives" (OECD, 2003). The concept of "policy coherence for sustainable development" extends this definition to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making (OECD, 2014). Advanced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the concept aims to support sustainable development outcomes by breaking down the silos between policy communities and applying integrated, whole of government approaches to common global challenges. Policy coherence for sustainable development is an approach designed to help ensure that actions taken to achieve different policy objectives (e.g. in agriculture, nutrition, health) can support rather than undermine each other. It focuses particularly on ensuring that policies promoting economic growth are better linked with those focused on social welfare and environmental development.

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Good nutrition is a cornerstone of good health and sustainable development throughout the world. It saves lives, enhances immunity, decreases susceptibility to infectious and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), enhances physical and mental

1 - "Nutrition action" refers to policies, programmes and specific interventions with the objective of improving nutrition

development, increases adult economic productivity and can help address the environment footprint of food (WHO, 2012, IFPRI, 2015).

Yet most households in the world are touched by the opposite of good nutrition – "mal" nutrition. Malnutrition manifests itself in many different forms, including various forms of "under" nutrition, such as not growing properly (being too short for age – "stunting"), being too thin ("wasting") and lacking in micronutrients, such as Vitamin A and iron. Malnutrition also takes forms associated with overconsumption of certain foods and nutrients – overweight/ obesity and nutrition-related NCDs.

2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition in all its forms

Most countries now experience several forms of malnutrition at any one time. This situation - often referred to as the multiple burden of malnutrition - has become the "new normal" in most parts of the world (IFPRI, 2014). Undernutrition is most prevalent in low- and middle-income countries and is particularly concerning when it occurs among infants and women of child-bearing age. 161 million children under age 5 are too short for their age (stunted) and 51 million do not weigh enough for their height (wasted) (UNICEF/ WHO/World Bank 2015). Many of these children and millions of women have diets insufficient in Vitamin A, iron, iodine and zinc. On the other hand, 42 million children under 5 and 1.9 billion adults are overweight or obese (WHO, 2015a). In 2010 it was estimated that over 12 million global deaths resulted from NCDs linked with unhealthy diets and inadequate physical activity (Lim et al, 2013). These forms of malnutrition are growing in low-income countries but are most prevalent in middle and high-income countries. They are found mainly in adults, but also exist in children.

A particularly vulnerable period for malnutrition is the first 1000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. Good nutrition during this very early period – in utero and up to two years of age - is crucial for physical growth and cognitive function. Undernutrition during this period can be lethal. Today, undernutrition is a leading cause of death of young children throughout the world. Sub-optimal child growth in the first 1000 days also influences future risk of developing NCDs (Uauy et al, 2008).

2.3 Causes of malnutrition in all its forms

The immediate causes of malnutrition are insufficient intake of food and/or certain nutrients, inability of the body to absorb and use nutrients, or overconsumption of certain foods (WHO, 2015b). Because disease has a strong influence on the ability of the body to absorb nutrients, poor health is also an important immediate determinant of malnutrition.


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Breastfeeding and associated care of mother and child are also critical determinants of nutrition. An estimated 804,000 babies die each year because they are prematurely weaned from breastfeeding (Black et al. 2013). Breastfeeding provides the optimal diet for infants, supporting healthy growth; protecting against infections; reducing allergies and sickness; and promoting bonding between mother and child. Over the longer term, it helps protect against obesity (Horta and Victoral 2013).


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Underlying these factors are more distal causes that influence people's ability to access sufficient diets and adequate health and care (UNICEF, 1998). These underlying causes include the availability and affordability of safe, nutritious and healthy diets and clean water; policies and programmes that support good hygiene, breastfeeding, and reduce unhealthy behaviours; poverty; and the provision of education (Table 1). Even more distal, but no less important, are national, regional and global drivers that shape these underlying causes, such as trade policy.

2.4 Nutrition targets and progress in addressing malnutrition in all its forms

Recognizing that accelerated global action is needed to address malnutrition, in 2012 World Health Assembly Resolution 65.6 endorsed a *Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition*. The Plan specified a set of six global nutrition targets, aiming to motivate countries to reduce the different manifestations of malnutrition among women, infants and young children by 2025 (Box 1).

In addition to the six World Health Assembly targets, in 2013 the WHO adopted a *Global Monitoring Framework for the Prevention and Control of NCDs*. This framework includes two global targets related to nutritional risk factors of NCDs among adults and adolescents (Box 1).

Tracking progress for indicators of these targets shows that in 2015, 119 out of the 193 countries monitored are on course to achieve at least one target (IFPRI, 2015). Yet only 21 countries are on course to meet three or more, and for adult obesity, no country is on course. At this rate, these global nutrition targets will not be achieved by 2025. Notably, Target 2.2 of the SDGs - to end malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 - is even more ambitious than the eight WHO targets. Attaining these targets will thus require much more concerted nutrition action.

2.5 Actions to address malnutrition in all its forms

BOX 1. EIGHT GLOBAL NUTRITION TARGETS FOR 2025 ADOPTED BY THE MEMBER STATES OF THE WHO

World Health Organization targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition

- achieve 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted;
- achieve a 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age;
- achieve a 30% reduction in low birth weight;
- no increase in overweight in children under 5 years of age;
- increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%;
- reduce and maintain wasting (children under-5) to less than 5%.

Global Monitoring Framework for the Prevention and Control of NCDs

- no increase in obesity and diabetes (in adults and adolescents)
- 30% reduction in salt intake (in adults)

Source: WHO, 2013b; WHO 2014a

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TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF NUTRITION ACTIONS AND PATHWAYS TO NUTRITIONAL OBJECTIVES

ACTIONS TO CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR NUTRITION ACTION	EXAMPLES OF NUTRITION ACTION	NUTRITIONAL OBJECTIVES		
		INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	NUTRITION BEHAVIOURS	NUTRITION STATUS
▸ Making nutrition a national political priority ▸ Ensuring continuous advocacy for nutrition action ▸ Investing in nutrition action ▸ Developing and sustaining/ maintaining capacity to deliver nutrition action ▸ Framing of other sectors' policies as opportunity for enhancing nutrition action and gathering evidence ▸ Ensuring policy space in other sectors does not encroach on policy space for nutrition action ▸ Putting in place governance arrangements that enable coordination between other sectors and nutrition action	▸ Procure foods into public institutions that serve people on low incomes ▸ Restrict promotional marketing of breastmilk substitutes, inappropriate complementary foods and foods high in fat, sugar, salt ▸ Provide clean piped drinking water and sanitation ▸ Provide electricity to help store food ▸ Promote local production of diverse foods ▸ Place nutrition labels on packaged foods	People live in healthy environments	▸ Mothers breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary feeding up to two years of age or beyond. ▸ All people – including infants & young children between six months & two years – consume adequate, safe, nutritious, diverse, healthy diets and safe drinking water all year round ▸ All people have an adequate intake of micronutrients such as Vitamin A, iron and iodine etc, including at periods of specific nutrient needs ▸ People who are malnourished and/ or sick are treated through healthcare platforms and programmes	All people have optimal nutrition status
	▸ Ensure social protection for vulnerable groups ▸ Humanitarian assistance safety net programmes	People are less poor		
	▸ Involve women in agricultural interventions to improve nutrition	Women are empowered		
	▸ Provide health care services ▸ Supplementation programmes for adequate micronutrient consumption during pregnancy	People have access to health care and nutrition services that prevent, treat and/or manage malnutrition		
	▸ Provide education for girls ▸ Promote breastfeeding ▸ Provide training in food skills (e.g. cooking, growing) ▸ Dietary counselling for pregnant women ▸ Conduct public awareness campaigns	People are educated & knowledgeable about positive nutrition behaviours		

Source: Derived from FAO/WHO (2014b); WHO (2013a, 2013b; 2014b); Bhutta et al (2013); Gillespie et al (2013); Huang et al (2015)

A lot is known about what can be done to address malnutrition in all its forms. These "nutrition actions" are set out in the Framework for Action adopted by governments at the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014 (FAO/WHO, 2014b), as well as in other international documents, in particular the WHO's "Essential Nutrition Actions" (WHO 2013a), and its Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (WHO, 2013b). The WHO has also developed a series of Policy Briefs that include specific actions to address different forms of malnutrition (WHO, 2014b).

Examples of "nutrition actions" are provided in Table 1. Taken together, they aim to address the causes of malnutrition in all its forms by achieving the following objectives in the pathway to improved nutritional status:

- People live in healthy environments.
- People are less poor.
- Women are empowered.
- People have access to quality health care and, where necessary, nutrition services that prevent, treat and or manage malnutrition.
- People are educated and knowledgeable about positive nutrition behaviours.

Despite evidence showing these actions can be used effectively to reduce malnutrition, the many forms of poor nutrition remain prevalent (IFPRI, 2015). Why? One reason is that decision makers are inadequately enabled and motivated to take effective action. Thus actions are needed to create an "enabling environment" that allows and/or motivates governments and other decision-makers to act (Table 1). This "enabling environment" constitutes the political and institutional context in which governments make decisions about if and what nutrition actions to take; it includes ensuring that there is policy space and that there are governance mechanisms in place for policies to be developed and enacted. Activities to create this enabling environment have been shown to be essential for nutrition actions to be implemented (Gillespie et al, 2013; Huang et al, 2015).

A second, and related, reason is that most nutrition actions involve not just specific interventions delivered by the nutrition and health sector, but other sectors. In other words, nutrition actions need different sectors to implement policies. For example, addressing poverty and expanding female education require the input of sectors involved in economic growth, social protection, and education; bringing clean water to rural areas requires sectors involved in building infrastructure; and making healthy food and diets available to people requires inputs from sectors involved in agriculture, food processing and retail, environmental sustainability and climate change.

At the national level this means other government departments leveraging their policies for nutrition action; at the level of the SDGs, it means leveraging the other goals to achieve the nutrition goal. The majority of the other SDGs are relevant to nutrition, including addressing poverty (Goal 1), ensuring healthy lives, access to education, clean water and sanitation (Goals 3-6), reducing inequality (Goal 10), ensuring sustainable production and consumption (Goal 12) and addressing climate change and environmental degradation (Goals 13-15) (UNSCN, 2014; IFPRI, 2015). Another policy area relevant to nutrition is spread throughout the SDGs: trade policy.


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III - TRADE POLICY

3.1 Trade policy and development

Trade policy (defined in Box 2) has become an increasingly important feature of the international development landscape (WTO, 2014a). The UN system positions trade policy – particularly policies that aim to liberalize trade – as **"instrumental for growth and development"** (UNSG, 2014). Trade liberalization policies have been positioned as central to financing the post-2015 agenda (given its potential to help stabilize the global financial system) (ERD, 2015). They have also been proffered as a smarter way to bring benefits to the poor than aid (Gavas et al, 2015).

Critical to the context of these perspectives has been the process of trade liberalization over past

BOX 2. WHAT IS TRADE POLICY?

Trade policy comprises the rules and regulations governments put into place to govern transactions across national borders. Modern trade policy involves a huge array of different policy instruments designed to influence not just the physical movement of products across national borders, but the provision of services and economic exchange. It includes measures that influence trade across borders as well as "behind-the-border" policies that affect trade and the incentives for private companies to trade and invest. In what is termed "trade liberalization," the general thrust of modern trade policy is to reduce barriers to trade. Examples of current trade liberalization policies include:

- Reduction of tariffs, quotas & export taxes
- Harmonization (use of international standards) and greater transparency of sanitary/phytosanitary measures, food labelling regulations and other technical barriers to trade
- Protecting intellectual property rights
- Dispute settlement mechanisms
- Reduction of barriers to trade in services, such as banking, telecommunications and real estate
- Reduction of trade-distorting, domestic and export agricultural subsidies
- Equal treatment of foreign and domestic food businesses in public procurement
- Supporting the development of infrastructure and capacity for trade e.g. transportation routes and storage facilities, export promotion agencies
- Provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit; measures for effective cooperation between customs and other authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance

These policies are often anchored in trade agreements made between different countries and implemented by signatory countries. Countries may also implement trade policies unilaterally. Policies agreed to in trade agreements are generally binding, although they may also include reference to voluntary standards. Unilateral policies can be changed through national legislative processes.

decades and the subsequent expansion of world trade (UNSG, 2014; WTO, 2014a). Trade liberalization – the reduction of barriers to trade and the facilitation of more open trade – has been pursued as a policy goal on the basis that open trade can stimulate economic development (UN, 2014). The underlying theory of trade liberalization is that if countries are allowed to trade freely, the global economy will operate at maximum efficiency and generate net economic gains. Trade theory suggests that under the right conditions, open trade can raise incomes, create employment, lower the prices of consumer goods, and increase effective demand. For example, through increasing export opportunities to overseas markets, enhancing access to skills, technology and capital, and attracting foreign investment. In agriculture, the theory is that by fostering competition and more efficient allocation of resources, policies that liberalize trade allow food to be more efficiently produced and distributed, and lead to more stable markets and prices.

3.2 Trade agreements

Trade agreements are the main means through which governments have pursued trade liberalization. Trade agreements can be formed at global or regional level. The first major international trade agreement was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Established in 1947, it was followed by nine "trade negotiation rounds" in which countries agreed to various reductions in tariffs and other barriers to trade. The GATT (1947) was designed to enable a truly international trade system. To do so it established two foundational principles to reduce "discrimination" in trade: First, the Most Favoured Nation principle states that countries should not discriminate between "like products"[2] from different trading partners; and second, the National Treatment principle requires countries not to treat products produced within national borders differently than "like"[3] imported products.

The final round of the GATT, the Uruguay Round (1994), marked the beginning of the modern era of trade liberalization by extending the scope of agreements to trade within the service sector, intellectual property rights, and food and agriculture. It also established the World Trade Organization (WTO). The main agreements negotiated during this round and subsequent rounds are described in Box 3. The latest round of WTO negotiations, the "Doha Round" (known as the "Doha Development Agenda"), aims to improve the trade prospects of developing countries. Initiated in 2001, there have been significant challenges bringing the Doha Round's negotiations to a conclusion. Partly in light of these challenges, countries have turned increasingly to regional trade agreements. As of April 2015, there were 406 such agreements in force (WTO, 2015).

Regional trade agreements are very different from global agreements in that they permit preferential access to the markets of signatory countries (they are sometimes termed "preferential trade agreements"). For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), implemented in 1994, permits preferential access between the United States, Canada and Mexico. Regional agreements may also extend to become Customs Unions. These are trade blocs composed of a free trade area with a common trade policy and a common tariff to other countries – such as the European Union, the Caribbean Community and the Southern Common Market (or "Mercosur").

Regional trade agreements tend to include provisions that extend beyond multilateral rules. For example, NAFTA provides equal treatment between domestic and foreign investors; the European Union and Mercosur require a common nutrition label. The new generation of trade agreements is even more extensive in scope and depth, being oriented towards deeper and comprehensive regulatory integration encompassing a range of behind-the-border regulatory measures, including investment, competition policy, capital movement, intellectual property rights and government procurement. This is notably the case in the new "mega regional trade agreements" such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreed upon in October 2015 between several Pacific Rim countries, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) under negotiation between the European Union and the United States.

2 - Broadly defined "like products" are products that are the same or substitutable for each other

3 - There are exceptions, including for measures necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health; to give developing countries special access to markets and raise barriers against goods traded unfairly by other nations; and in regional trade agreements and customs unions.


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BOX 3. TRADE AGREEMENTS ADMINISTERED BY THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Multilateral agreements include:

- **AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE**

  Pledges WTO members to reduce tariffs (market access provisions), export subsidies (export competition provisions) and domestic agricultural support (domestic support provisions), with exemptions for developing countries.

- **AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (SPS)**

  Sets out rules for food safety and animal and plant health protection measures, and encourages WTO Members to base these measures on international standards.

- **AGREEMENT ON TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (TRIPS)**

  Obliges WTO Members to provide minimum protection to a range of intellectual property rights, including for some food products (e.g. patents or sui generis rights for new plant varieties, geographical indications and other commercial identifiers). None of these obligations apply to least developed countries, which are subject to special and differential treatment.

- **TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE AGREEMENT (TBT)**

  Establishes obligations to ensure that national mandatory regulations do not discriminate against producers nor create unnecessary obstacles to trade; encourages WTO Members to base their regulations on relevant international standards.

- **DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING**

  The World Trade Organization's procedure for resolving trade disputes.

- **GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT) (1994)**

  Applies to trade in goods and establishes, among other obligations, a reduction of tariff rates to facilitate market access.

- **GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES (GATS)**

  Obliges WTO Members to implement measures to liberalize the trade in services.

- **AGREEMENT ON TRADE-RELATED INVESTMENT MEASURES (TRIMS)**

  Prohibits trade-related investment measures, such as local content requirements, that are inconsistent with basic WTO agreement provisions.

- **TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT**

  Provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit; provides measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues (will enter into force upon ratification by two thirds of WTO members).

The WTO also has some plurilateral agreements that are not part of the single undertaking and therefore do not include all WTO Members. WTO members are given the choice to participate voluntarily. There are three plurilateral agreements in force administered by the WTO, including one on government procurement.

3.3 Trade liberalization policies and investment

One important area where regional agreements extend beyond multilateral rules is in investment. Measures to promote cooperation in investment include: removing requirements for foreign-owned companies to export a certain percentage of what they produce, to use domestic services, or to transfer technology to competitors; and giving foreign-owned companies the right to repatriate profits, to compensation in the event of expropriation, and to international arbitration in the case of monetary disputes with governments.

Beyond being integrated into regional trade agreements, foreign investment has been a fundamental process accompanying trade liberalization. Unilateral liberalization and bilateral investment treaties have proliferated along with trade agreements and led to greater foreign direct investment (FDI) (Neumayer and Spess, 2005). FDI – an investment by an enterprise from one country into an entity or affiliate in another – has in turn created or enlarged transnational corporations. FDI is one of the mechanisms through which transnational corporations enter new markets, and reflects an intention to remain invested over the long term.

The relationship between free trade and FDI has long been debated. While conclusions about whether they function as complements or substitutes for each other are difficult to draw, it is widely recognized that trade policy is one of the main determinants of foreign firms' investment decisions (OECD, 2005). This is because it influences the stability of the trading environment and, therefore, the confidence of investors (UNCTAD, 2003).

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IV - PATHWAYS OF (IN)COHERENCE BETWEEN TRADE POLICY AND NUTRITION ACTION

4.1 The objectives of trade policy and nutrition action

Trade policy evidently encompasses a wide range of policies developed and implemented at different levels. As a distal cause of nutrition, it can be expected to have an influence through a series of pathways from policy to outcome. At the core of policy coherence is the identification of shared challenges and common policy objectives to address these challenges in a coordinated and consistent manner (OECD, 2014). Thus when considering policy coherence, a key aspect of articulating these pathways is the objectives of the different sets of policies. Historically, trade and nutrition have been treated as separate domains, so it can be expected that their objectives will reflect differing priorities.

The specific objectives of trade policy differ from place to place, but broadly, as described in Section 3.1, the goals of trade liberalization are economic, and include economic growth, higher incomes, greater employment opportunities, more stable supply of products and services, lower prices of consumer goods.

From a nutrition perspective, trade policy can contribute to improved nutrition if these objectives are levered towards meeting the objectives of nutrition actions. As described by Table 1, this means that trade policy should be coherent with actions that enable and motivate:

- Mothers to breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond.
- All people to consume adequate, safe, nutritious, diverse, healthy diets and safe drinking water all year round.
- All people to have an adequate intake of micronutrients such as Vitamin A, iron and iodine, especially during periods when nutrient requirements are specific and high (e.g. pregnancy, infancy, early childhood, or during illness).
- Timely and adequate treatment of people who are malnourished and/or sick through healthcare platforms and programmes.

It also means trade policies are synergistic with meeting intermediate outcomes along the pathway of nutritional improvement (Table 1), namely that:

- People live in healthy environments.
- People are less poor.
- Women are empowered.
- People have access to health care, and nutrition services that prevent, treat and/or manage malnutrition.
- People are educated and knowledgeable about positive nutrition behaviours.

4.2 The relationship between the objectives of trade policy and nutrition action

Figure 1 illustrates potential pathways of coherence between trade policy and nutrition objectives. At the top are some of the main overarching objectives of trade liberalization policies. Specific trade policies (see Box 2) work to pursue these objectives by influencing import and exports, foreign investment, the provision

of services, and government revenues. This in turn influences the availability of products and their prices, employment and national infrastructure.

Figure 1 indicates that pursuing the core objectives of trade liberalization policies through these mechanisms can be coherent with the objectives of nutrition action by contributing to healthier environments for people, less poverty, more empowered women, and greater access to education, health care, treatment for malnutrition, and programmes that provide nutrition services (Table 1). For example, raising incomes and creating employment can address poverty; lowering the price of foods can make them food more accessible to people; and directing resources from accelerated economic growth towards funding for health care and targeted programmes can enhance access to health services. Indeed, in theory these effects could have a far more significant influence on nutrition outcomes than nutrition-specific actions implemented by the nutrition/health sector.

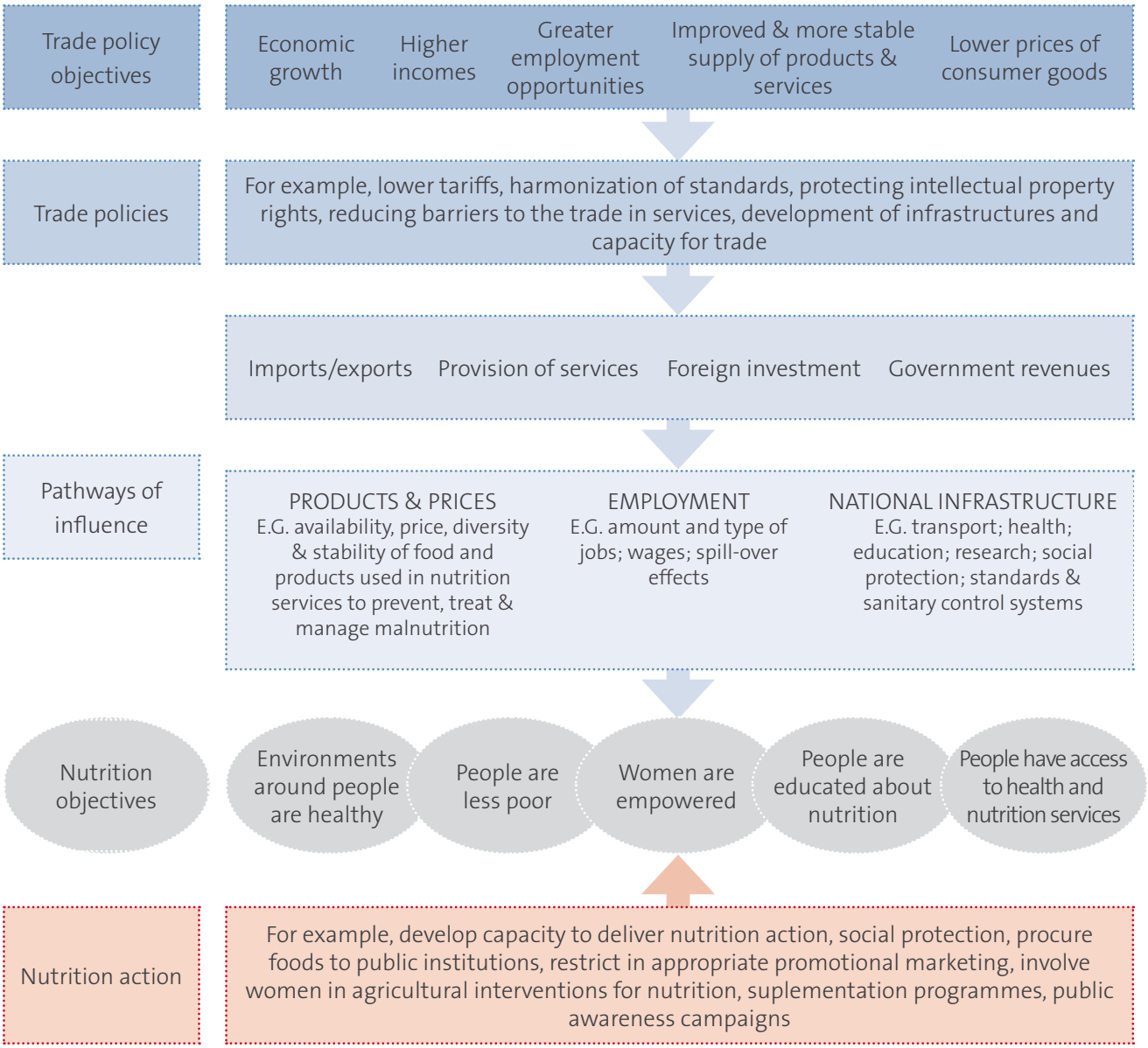
Yet despite the potential of trade liberalization policies to be coherent with nutrition action, the evidence suggests the picture is far more complex: trade liberalization policies can, in practice, both support nutrition action and undermine it. Table 2 provides an illustration of both scenarios, showing how the same trade policy can have positive or negative implications for nutrition. Although the outcomes in Table 2 are hypothetical, they are consistent with an evidence base demonstrating a consistent lack of generalizable outcomes of trade policy for food security (FAO, 2015). For example, the evidence indicates that trade liberalization's effects on food availability, diversity and access varies between countries: policies that liberalize trade have been associated with greater food availability in some countries but not in others (McCorriston et al 2013; FAO, 2006). Likewise for employment and income: trade liberalization has been associated with enhanced income and employment opportunities among poorer population groups in some countries but not others (Bineau and Montalbano, 2011).

This lack of generalizability in part emerges from significant differences in the trade policies that are implemented. But it also emerges from the different contexts into which trade policies are put into place, including, as shown by the evidence below, heterogeneity in: (a) forms of malnutrition and foods types; (b) sub-populations; (c) food systems; (d) associated trade reforms; and (e) existing policy and institutions in countries and trading partners. As a result of these (often inter-related) heterogeneities, even the same trade policy can have different impacts in different places.

(a) Heterogeneity of forms of malnutrition and foods affected. As outlined in Section 2, there are different forms of malnutrition and while these have broadly shared causes, there are differences in the specifics. Some, for example, are related to lack of sufficient energy (calorie) intake, others to inadequate dietary diversity leading to micronutrient deficiency, and still others to excess consumption.

Trade policy can be expected to have different effects depending on the type of malnutrition. This in turn is inter-related to the types of food affected. For example, in countries where supply is inadequate, trade liberalization policies could help improve the underlying conditions for increased caloric intake. Evidence at the national level shows that policies that liberalize trade tend to increase the overall amount of food traded and available in food deficit countries (Porkka et al, 2013; Brooks and Matthews et al, 2015). There is also evidence from emergency situations that more open trade can help move basic staples into areas affected (del Ninno and Dorosh, 2001). At the same time, evidence indicates that trade liberalization policies and associated foreign investments can increase the availability products associated with poor diets, obesity and NCDs. Reasons include increased direct imports of these products (e.g. Thow and Hawkes 2009); increased imports of ingredients used

FIGURE 1. **POTENTIAL PATHWAYS OF COHERENCE BETWEEN TRADE POLICY AND NUTRITION OBJECTIVES**



Source: Corinna Hawkes

by the food processing industry (e.g. Igumbor et al 2012); increased imports of lower-cost animal feed (in many cases, from developed countries with subsidized production) (e.g. Hawkes, 2010); and increased foreign direct investment by food companies (e.g. Stuckler et al, 2012; Schram et al, 2015). Trade policies may also have a price lowering effect on foods and ingredients used in processed foods associated with less healthy diets (Dangour et al, 2013; Drewnowski et al, 2010; Hawkes et al, 2012). Trade policies and associated investments have also been associated with greater availability and promotion of breastmilk substitutes (Galtry, 2013; Smith et al, 2014).

(b) Heterogeneity of sub-populations within and between countries. Population sub-groups will be affected differently by trade policy. Groups may be differentially affected according to parameters such as their income, age, household location and occupation, and by sub-categories within these, for example, whether rural households own land, and if so, the size and assets of the holdings. Examples of population-subgroups include:

- *Agricultural households who are self-employed/ employed by commercial farms:* Income generation from employment may be increased among commercial labourers employed on larger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farms that can take advantage of increased export opportunities (OECD, 2006) while reduced among self-employed farmers and poor rural producers in low and middle-income countries competing with imported foods (Khor, 2006; Salamanca et al, 2009; Maertens and Swinnen, 2009). This has implications for the ability of these subgroups to produce diverse food for their own consumption, as well as to generate income to purchase foods to increase dietary diversity.

- *Lower-income/higher-income groups:* Policies that reduce tariffs (Box 2) have been shown to lead to greater imports of fruits and vegetables (Huang, 2010). Evidence suggests this has boosted consumption of counter-seasonal fruits and vegetables for higher income groups. Yet evidence has not emerged that increased imports have boosted access by lower income households – and low-income countries still face a significant shortfall in fruit and vegetable supply (Siegel et al, 2014).
- *Producer/consumer households:* In an example that shows differences between both within and between countries, palm oil production has the potential to benefit nutrition among producer households by directly increasing income among smallholders involved in its production, and providing local communities with an a Vitamin A-rich oil. Yet trade and associated development policies also widen the global availability of refined, bleached, deodorized palm oil, which is primarily a source of saturated fats and, if partially hydrogenated, trans fats used in processed foods. This has negative implications for consumer households attempting to follow the World Health Organization recommendation to replace saturated and trans-fats with unsaturated fats (WHO, 2013).

(c) Heterogeneity between food system characteristics. For example, whether the country is a net food importing or exporting country; a large producing country or a small island state; has or lacks infrastructure that facilitates food distribution (e.g. ports, roads, markets); or is dominated by small-scale farming or by commercial agriculture. How these characteristics come together in a given context has significant implications for the nutrition implications of a particular trade policy. For example, imports of less healthy foods have been shown to have a particularly significant impact on diets in small island states where the population depends largely on food imports (Thow et al, 2011; Estime et al, 2014).

(d) Heterogeneity of associated trade reforms. The same trade policy may have different impacts depending on the package of economic development policies it is implemented with. For example, export promotion of fruits and vegetables could mitigate

TABLE 2. EXAMPLES OF NUTRITION ACTIONS AND PATHWAYS TO NUTRITIONAL OBJECTIVES

	Potential trade policy outcomes		
NUTRITION GOALS	**POTENTIAL FOR COHERENCE**	**POTENTIAL FOR INCOHERENCE**	**POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES AND MANAGE RISKS**
All people **consume adequate, nutritious and healthy diets**	▸ Greater availability of food in countries where there are inadequate supplies ▸ Greater availability of fruits and vegetables and in counter-seasonal periods in importing countries ▸ Greater diversity of healthier food products available	▸ Increased availability and greater promotion of high calorie, nutrient poor foods ▸ Increased availability of vegetable sources of saturated and trans fats ▸ Grains of poorer nutrient quality displace more nutritious grains used for complementary feeding (e.g. milled rice replaces millet) ▸ Exports of fish mean self-employed fisherfolk have less access essential source of protein and micronutrients	▸ Programmes which enhance economic access to fruits and vegetables for low income groups ▸ Investment in infrastructure for local markets for fruits and vegetables ▸ Policies which encourage household/ community horticulture ▸ Reducing supply-side barriers to horticulture production through the WTO Aid for Trade initiative facility or Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) aid for trade partnership to increase the supply of fruits and vegetables in low income countries ▸ Policies to restrict marketing of energy-dense foods to children ▸ Nutrient standards for foods available in schools and other specific settings ▸ Nutrient labelling/warnings ▸ Consumer nutrition education on healthy food choices- Safeguards to prevent distortions that discourage local production and regional trade in nutritious crops and products ▸ National investment in agrobiodiversity in areas where markets are poorly developed ▸ Including nutrition considerations when supporting the design of Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) in LDCs
All people **have an adequate intake of micronutrients**	Greater ability to manufacture complementary foods & micronutrient supplements	Greater investment by transnational companies in the marketing of complementary foods	▸ Policies to restrict inappropriate marketing of complementary foods
All people **consume safe food**	Good practices gained from producing safe food for export with positive spillover to production for domestic informal markets	Foods failing to meet export safety standards are redirected to domestic informal markets	▸ Domestic capacity building for production of safe food for local markets ▸ Procedures are in place to decontaminate food, or direct to other uses food that fails to meet food safety standards for export
People **are less poor**	Employment opportunities increased among commercial labourers employed on larger farms that can take advantage of increased export opportunities	Employment opportunities are reduced among self-employed farmers and poor rural producers in low and middle-income countries who compete with imported foods	Social protection programmes Implementation of agricultural programmes to encourage diversification
Mothers breast-feed	Training in health personnel provides resources for greater breastfeeding support for mothers	Greater sales of breastmilk substitutes	▸ Implementation of WHO Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes ▸ Implemented and enforced national policies on maternity leave

Source: Developed from evidence available in Anim-Somuah et al. 2013; Asche et al (2015); Béné et al (2010); Estime et al (2014); Grover (2014); Hawkes et al (2010); Hawkes et al (2012); Huang (2012); Igumbor et al 2012; Lancon and Benz (2007); Remans et al, 2014; Salmon (2015); Smith et al (2014); Thow and Hawkes 2009; UNICEF (2013); Unnevehr and Ronchi, 2014.


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against national objectives to improve fruit and vegetable consumption. However, if it is accompanied by increased investment in local production of fruits and vegetables as part of an "aid for trade" package, this could lead to increased availability of fruits and vegetables for both export and local markets (EDI, 2013).

(e) Heterogeneity of existing policies and institutions in countries and trading partners. The policy context into which trade policies are implemented, and the strength of existing government infrastructure and institutions, can have a significant impact on trade policy outcomes. For example, long-standing agricultural subsidies in North America, Europe and Japan have influenced the impact of reduced barriers to trade in low- and middle-income countries by undercutting farmers' livelihoods in these countries (OECD, 2013). This highlights the importance of degree of prior liberalization – and that it is very difficult to untangle the attributive role of trade policies alone. For example, while evidence suggests that trade restrictions were a significant factor in the 2007/08 food price crisis, particularly for rice (Daivron et al, 2011), there is also evidence that other international macroeconomic factors played a role, making it difficult to isolate the effects of trade policy alone (Clapp, 2009; Pinstrup-Anderson, 2014).

There is also heterogeneity in people's *perspectives* on the role of trade policy in nutrition, most notably in the context of concerns about food security (Burnett and Murphy, 2013). This in turn reflects broader differences in world views about how development can best be achieved. For example, during the 2007/2008 food price crisis there was a fierce debate on the preferred policy response from a nutritional perspective: some regarded the export restrictions imposed during the crisis as damaging to nutrition security, while others believed that restricting trade could serve nutrition by facilitating food sovereignty (World Bank, 2008; Gillson and Fouad, 2015; La Via Campesina, 2008).

4.3 Space in trade policy for nutrition action

Another aspect of policy coherence is whether trade agreements provide "policy space" for nutrition action to be developed and enacted, which is an important aspect of the enabling environment for nutrition (see Table 1 and Section 2.5). In the early 2000s, international agencies and documents began to use the term 'policy space' to describe "the scope for domestic policies, especially in the areas of trade, investment and industrial development" which "might be framed by inter- national disciplines, commitments and global market considerations" (Page, 2007). The context was the proliferation of proposed or implemented international agreements around a range of issues, including the environment, investment and trade. The GATT (1994) and the establishment of the WTO (Section 3.2) was a clear reflection that, as put by Page (2007: 1) governments had made "a choice in favour of more limits: a view that there had been too much policy space for countries to take trade measures against others." Nevertheless there were also concerns that government's scope to make policies for advancing social and environmental goals (e.g. health, protection of natural resources) was unduly limited by these international agreements.


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According to Fidler (2006, cited in Baker et al, 2014) there are three possible ways that trade agreements can encroach on policy space.

- **Substantive constriction:** This occurs when the range of policy instruments available to governments are directly limited by trade agreements.
- **Procedural constriction:** This type of encroachment refers to when the potential threat of trade sanctions or costly litigation deters government institutions from initiating policy processes.
- **Structural constriction:** This occurs if trade policy expedites a shift from public to private provision of goods and services in a way that expands the economic and regulatory power of private sector actors.

It is challenging for the nutrition community to fully understand the implications of trade agreements for policy space for nutrition action. Many concerns have been raised about policy space in international agreements from a nutritional perspective but overall the discourse is difficult to navigate. Given the complexity and nuanced nature of international trade and investment law, it is easy for non-experts to misunderstand it. While, generally speaking, trade agreements appear to give states significant regulatory autonomy and not restrict "substantive" policy space, there can also be significant uncertainties. Whether the existing policy space is sufficient and adequate is a controversial issue and some argue that "measurements of policy space fail to distinguish between space that is available and space that is actually useful or relevant to the specific country" (FAO, 2015). In addition to uncertainty, lack of technical legal capacity and the possibility of (expensive) legal challenge in international fora can create procedural constrictions and 'regulatory chill' – where legal uncertainty and/or threat of legal challenge dissuade governments from acting (Jewell et al 2013; Baker et al, 2014).

Box 4 provides a brief summary of the policy space available in WTO Agreements. Analysis suggests that the provisions in WTO agreements (Box 3) do not present substantive constrictions to nutrition policy space (Fidler, 2010; von Tigerstrom, 2013; WTO, 2014b). There are, however, reported cases of procedural constriction during which interest groups have challenged nutrition actions on trade-related grounds in a way that reduces the confidence of government institutions in pursuing pro-nutrition policy processes. These interest groups may deliberately give the impression that the policy space available in trade agreements is far narrower than it is in practice. For example, during efforts in Vietnam to implement stronger measures to promote breastfeeding, a case study by UNICEF reported that "Some National

Assembly members and other stakeholders became hesitant to expand the advertising ban when interest groups raised concerns about violation of international trade laws" (UNICEF, 2013). This was despite the fact there was no evidence that breastfeeding measures were not trade policy compliant.

As described in Section 2.2, recent developments in trade policy have seen multiple regional trade agreements extend beyond WTO Agreements to include a greater number of measures, including wider provisions for investment, mandatory provisions for procurement, and more latitude for private companies in investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms. Health researchers and advocates have voiced concerns that these regional trade agreements encroach on the policy space that governments need to implement nutrition actions (Baker 2014, 2015; Gleeson and Friel, 2014; EHN, 2015; Wemos, 2015; Friel et al, 2013; Hansen-Kuhn, 2013; Thow and McGrady, 2014; Thow et al, 2015).

These concerns are in part based on past and current legal cases brought against regulation of tobacco and pharmaceuticals by multinational companies, on the basis of protections claims embedded in trade agreements (Blouin, 2010; Gleeson and Friel, 2013).

Two mega-trade agreements that have attracted particular attention in terms of potential policy space encroachment are the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) between countries in North America, Asia, and the Pacific, which was finalized in October 2015, and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), currently being negotiated between the EU and the United States (EHN, 2015; Wemos,

BOX 4. POLICY SPACE FOR NUTRITION ACTION IN WTO AGREEMENTS

(i) WTO Agreements recognise health as a legitimate objective, stating that measures to protect human health are a "legitimate policy objective" even if they have the effect of limiting trade (McGrady, 2011).

(ii) WTO law states that policies to protect human health must apply the principle of National Treatment (see Section 3.2) and not treat imported products less favourably than like domestic products. This is coherent with a nutrition perspective. For example, in 2013 a bill in the French Senate to increase tariffs on palm oil imports by 30% as a health measure was reported to be rejected in part because it made no sense if it was not also applied to other sources of saturated fat, such as butter (Scott-Thomas, 2012).

(iii) The WTO Agreement on Agriculture provides flexibility to developing countries in supporting domestic producers, including agricultural interventions to support nutrition objectives (Atkins, 2010; Matthews, 2015). Although limits on the use of market price supports to strengthen domestic food security potentially presents substantive constriction (Matthews, 2015), in what is known as de *minimis* levels of support, developing countries can exempt domestic support granted to the production of specific crops up to 10% of the annual value of production of these crops and up to 10% of the gross value of agricultural production in any year. The challenge here for developing countries has been their lack of resources and capacity to implement these measures.

(iv) Tariff schedules permit flexibilities up to the "bound" or highest rate agreed upon through Article II of the GATT. There are examples of Pacific Island countries raising (and lowering) tariffs in order to influence the healthiness of the food supply (WCRF International, 2015).

(v) The WTO Agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade and Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (Box 3) state that policies which represent technical trade barriers under the rationale of achieving a health or other welfare-oriented objective might be vulnerable to contest if other measures can make an equivalent contribution to that objective in a way that is less restrictive and reasonably available. Countries that adhere to this principle are encouraged to adopt relevant international standards as the "least trade restrictive" approach where appropriate. Analysis shows that these regulations are for the most part consistent with WTO obligations (Fidler, 2010). One area of uncertainty is nutrition warning labels. Between 2006 and 2014 regulations proposed by four countries on nutrition "warning" labels to discourage unhealthy eating have been subject to queries ("Specific Trade Concerns") in the WTO TBT Committee. These queries concerned a range of factors, including the unintended effects of the measure, effectiveness in achieving the stated policy objective and whether the objectives could be achieved through less trade-restricting measures.

2015; Friel et al, 2013; Hansen-Kuhn, 2013; Thow and McGrady, 2014; Thow et al, 2015). Box 5 describes concerns raised over the investment and procurement measures in these agreements.

This initial exploration of opportunities for, and challenges to, coherence between trade policy and nutrition action highlights four key needs to enhance coherence:

- analytical tools to enable policy makers to better analyze coherence between trade policy and nutrition action among their own populations
- complementary policies to enhance synergies and manage risks between trade policy and nutrition action
- stronger capacity for cross-sectoral coordination
- better governance of policy–making processes


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BOX 5. INVESTMENT AND PROCUREMENT MEASURES IN THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TTP) AND THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (TTIP)

INVESTMENT MEASURES.

Unlike the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) (Box 3), this new generation of agreements often include strong provisions for investor protection through the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. Previously the exclusive domain of Investment Treaties, ISDS mechanisms give investors the right to bring disputes against states directly. This is in direct contrast to WTO forums, where only states can bring disputes against other states. Proposed public health nutrition measures intended to reduce sales of products high in fat, salt and sugar could thus be perceived as potentially undermining the value of investments (Thow and McGrady, 2014). For example, investors might claim that restrictions on advertising, or on the levels of fats, sugars and salt permissible in foods, constitute indirect expropriation because they reduce the value of an investment. This would be the case even when the policies are non-discriminatory (in that they would apply equally to domestic and foreign-owned aspects of the food supply). Even if the action is technically permitted, there is concern that ISDS mechanisms in the TPP and TTIP will lead to procedural restriction, when governments are unwilling to implement nutrition actions for fear of expensive litigation, and structural constriction, in which the expedited shift in power to private companies expands their lobbying power against pro- nutrition and other actions which potentially threaten their financial interests.

PROCUREMENT MEASURES.

The plurilateral WTO Agreement on Government Procurement is optional and few developing countries have signed up to it. However, there are efforts to make restrictions on procurement mandatory, such as in the TPP Government Procurement chapter (Friel et al 2013). If adopted it could mean that, depending on the exceptions or limitations placed on the chapter, government tenders will have to be open to bids from companies in any country that signs on to the TPP, with the subsequent result that the conditions governments place on their tendering processes be reduced. This could include the geographical origins and/or nutritional quality of foods procured by governments for public institutions such as schools and hospitals (Friel et al, 2013). As such, public school lunch and other programs that favour the use of sustainably produced, local foods, or that require a certain percentage of foods be sourced from local, small-scale farmers may be compromised (Hansen-Kuhn, 2013). Nevertheless, the US-Korea trade agreement indicates that it is possible to negotiate exceptions for these programmes and policies (Thow et al, 2015).

V - HOW TO ENHANCE COHERENCE BETWEEN TRADE POLICY AND NUTRITION ACTION?

TOOLS AND PROCESSES

5.1 Tools to analyze coherence between trade policy and nutrition action

It is evident that there are challenges in analyzing the degree of alignment between the objectives and outcomes of trade policy and nutrition action. It is a heterogeneous picture: the influence of trade policy on nutrition is not generalizable but context specific, differing between foods, forms of malnutrition and population groups, and influenced by accompanying trade reforms and existing policies and institutions.

These challenges are not unique to trade and nutrition policy. The OECD has begun to develop methodologies to analyze policy coherence for sustainable development more broadly to address some of the challenges. They propose that a way forward is to map out the theory of what the outcomes of policies might be through a "results chain" in the specific context in which they are implemented (OECD, 2010). Other methodologies for policy coherence analysis generally provide for this initial conceptual stage as a first step from which a more detailed analysis can be conducted at a later stage (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj, 2007; Nillson et al 2013). There are also existing tools to draw on such health impact assessments, multi-criteria mapping, problem solution trees and value chain analysis.

Standard analytical tools are needed to enable countries to better analyze coherence between trade policy and nutrition action in a way that also takes into account the international nature of trade policy. Analysis of trade and nutrition coherence is needed for international and regional trade agreements, but, most importantly, at the national level at which both trade policies and nutrition actions are developed and implemented – and where malnutrition in its different forms is experienced.

At the national level the focus should be on the nutritional problems in the country – and national nutrition objectives set in existing plans. To stay focused on these nutrition objectives and outcomes, the tool should work backwards to first identify how trade policy would influence the attainment of nutrition objectives along the chain of potential outcomes (Table 1). For example, to focus the analysis on inadequate breastfeeding among women in the workforce, inadequate intake of iodine among certain groups, or excess consumption of trans-fats among others. The tool should allow tracking back from these problems to identify if trade policy plays any role in improving or worsening the problem; in some cases, the impact of trade policy may be non-existent, in others, very significant. Along with identifying potential for coherence and/or incoherence, a second role of the tool would be to identify the complementary policies needed to enhance the synergies and manage the risks of trade policy for nutrition action.

Questions remain about who would do this analysis, how, and with what information. The challenge is not just methodological, but emerges from the need for capacity to conduct such analyses (Section 5.3) and for governance to implement the results as part of the trade- and nutrition-policy making process (Section 5.4).

5.2 Complementary policies to maximize potential synergies and minimize potential risks

Complementary policies are needed to enhance the synergies and manage the risks of trade policy for nutrition action. Enhancing the synergies involves transferring benefits of trade policy to the populations most in need of the benefit; managing the risks involves implementing policies that protect consumers from risks, provide social protection, and, where relevant, use flexibilities in trade agreements to support groups negatively affected by trade.


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Table 2 illustrates some examples of complementary policies. It indicates there are many options for countries to consider. Taking the case of fruits and vegetables, subsidized vouchers could make the benefits of greater diversity of fruits and vegetables available through trade accessible to low-income consumers. Existing investment in export horticulture could be leveraged to benefit domestic markets by strengthening cold chain infrastructure so improving the incentive for producers to sell fruits and vegetables locally as well as for export. In cases where trade policy is undermining local production of nutritious produce for local populations, policy instruments could be used to encourage household and community production of fruits and vegetables.

This process of identifying and implementing complementary actions would require both adequate capacity for cross-sectoral coordination and effective governance of policy-making processes.

5.3 Strengthening capacity for cross-sectoral coordination

To conduct the aforementioned actions – developing and applying analytical tools and complementary policies – requires government capacity for more effective cross sectoral coordination. Trade, agriculture, and nutrition/health officials in countries need capacity to negotiate across government to implement those policies; defend them against illegitimate challenges if needed; negotiate legitimate conditions to preserve/expand policy space for nutrition action in trade agreements; in so doing take into consideration

the specific situations of countries/country groupings; and generate and gather evidence to support all of the above.

The need for capacity is recognized by governments. For example, participants in a workshop on trade policy and NCDs in the Pacific in 2013 – including government representatives from several of the islands – concluded that two of the most pressing needs to enhance policy coherence were (WPRO/SPC/CPOND/UNDP, 2013):

- to "strengthen national capacities and regulatory mechanisms (where established) to include among others, undertaking impact assessments, introducing policies, and participating in international trade negotiations" and;
- "for international, regional agencies and development partners to continue to support countries including through provision of technical assistance to support policy coherence between trade and health sectors at a national and regional level and specifically enhance informed decision making and trade negotiations"

Yet according to a report on policy coherence between EU policies for development "the current global system lacks the basic capacity to prevent, detect or redress incoherent policies" (Concord, 2013). Capacity needs are significant. As noted by Walls et al (2015:1) in the context of incorporating health considerations into trade negotiations: "at all stages the capacity needed is expensive, skill-intensive and requires considerable infrastructure, which smaller and poorer states especially struggle to find. It is also a task generally underestimated." In an analysis of policy coherence between trade and health in Asia, Baker et al (2015) identified lack of capacity for engagement between multilateral agencies and between government ministries as a key barrier. A relatively rare reported case of successful coherence between trade policy and health – from Thailand – found that building capacity was essential to the process (Thaiprayoon and Smith, 2014).

There is no shortage of potential mechanisms that can be used to build capacity. Mechanisms include political and financial support for trade-nutrition/health programmes in the relevant multilateral, regional and national institutions; technical assistance for developing countries; legal training programmes; the development of guidelines and trade-nutrition monitoring systems. Another process identified as critical for building capacity is generating and communicating evidence (Blouin, 2007, OECD, 2013). As put by the OECD (2013: 40) "A more robust evidence base on the costs of incoherence and the benefits of coherence is crucial to inform policy and convince decision makers to act." This is particularly important given the tendency of interest groups to use lack of evidence as an argument against nutrition actions perceived as unfavourable (Jewell et al, 2013). Experience of formal legal cases for tobacco shows that close attention is paid to the evidence supporting public health measures in trade disputes (von Tigerstrom, 2013).

5.4 Improving governance of policy-making processes

Enhancing capacity in turn implies a need for stronger governance. The nutrition and health community have, in particular, highlighted two governance needs. The first is governance mechanisms to promote dialogue and coordination between trade, agriculture, economic and nutrition decision makers at the national, regional and international level (e.g. Walls and Smith, 2015). This is needed to advance the first core aspect of policy coherence: setting common goals and shared priorities across sectors (OECD, 2014). While objectives in different sectors are interconnected in practice, in most cases, the processes of setting objectives are not. Rather, policy making at national level is typically attached to sectoral processes that set overarching sectoral objectives and priorities. Thus each sector determines its objectives and priorities without considering the implications for other sectors. This is not the case only for nutrition but a generalized problem that exists at the interface of processes related to trade and economic growth and sustainable development.

A key way to overcome this sectoral challenge is to promote policy dialogues between sectors in which common goals and shared priorities are agreed.

Relevant existing cross-government mechanisms often already exist – such as coordination mechanisms between trade and agriculture – which could be leveraged to engage nutrition and health stakeholders, encourage dialogue and improve understanding of nutrition issues. These mechanisms could also serve to build trade capacity among the health community so that it can better evaluate and understand the potential impacts of trade policy on nutrition.

The second core governance need is for a process that enables nutrition and health officials to be part of: (i) the development of national trade strategies, and (ii) trade negotiating committees in international trade negotiations. One notable example of the latter is the formal participation of the principal nutritionist in Samoa's accession committee to WTO (Thow et al, 2014). In this instance, participation from the nutrition sector enabled development of an ongoing strategy to mitigate the negative impacts of imports of fatty meats to ensure that policy space was enshrined for an alternative health policy approach, namely the implementation of a high sales tax (WTO, 2011).

Analysis by Blouin (2007) suggests that these types of mechanisms are important not just for formal discussions but to promote mutual understanding between the trade and nutrition/health communities. Trade and nutrition decision makers come from different epistemic communities, who may not share beliefs about cause and effect. For example, nutrition and health actors may view trade exclusively as a threat to population health, with little consideration for trade objectives. Trade actors, in contrast, focus on economic objectives and may assume these automatically benefit nutrition and health (Smith et al, 2009; Baker et al, 2015). The positive experience of building capacity for coherence between trade policy and health in Thailand showed that processes to build this type of understanding were essential and could be achieved not just through formal governance mechanisms, but also informal relationship building (Thaiprayoon and Smith, 2014).

Calls for more and better governance are not new. In 2006, for example, the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on trade and health, calling for engagement with trade policy-makers to "take advantage of the potential opportunities, and address the potential challenges that trade and trade agreements may have for health" (WHO 2006). The SDGs highlight the need for action to improve governance for policy coherence. The ongoing efforts to improve the governance of trade and agriculture/ food security provide possible entry points to address issues of policy coherence with nutrition action (Canigiani and Bingi, 2013). More reporting of examples of the adoption of these types of governance processes are needed to generate further evidence of the most effective way of building greater coherence between trade policy and nutrition action. Fostering civil society, researcher and other state and non-state collaborations in this space will be necessary to generate new evidence and build social and political support for action (Smith et al, 2009).

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VI - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

In 2014 the Rome Declaration of the Second International Conference on Nutrition called for "trade policies to be conducive to fostering food security and nutrition for all." So what actions do nutrition and trade policy makers need to take next to enhance coherence between trade policy and nutrition action? What is needed from governments, international organizations and processes, civil society and researchers to move the agenda forward? The analysis in this discussion paper leads to the identification of four fundamental needs to enable and motivate policy coherence between trade policy and nutrition action:

1. **Better analysis of the coherence between trade policy and nutrition action** to both enable a common understanding of the opportunities and risks presented by trade policy for nutrition action (and by nutrition action for trade policies) and to identify complementary policies to enhance synergies and manage risks. This is needed for international and regional trade agreements, but most importantly, at the national level at which trade policies are actually implemented and people experience malnutrition.
2. **The implementation of complementary policies** as part of the package of trade reforms to ensure benefits of trade policies are transferred to the people who most need them, and to mitigate the risks.
3. **Stronger institutional capacities** to enable analysis, implementation and greater coordination and cooperation.
4. **Better governance mechanisms**, to, along with greater capacity, enable greater coordination and cooperation for trade and nutrition policy coherence.

Also of critical importance, governments need to identify nutrition as a national development priority and a shared challenge across sectors, as is now reflected in the SDGs. Without this step it will be difficult to motivate increased coherence between trade and other economic development policies, and nutrition.

IDENTIFICATION OF THESE NEEDS LEADS IN TURN TO EIGHT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Government trade and/or health ministries should appoint a nutrition focal point for participating in trade policy negotiating forums internationally and nationally, and leverage existing cross-governance structures linked to agriculture and trade planning processes to mainstream nutrition issues in the process of developing national trade policies.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Government nutrition agencies/health ministries should establish a process for assessing the coherence between their national trade policies and their nutrition actions. The focus should be national priorities for nutrition outcomes among specific groups and/or for particular nutritional problems. The process should aim to identify what complementary policies and/or multilateral action is needed to leverage opportunities and manage risks.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The OECD and World Bank should continue gathering data, developing methodologies and indicators to support the understanding of the impact of trade policies, including on nutrition outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 4

International donors and funders should support capacity building for nutrition action and for coherence between trade policy and nutrition action

RECOMMENDATION 5

The WTO Secretariat should, within its mandate, provide technical assistance to enable national trade, nutrition and health officials to better understand the policy space available in multilateral agreements for nutrition action.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Member States of the WHO and FAO should request the WHO and the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission to identify areas where further harmonization may reduce barriers to trade while supporting nutrition policy, and to develop standards which enable multilateral actions.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Civil society should contribute to the process of identifying areas of (in)coherence between trade policy and nutrition action by bringing examples experienced by people in communities to the attention of both trade and nutrition policy makers. They should also benchmark and monitor progress by policy makers in advancing policy coherence.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Researchers should develop a clear and useable analytical tool for policy makers to use to assess coherence between trade policy and nutrition action. Researchers should also examine how existing data sources could be used in novel ways to assess coherence in outcomes between trade policies and nutrition actions.

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ANNEX

TRADE-RELATED TARGETS IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

GOAL 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round (target 2b)
- Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility (target 2c)

GOAL 8: PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

- Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade- Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries (target 8a)

GOAL 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

- Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements (target 10a)

GOAL 14: CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation (target 14,6)

GOAL 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda (target 17.10)
- Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 (target 17.11)
- Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access (target 17.12)

List of Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GATT (1947)	The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade adopted in 1947
GATT (1994)	The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade adopted in 1994
ICN2	Second International Conference on Nutrition (2014)
ISDS	Investor State Dispute Settlement
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

United Nations System
Standing Committee on Nutrition

The United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) is the food and nutrition policy harmonization forum of the United Nations. Its vision is a world free from hunger and malnutrition, where there are no longer impediments to human development.

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Funding support is gratefully acknowledged:

With support from
Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
by decision of the German Bundestag