



# REPORT OF THE Technical consultation

o n

## measuring healthy diets:

CONCEPTS, METHODS AND METRICS

Virtual meeting, 18–20 May 2021



World Health  
Organization

unicef



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



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ISBN 978-92-4-004027-4 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-004028-1 (print version)

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# Acknowledgements

This meeting report is an outcome of the WHO-UNICEF Technical Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition Monitoring (TEAM), which was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

WHO, UNICEF and FAO gratefully acknowledge the work of the TEAM Working Group on Diet Quality that initiated the consultation: Mary Arimond, Jennifer Coates, Omar Dary, Edward Frongillo, Chika Hayashi, Lynnette Neufeld, Kuntal Saha and Wenhua Zhao.

The host agencies express their sincere appreciation to Mary Arimond, Jennifer Coates and Monica Woldt, for leading the consultation development process; and to the consultation planning committee: Nancy Aburto, Jennifer Coates, Chika Hayashi, Bridget Holmes, Kuntal Saha and Monica Woldt.

We also wish to thank the USAID Advancing Nutrition team for coordinating the consultation: Victoria Anders, Ben Cox and Yaritza Rodriguez; and Rebecca Heidkamp for her contributions to the consultation preparation and facilitating the consultation. Finally, we wish to thank all participants and presenters for their time and thoughtful contributions during the consultation.

# Acronyms

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| AHEI         | Alternative Healthy Eating Index                        |
| DHS          | Demographic and Health Surveys                          |
| DQI          | Diet Quality Index                                      |
| DQ-Q         | Diet Quality Questionnaire                              |
| FAO          | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FAO/WHO GIFT | FAO/WHO Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool    |
| FBS          | Food balance sheet                                      |
| FIES         | Food insecurity experience scale                        |
| GAIN         | Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition                  |
| GBD          | Global Burden of Disease                                |
| GDD          | Global Dietary Database                                 |
| GDQS         | Global Diet Quality Score                               |
| GDR          | Global Dietary Recommendations                          |
| HCES         | Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys           |
| HEI          | Healthy Eating Index                                    |
| INDDEX       | International Dietary Data Expansion                    |
| IYCF         | Infant and young child feeding                          |
| JME          | Joint Malnutrition Estimates                            |
| LMICs        | Low- and middle-income countries                        |
| MDD          | Minimum dietary diversity                               |
| MDD-W        | Minimum dietary diversity for women                     |
| MICS         | Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys                      |
| NCDs         | Noncommunicable diseases                                |
| SDGs         | Sustainable Development Goals                           |
| SUA          | Supply utilization account                              |
| TEAM         | Technical Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition Monitoring |
| UNICEF       | United Nations Children's Fund                          |
| UPF          | Ultra-processed food                                    |
| USAID        | United States Agency for International Development      |
| WFP          | World Food Programme                                    |
| WHO          | World Health Organization                               |

# Executive summary

Healthy diets are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 2, which aims to end all forms of malnutrition. Yet, there are no harmonized metrics for tracking how diets around the world are evolving and the impact of these changes on human health and the environment. While researchers have been developing concepts, metrics, methods and tools to characterize the healthfulness of diets, there is a need to share experiences, improve collaboration and coordination, harmonize and complement efforts, develop a common agenda, and accelerate progress around assessment and monitoring of characteristics of diets at global and national levels.

In response to this need, the WHO-UNICEF Technical Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition Monitoring (TEAM) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with technical and logistical support from USAID Advancing Nutrition, hosted a Technical Consultation on Measuring Healthy Diets: Concepts, Methods and Metrics.

The goal of the consultation was to promote increased communication, coordination and collaboration for the purpose of accelerating progress towards identifying or developing a parsimonious set of metrics for global monitoring of healthy diets for individuals over 2 years of age. Eighty-five participants took part in the consultation, representing a wide range of institutions and roles in the data value chain.

Expected outputs of the consultation were to: (1) identify areas of convergence and divergence on characteristics of healthy diets that could be monitored at global and national levels; (2) map existing metrics of healthy diets with associated tools and methods; and (3) identify next steps to establish mechanisms for collaboration and reach convergence on metrics for global and national use.

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