

**Administrative Committee  
on Coordination**ACC/1996/5  
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## REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION ON ITS TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

(Accra, 24 February-1 March 1996)

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-third session of the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition (SCN) was hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its regional office in Accra from 24 February to 1 March 1996. Introductions and welcoming remarks by the Director of the FAO Food and Nutrition Division and the FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa were followed by an opening statement by the SCN Chairman. The Minister of Food and Agriculture of Ghana, His Excellency Alhaji Ibrahim Adam, welcomed participants to Ghana and wished them success in their meeting. The keynote address was delivered by the Honourable Nana Afua Asabea Kyeiwaa II Krontihemaa of Aburi and Member of the Council of State. A number of other members of the Government of Ghana were present. The opening ceremony was followed by a symposium on the theme "Effective programmes in Africa for improving nutrition, including household food security, following the International Conference on Nutrition".

2. The symposium, which was presided over by the President of Pan-African Union for Science and Technology, emphasized that the reports presented on successful activities in the region showed conclusively that properly prepared and carried out programmes could bring about rapid improvement of nutrition in Africa, particularly in the most vulnerable groups. Reports presented covered activities in different parts of Africa on household food security, combating and preventing micronutrient deficiency and protein-energy malnutrition problems, and preparing and implementing intersectoral national plans of action to follow up the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN). Activities reported included work done by national Governments using existing human and funding resources, as well as projects of Governments and local groups, with funding and technical assistance provided by various United Nations agencies, bilateral aid agencies and international non-governmental organizations. The symposium participants strongly recommended that information on such programmes be given the widest possible dissemination to show that many effective activities were under way in Africa to improve nutrition. The symposium also emphasized the need for better coordination of local and national activities to ensure that the positive effects of a range of successful food, health, education and poverty alleviation activities would be more sustainable and would be further adapted and utilized to improve nutrition throughout Africa.

3. SCN also strongly supported the World Food Summit to be held in November 1996. It welcomed the attention and focus being given to solving problems of hunger and malnutrition. Representatives of the SCN member bodies in attendance at the twenty-third session (see list of participants in annex I) showed their strong interest in and support of the World Food Summit. They emphasized that successfully resolving problems of hunger and malnutrition in a sustainable manner requires strong cooperation between all international agencies at the global, regional and - especially - country levels. Participants hoped that implementing the recommendations of the World Food Summit would give greater emphasis and strength to work under way to achieve the goals of other previous conferences, such as the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Nutrition, the World Summit for Social Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Fourth World

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Conference on Women. Each of those international gatherings of heads of State and high-level policy makers had emphasized various aspects of hunger and malnutrition, and participants urged that the World Food Summit synthesize appropriate aspects of each conference in arriving at a global statement and plan of action on sustainable national, community, household and individual food security.

4. Participants took note of the arrangements made for preparing and holding the World Food Summit, and expressed their interest and intention to play an active part in that process.

5. The list of participants is contained in annex I, the list of documents in annex II.

#### I. MATTERS FOR THE APPROVAL OR ATTENTION OF CCPOQ

6. In opening his first meeting as Chairman of SCN, the Chairman paid tribute to his predecessor, Dr. A. Horwitz, for his long service and effective leadership in international nutrition matters. Since the Technical Secretary of SCN, Dr. J. Mason, would be vacating his position in July 1996, he was attending as Technical Secretary for the last time; the Chairman wished to record the appreciation of SCN for Dr. Mason's high technical competence and his devotion to the work of SCN.

##### A. Options for strengthening the functions of the Subcommittee

7. At its twenty-second session (Washington, D.C., 12-16 June 1995), SCN had decided to defer consideration of this item for several reasons, notably the plans of the bilateral group to carry out an evaluation of the work of SCN. The purpose of this evaluation, carried out by an outside team of experts, was to review the mandate of SCN, evaluate its effectiveness and, where appropriate, recommend revised structures. The report of the team to the bilateral group had been circulated to all participating agencies and comments had been received. A final version, dated 29 January 1996, was available for discussion. The executive summary of the evaluation report is contained in the appendix to annex X; the statement by the bilateral agencies on the evaluation report is contained in annex III.

8. As in the case of previous studies carried out by SCN itself, the evaluation report reviewed a number of possible models for a future SCN, and recommended a reformed SCN after discarding three other possible models. The characteristics of the reformed SCN are summarized in figure 5.1 of the executive summary (annex X, appendix), followed by a number of recommended decisions to be taken by SCN. Other options were based upon a circular letter by the Chairman dated 20 March 1995; comments received from participating agencies in reply thereto suggested the usefulness of a number of reforms. In the course of discussion, a number of issues were reviewed; comments and conclusions were as follows:

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(a) Functions. Harmonization of policies is one of the main functions of SCN, but at the country level harmonization is the responsibility of the national authorities, with inputs from United Nations agencies, as appropriate. Since better coordination at the local level is often needed, it would be useful to develop guidelines for coordinated action under the auspices of SCN. The advocacy of nutrition is an important function that should get more attention in future;

(b) Programme. The central programme of SCN finds its reflection in the holding of its annual session, including meetings of the Advisory Group on Nutrition. High priority among programmes to be funded as and when supplementary funds become available are the Report on the World Nutrition Situation, followed by the Refugee Nutrition Information System and policy harmonization; a medium-priority group consists of SCN News and other publications; the lower priority group is resource flows, and support to training and research. In executing some specific aspects of these and other tasks, greater direct contributions from United Nations agencies would be sought by the SCN secretariat in the preparation of reports and publications; specific suggestions are being put forward (see para. 10 below). In a similar approach, responsibility for convening and financing working groups should be assumed by specific United Nations agencies, or in combination. This would enable those bodies to more thoroughly review the problems in question and report to the annual SCN session on work completed, as well as respond to additional comments or questions from interested agencies. Reporting on the follow-up to ICN and possible future global meetings could also be facilitated by issuing coordinated guidelines. SCN noted that while it was not yet certain what extrabudgetary funds would be available, it was pleased to learn that the Chair had received reasonable assurance of some funding becoming available. As far as resources allowed, programme activities would be carried out in the three priority areas defined above;

(c) Working methods and decision-making process. Transparency in the process of arriving at recommendations and recording decisions was important. It was noted that the SCN process for recording its decisions had greatly improved over the last two years, especially in SCN reports, which had been adopted at the end of each of its sessions. SCN emphasized the very positive experience of holding the SCN session in a developing country such as Ghana, which had made possible a wide participation in the SCN symposium and some of its meetings by representatives of Ghana and observers from other countries of the African region;

(d) Membership and participation. The establishment of a separate operational advisory group alongside the existing Advisory Group on Nutrition was not supported. The size of the present Advisory Group (eight members) allowed for geographical balance as well as a suitable representation of different disciplines. The increased developing country participation in the Advisory Group was welcomed. A larger presence of developing country representatives at symposiums was also considered desirable, and perhaps also at SCN working meetings, though added costs would be a limiting factor;

(e) Secretariat and location. The evaluation team had recommended that the SCN secretariat continue to implement elements of the programme of work and

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seek extrabudgetary funds, but within defined priorities. A suggestion was made, as a further option for the future, to assign the secretariat function to one agency, with rotation among agencies similar to that of the Chairmanship. While that might have certain advantages of economy and coordination, it gave rise to the question of the independence or objectivity of the Secretary. There was broad support for the ability of the Secretary to act autonomously, i.e., without being part of a single agency's hierarchy, in the appraisal, analysis and production of data and reports. The question of rotating the location of the Secretariat should continue to be kept under review, bearing in mind cost and other factors. The World Health Organization (WHO) reminded the meeting of the principle of rotating the hosting of the secretariat but indicated it would be pleased to continue the hosting at WHO/Geneva if that were the desire of SCN. The offer was gratefully noted; the decision on the location of the secretariat was to be kept open pending the selection of a new Technical Secretary.

#### B. Programme and budget

9. At its twenty-second session, SCN had approved a budget of \$1,070,000 for 1996-1997 to cover the activities of its secretariat and the Advisory Group on Nutrition, to be financed by contributions from participating United Nations member organizations. At the time of budget approval and its subsequent clearance through higher-level ACC bodies, not all participating United Nations agencies had been able to confirm their contributions. Confirmation had meanwhile been received from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which would contribute \$25,000, while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also wished to be included for \$25,000. On the other hand, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) stated that owing to budgetary constraints it would not be able to make its contribution, which had been proposed at \$141,000, and reductions in the proposed contributions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO were also likely. As a result contributions might be reduced by a net amount of approximately \$200,000 and expenditures for the biennium would need to be adjusted to the lower level of contributions. Reductions to be envisaged would come from the secretariat provision for salaries and allowances (\$100,000), other expenses (\$65,000) and the provision for meetings of the Advisory Group (\$35,000).

10. The attention of SCN was drawn to a document entitled "Proposals for extrabudgetary funding for the ACC/SCN 1996/1999 work programme", containing summary outlines and costings for six programme activities: (a) reporting on the world nutrition situation; (b) monitoring flows of external resources to nutrition; (c) policy harmonization and monitoring; (d) SCN News, publications and distribution; (e) the Refugee Nutrition Information System; and (f) support to training nutrition-related staff and operational research. The meeting was also provided with an estimated allocation of secretariat and Advisory Group costs for 1996-1997 to those programme proposals.

11. In view of the limited resources available, SCN reviewed priorities as well as a note on possible in-kind contributions from SCN members in relation to these programme priority areas (annex IV below). The main programme to which such contributions could be made was the Report on the World Nutrition

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Situation, which was considered to be the highest priority programme activity. The Technical Secretary was requested to follow up with agencies concerned.

12. In obtaining in-kind contributions from participating agencies, some savings to SCN could ensue, although the overall impact would be small. With respect to the Report on the World Nutrition Situation, concern was expressed that its quality, objectivity and timeliness be retained. Generally, it had been issued at approximately four-year intervals, with updates in between, and the expectations of the readership were that this cycle would continue. While other publications, such as FAO's World Food Survey and WHO's World Health report, both containing relevant data, would be published during the current biennium, they did not bring together and focus on world nutrition data the way the Report on the World Nutrition Situation did, for which reason there was strong support for continuing the established pattern of reports.

#### C. Meetings of the Advisory Group on Nutrition

13. SCN briefly reviewed the recent meetings of the Advisory Group and its manner of reporting its findings to SCN. SCN suggested that the agenda of Advisory Group meetings sent out by the Technical Secretary be established well before proposed Advisory Group meetings and sent in draft form to all SCN members, with a request for items for discussion as well as comments on items proposed to be returned to the Technical Secretary. The draft report of Advisory Group meetings would normally be submitted before SCN sessions so that its conclusions and recommendations could be taken fully into account at such sessions. As to the number of meetings, Advisory Group meetings preceding the annual SCN session should be continued, and occasions might arise, such as the recent World Food Summit, where it would be possible to hold a second meeting of the Advisory Group when a number of members would be attending a given event. Budgetary restrictions might also cause a second annual meeting to be dropped. It was noted that several vacancies would arise at the end of 1996, which would be filled through the normal selection process. SCN paid tribute to the hard work and high level of expertise obtained from the membership of the Advisory Group.

#### D. Advocacy of nutrition

14. SCN agreed that it should perform a greater role in the advocacy of nutrition than it had in the past; it reviewed several forms foreseen as appropriate for a United Nations inter-agency body of its kind. In the first place, much of the advocacy should take place by individual agencies; second, the Advisory Group on Nutrition, particularly in its revised composition, with a better focus on developing country needs, could make a valuable contribution; third, press releases at the end of SCN sessions or upon publishing major publications, such as the Report on the World Nutrition Situation, would be valuable instruments. Some meetings of SCN or its working groups might allow the participation of groups or organizations not normally associated with its work, which could provide useful contacts for advocating the case of nutrition. The strong role of bilaterals and non-governmental organizations in advocating nutrition was emphasized.

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E. Position of the Technical Secretary

15. SCN had been presented with a suggested selection procedure for recruiting to the post of Technical Secretary of SCN, which owing to Dr. J. Mason's departure was to become vacant from July 1996; a draft vacancy notice had also been submitted. High technical competence and ability to manage SCN programmes of work were essential requirements for the incumbent of the post; accordingly, the level of Principal Officer, D.1, was fully justified in order to attract qualified candidates. SCN agreed to a revised vacancy notice, to be issued in English, French and Spanish, calling for applications to be received by 30 April 1996.

16. SCN agreed to establish a selection committee, presided over by the SCN Chairman, with representatives of FAO, WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and the United Nations University (UNU). The selection committee would propose to all SCN members the names of candidates recommended for selection. Assurance had been received from the Chairman of the ACC Organizational Committee (OC) that (a) a flexible implementation of the guidelines for recruitment of subcommittee secretaries would be possible, enabling recruitment from outside the United Nations system, and (b) once SCN had agreed on a candidate, OC would have no difficulty giving its endorsement. Accordingly, the vacancy notice would be widely distributed throughout the United Nations system of organizations, as well as to international non-governmental organizations, bilateral agencies and other appropriate institutions; details of the recruitment process, including consultation with bilaterals, timetable and interviews, would be managed by the selection committee, enabling the appointment of the new Technical Secretary to take place well before the end of 1996.

F. Dates and venue of the next session

17. The ACC Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) had recently decided to review the budgets of all ACC subsidiary bodies at its meeting normally held in February; it also met in August each year. That would mean that the SCN regular budget for 1998-1999, financed by participating agencies, would be reviewed by CCAQ in February 1997; prior to that, it would need to be reviewed by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and adopted by SCN itself. In fact, if followed, that procedure would require SCN to adopt its budget no later than December 1996. The problems thus posed to SCN, notably to assure financial commitments from participating agencies, had been brought to the attention of the Secretary of ACC, who referred the matter to the Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) CCAQ(FB), which met from 12 to 16 February 1996. It was reported that the CCAQ(FB) had not come to a conclusion and had referred the matter to CCPOQ.

18. Under the circumstances, SCN decided to propose that its twenty-fourth session be held from 17 to 21 March 1997 in Asia, hosted by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia in Kathmandu. In the event its regular budget would have to be submitted to CCAQ(FB) at its February 1997 meeting, the budget would be

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prepared and cleared with SCN members before the end of 1996. The symposium topic for the twenty-fourth session was agreed as "Nutrition and poverty". A provisional agenda based on that of the twenty-third session is contained in annex V below. The structure of the session with respect to the use of working groups will be reconsidered in scheduling the agenda; a note agreed on the functioning of working groups is contained in annex VI below.

## II. WORK IN PROGRESS: SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### A. Symposium on the theme "Effective programmes in Africa for improving nutrition, including household food security, following the International Conference on Nutrition"

19. Some 14 reports from different parts of Africa, together with lively discussion, showed conclusively that programmes properly prepared and implemented, with strong community participation, could bring about rapid improvement of nutrition. Symposium participants strongly recommended that information about these programmes be given wide dissemination to show that many effective activities are under way in Africa to improve nutrition. The agenda of the symposium is contained in annex VII below.

20. The following seven cross-cutting themes emerged from the presentations and discussion.

(a) Community involvement and participation. This was a central issue, with many facets. It required sensitivity to the traditional and cultural context, and made use of existing community knowledge and organizations in the community, including non-governmental organizations, which needed to be identified and fully involved. Nutrition might be used as an entry point for an integrated community development approach, which facilitated success and sustainability. A minimum package, including growth monitoring and promotion, needed to be identified through flexible negotiation at the community level. The assessment of community involvement was an important subject for study, including the identification of appropriate indicators. The sustainability of programmes required continuous technical support and supervision and the deployment of resources through an iterative process of assessment, analysis and action (the triple A cycle);

(b) Capacity-building. Another central issue, involving the development and training of facilitators external to the community and of "mobilizers" within the community, and the facilitation of creative dialogue between them. Appropriate and relevant training at the community level would be programme-driven;

(c) Necessity of long-term investment. Political commitment is required for this to occur: the role of Governments is crucial for sustainability. A nutrition-friendly macro-policy environment sustains effective programmes, and promotes sustained support and partnership between key players: Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and donor agencies. In that connection, ICN had played a catalytic role;

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(d) Scaling-up: expanding small successes. Government attention and commitment must be directed to successful programmes. Success needed to be defined in terms of process indicators that monitored programme implementation since impact in terms of nutrition outcome took time;

(e) Necessity of intersectoral and inter-agency collaboration and action. That was facilitated when sectors and agencies had clearly defined roles and objectives and plans that clearly identified responsibilities;

(f) Networking and regional cooperation. Such cooperation to support programme development and implementation was an aspect of capacity-building. Mechanisms needed to be developed to enable and encourage the sharing of information between developing countries: the so-called "South-South dialogue";

(g) Advocacy and raising awareness on nutrition issues at all levels. That had been a feature of ICN and its follow-up process, but more needed to be done to strengthen information, education and communications, especially at the community level.

#### B. ICN follow-up

21. The topic of the World Food Summit organized by FAO for November 1996 was introduced by J. Lupien (FAO). Participants adopted two statements on the World Food Summit. The first (annex VIII below), was a message to the Summit itself and to countries for their use in preparations for the Summit. The second (annex IX below) was shorter and written for a wider audience. SCN hoped that both would receive broad distribution.

22. SCN accepted the following recommendations of the Advisory Group on Nutrition:

(a) As a follow-up to ICN, SCN should analyse selected national plans of action (NPAs) by region, based on existing information provided by FAO, WHO and others. The Advisory Group recommends the following course of action by region. The evaluation should examine the proposed national goals, objectives and strategies, the concordance of these with the characterization of the country's food and nutrition situation, the process of developing NPAs (as feasible) and the built-in monitoring system of advances in achieving the goals. The expected financial costs specified in the NPAs should be reported; efforts made to obtain the funds that are necessary for implementation and monitoring of NPAs from local and external sources should also be reported;

(b) In addition, the SCN secretariat should conduct analyses of NPAs in the 10 countries in which SCN already has case studies (published or in draft), in collaboration with country-level organizations. The analysis should include an evaluation of the impact of ICN on the actions taken by those countries in advancing the goals proposed by ICN. The SCN-sponsored country studies prior to ICN would provide baseline information. The country studies could give insights into how the process of generating the NPAs has served to strengthen or catalyse actions. The results of the analysis of the NPAs should be reported in SCN

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publications, with special emphasis on the progress made in meeting ICN goals and on the impact of ICN in advancing those goals at the national level;

(c) Information on the follow-up of ICN prepared by the SCN secretariat should be included in the forthcoming Third Report on the World Nutrition Situation. Possible initial areas to be included, depending on feasibility, are:

- (i) General information on the status of the NPAs by region, and more specific information for selected countries;
- (ii) Information on the completeness of the key components of the NPAs: definition of national goals, objectives and strategies. Estimated costs and feasibility to cover financial requirements of NPAs;
- (iii) Report of advances made in meeting the main goals set by ICN. Famine prevention, reduction of chronic malnutrition, and eradication of iodine and vitamin A deficiencies;
- (iv) Report of advances in meeting other goals set by ICN. Alleviation of starvation and undernutrition in vulnerable groups, reduction in the prevalence of iron deficiency and diet-related non-communicable diseases, improvement in breastfeeding practices and improvement in hygiene, sanitation and safe drinking water;
- (v) Report on the efforts made by member agencies in advancing the objectives of ICN at the local and regional levels;

(d) An executive summary of this information should be prepared for distribution at the World Food Summit.

### C. Nutrition, ethics and human rights

23. The working group (Chair: U. Jonsson; Secretary: W. Barth Eide) discussed the implications of moving from a needs-based to a human rights-based approach to food and nutrition problems, and examined the responsibilities and roles of various development actors in a rights-based framework.

24. In an introductory presentation, U. Jonsson (UNICEF) emphasized that development should ensure both a desirable outcome and an adequate process for achieving that outcome. A rights-based strategy went beyond the fulfilment of needs because the State had obligations to respect, protect and fulfil those rights. In the field of nutrition, such a strategy aimed at the progressive achievement of nutritional goals and the progressive establishment of a high-quality process to meet related obligations. In January 1996, the UNICEF Board had approved a new mission statement for UNICEF, in which the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been recognized as the long-term basis for UNICEF work. In comparing the concept of entitlements with that of economic, social and cultural rights U. Kracht (World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights) showed that entitlements were constrained by prevailing legal, political and economic arrangements that could be changed in favour of the poor through a rights-based

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approach. He explored the roles of various actors in the State sector, the private for-profit and non-profit sectors and civil society at large, and recommended (a) strengthening instead of weakening developing country Governments to do the things they were best placed to do, while delivering them from the burden of tasks that others could perform more efficiently; (b) strengthening civil society as both an active agent and a beneficiary of a public strategy to eliminate famine, hunger and malnutrition; (c) fostering cooperation between the State, private enterprise, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large; and (d) strengthening the legal framework for food and nutrition rights and related economic and social rights.

25. SCN suggested adopting a cautious approach to advancing nutrition rights, considering the political sensitivities involved in some countries; the need for further conceptual clarification and consensus-building on the issues presented, as well as for updating the work of the United Nations on economic, social and cultural rights in general; and the need for more substantial evidence of the value added of a rights-based versus a needs-based approach to nutrition. It recommended that the working group continue its work, taking into account the recommendations of the first meeting in 1994 and focusing on the following items in 1996:

(a) Prepare case studies on the value added where a rights-based approach had been used;

(b) Draft an overall issue paper on food as a human right for discussion at the next meeting;

(c) Prepare a discussion paper on international obligations for assisting countries in fulfilling nutrition rights and the implications of such rights for resources, sanctions and structural adjustment programmes.

#### D. Report on the World Nutrition Situation

26. The Technical Secretary introduced his draft paper on preliminary results of analyses for the third Report on the World Nutrition Situation, which he said had benefited greatly from collaboration with the WHO Nutrition Unit, the UNICEF Planning Office and Macro International. New data from national surveys had enabled a reassessment of trends in the prevalence and numbers of underweight children. The two regions of greatest concern were sub-Saharan Africa, where no improvement had been seen on average in the 1980s and an actual increase in prevalence had occurred in 1990-1995, and South Asia, which for reasons that were unclear had much the highest prevalence of any region in the world and over half the total number of underweight children, and where preliminary results indicated that little or no improvement had been seen in 1990-1995.

27. The overall static situation in sub-Saharan Africa might be related to extreme poverty, the effects of structural adjustment programmes in many countries, increasing unemployment, drought, and the impact of conflict and displacement, although there had been some success with community-based programmes, as had emerged from the symposium.

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28. The representative of FAO pointed out that such trends were in general consistent with those in the sixth World Food Survey, which was being prepared, though the Food Balance Sheet methodology tended to underestimate the consumption of local foods. Other FAO publications confirming similar trends included the annual State of Food and Agriculture, Agriculture Towards 2000 and Agriculture Towards 2010.

29. SCN congratulated the secretariat on the production of those reports. FAO data would be included when available, as well as data on micronutrients and if possible in infant mortality, exclusive breastfeeding and low birth weight, together with gender differentials, as appropriate.

#### E. Nutrition of refugees and displaced people

30. The working groups (Chairs: R. Bhatia and P. Dijkhuizen; Secretary: G. de Sagarra) noted with concern that the number of persons under the mandated care of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had risen to more than 27 million by the end of 1994: one in every 205 people in the world. And if internally displaced people were taken into account, the total number of people who had been forced to flee their homes would approach 50 million.

31. In 1995, the World Food Programme had allocated food for some 17 million refugees and 15 million internally displaced people. It was noted that two thirds of WFP resources were dedicated to emergencies, compared with only one quarter of WFP resources a decade ago.

32. The reports on the Refugee Nutrition Information System were appreciated. It was suggested that ways of expediting the transfer of recent information be explored and more attention paid to giving the reports wider publicity.

33. The report of a workshop on the theme "Improvement of nutrition of refugees and displaced people", held in Machakos, Kenya, in December 1994, was welcomed and the importance of follow-up action stressed. In particular, meeting training needs was considered one of the top priorities. The Advisory Group recommended that a training needs assessment be carried out to assess capabilities, interests and comparative advantages of training institutions in sub-Saharan Africa to provide for the training needs identified in the Machakos report, and to produce a proposal, including needs for external funding, to develop the necessary training activities. That would move the process ahead to enable funding for long-term support to developing the capability training for the better management of nutrition in emergencies.

34. The Machakos report singled out a number of issues related to policy and programme planning and management that needed to be followed up, in particular the need to study appropriate uses of blended foods and strategies for ensuring an adequate supply of micronutrients. SCN recommended expediting the study of the use of blended foods for the supply of micronutrients. It was noted that the World Food Programme (WFP) had agreed to organize a meeting in the near future to follow up on that recommendation.

35. In relation to the provision of micronutrients, a number of other issues were raised, such as the use of food as a resource transfer and the need to consider other food strategies. It was noted that a policy paper setting out generally applicable principles related to the use of food aid in refugee situations would be useful to potential donors. It was noted that WFP was currently preparing a paper on the monetization of food aid.

36. It was noted that in an effort build consensus and foster collaboration among food and nutrition coordinators from WFP/UNHCR and non-governmental organizations, UNHCR had organized a workshop in Addis Ababa in October 1995. One of the recommendations called for some form of networking of technical and operational experience and practice for nutritionists working in emergencies. UNHCR would endeavour to launch that initiative by building on the complementary work of the Refugee Nutrition Information System.

37. SCN noted that UNHCR and UNICEF would soon be signing a memorandum of understanding that would reinforce the collaboration in dealing with refugee situations and would streamline actions to be undertaken by both agencies, particularly in emergency situations. Similar memoranda were being developed between UNICEF and WFP and between UNHCR and WHO.

#### F. Household food security

38. The working group Chairman (J. Lupien; Secretary: D. Maxwell) noted the various definitions of household food security (HFS), one of the foundations of improved nutrition, which had engendered the most debate as well as the longest section of recommendations in the ICN Plan of Action for Nutrition.

39. The International Development Research Centre gave a brief presentation on HFS as a component of sustainable development, with reference to the "barometer of sustainability" concept. Assessment must be system-wide (both the human system and the ecosystem), goal directed, organized hierarchically and hypothesis-led. Incorporating both human and ecosystem elements onto a two-dimensional matrix created the barometer of sustainability, with eight dimensions, four human and four related to the ecosystem. HFS fell under the health dimension, although it could also be incorporated under livelihood. Local examples of that kind of assessment were being carried out in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

40. General discussion fell into four broad categories:

(a) Issues related to indicators. UNHCR and UNICEF reported work on new guidelines for HFS assessment based on a variety of indicators;

(b) Urban issues. Urban cultivation, including fruits and vegetables and small animal production, street foods and the legal status of informal sector activities;

(c) New elements in the discussion on HFS, including food safety, food quality, and micronutrients;

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(d) The agricultural production/food processing and storage/HFS/nutrition continuum. Including the impact of agricultural commercialization, the role of indigenous/traditional food crops in HFS, famine early warning systems, and extended discussion on the nature of coping strategies in both urban and rural areas for dealing with the problems that arose at each of the nodes mentioned.

Cross-cutting those issues were two general concerns: the central importance of women in virtually all of the topics discussed, and the need for further research on many of the issues raised, including their policy implications.

41. SCN expressed appreciation for the working group's activities, noting the Chairman's suggestion that the working group meet outside the regular sessions of SCN. Decisions would be required by the SCN Executive Committee on the chairing and hosting of such meetings, as well as on guidelines on working group procedures.

#### G. Nutrition education and behavioural change

42. The Chair (S. Van der Vynckt; Secretary: J. Lupien) recalled previous SCN discussion on the topic, including the symposium held at the twenty-first session of SCN, which had focused on behavioural change components and had concluded with a strong recommendation for more attention to be given to behavioural issues in nutrition programmes. Social mobilization and development communication were considered to be critical components of outreach strategies to motivate communities to become more active participants in meeting their food and nutrition needs. Attention was called to the expert consultation that had been organized by FAO in Rome in September 1995, which had brought together a number of concerned agencies and specialists in the field to assess past experiences, the feasibility of different nutrition education and communication strategies, training needs for teachers and other educators, and evaluation. One main recommendation of the Rome consultation was that strategies for nutrition education combine the use of mass media to build public awareness with face-to-face education to facilitate behaviour change and improvements in nutrition.

43. It was noted that nutrition education was a lifelong process. The educational system of most countries offered opportunities for reaching children, their parents and the wider community. Undernutrition and ill-health might be important underlying factors of low school enrolment, absenteeism, poor scholastic performance and early school dropout. In policy terms, addressing the health and nutritional problems of the school-age population was not only important for the general well-being of that group but was also fundamental in the struggle to democratize access to and participation in basic education for both girls and boys.

44. The Secretary of the group referred to the global information package for nutrition education developed by FAO, which was designed to be adapted locally, regionally or nationally. The simple messages and information could be used to develop education programmes for public information, schools and other training settings. Discussion emphasized the importance of establishing guidelines on how to make adaptations suitable for local situations and the essential need for

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participatory techniques to identify locally relevant nutritional messages and activities.

45. Behavioural change components featured in most World Bank nutrition projects, and strategies were needed to encourage behavioural change at all levels, including that of policy makers and planners. UNFPA stressed the need for a broad development perspective in the redesign of relevant curricula. UNICEF pointed out that ways in which nutrition and education were linked depended on the one hand on the conceptual framework with which the nutritional problems were viewed and on the other on the role that was ascribed to poor local communities: after five years, the Iringa Nutrition Programme devoted 73 per cent of its resources to training and education.

46. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) stressed the issue of household food security and traditional habits and taboos affecting different age groups: promoting behavioural changes among school children, for example, required a combination of approaches and a sound understanding of practices and habits related to food, nutrition and care. Examples were given of a Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit project in the Andes that had demonstrated how effective community education could be used to promote local crop production and the availability of indigenous foods, and an FAO project in Ghana that had showed that rapid appraisal techniques could be used for developing training of rural extension workers in information, education and communication. More attention needed to be given to adolescent girls and their nutritional and health needs, and to how to reach those who were not in school; there was a need to pool experience.

47. SCN welcomed the activities of the working group, noting that the wide scope of the discussion was a clear indication of the need to continue its work through regular information exchange and other means.

#### H. Nutrition of the school-age child

48. The establishment of the working group (Chair: J. McGuire; Secretary: P. Dijkhuizen) had been prompted by the observation that 20 million disability-adjusted life years were lost among schoolchildren worldwide every year, primarily due to helminthic infections; the resulting anaemia had direct repercussions for learning ability. Other contributing observations were the possible potential for catch-up growth, the possible use of schools for community interventions and the importance of influencing the parents of tomorrow.

49. UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and WFP described their experience on undertaking health interventions in order to enhance learning ability. For example, a pilot approach in Guinea by the World Bank would implement malaria treatment, deworming, iodine supplementation and anaemia treatment through a participatory process. The preliminary findings of the Ghana Partnership for Child Development Programme had revealed a high level of stunting, helminthic infection and anaemia.

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50. The group reached the following conclusions:

(a) Helminthic infections seemed to be a major affliction of schoolchildren;

(b) Associated anaemia had a strong negative effect on the learning ability of schoolchildren;

(c) A deworming campaign must be accompanied with improvement of environmental sanitation in order to have any lasting impact;

(d) Micronutrient deficiencies as well as short-term hunger caused by deficient breakfast habits were important factors decreasing learning ability;

(e) Attention must be paid to the food habits of schoolchildren, particularly in the African setting (increasing evidence of junk food consumption);

(f) Promising new approaches in film and video using animation techniques, as well as rapid assessment methods for educational attainment were valuable tools;

(g) The participation of parents and community deserved more attention;

(h) Schools should be seen as entry points for community awareness-raising.

51. The group agreed to request WHO to ascertain, on the basis of available literature, whether there was any solid evidence that catch-up growth during school years and adolescence was possible and feasible. The reply would be made available to SCN at its twenty-fourth session.

52. SCN agreed that the working group would be established as an information exchange forum and convene again in two years' time.

#### I. Breastfeeding and complementary feeding

53. The second meeting of the working group was chaired by Dr. Lida Lhotska and Dr. Festo Kavishe of UNICEF. The Institute for Reproductive Health of Georgetown University and the WHO Collaborating Centre acted as secretariat.

54. Discussing breastfeeding from the perspective of women's and children's rights, the group generally agreed with the principle that women had the right to choose and decide, based on full information, on the way their infants and young children were fed. Some concern was expressed about the implementation of those rights, particularly at the community level, and discussion focused on strategies to protect, promote and support infant and young child feeding.

55. It was expected that the final report of the WHO/UNICEF Montpellier Joint Consultation on Complementary Feeding, which would encompass points of consensus

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as well as research recommendations, would be completed within the next few months.

56. To date, more than 4,000 hospitals in countries had been designated "baby friendly", despite the fact that the targets of the 1990 Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding had not been met in any country of the world. Key areas for action were identified as advocacy, information, national capacity-building, protection, maternity entitlements, the transformation of maternity practices and community support.

57. Discussion of exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding centred on the issues of growth faltering and micronutrient malnutrition due to the displacement of breast milk with breast milk substitutes and inadequate intake and composition of complementary foods in the context of the optimal timing for their introduction. The WHO/UNICEF initiative on complementary feeding was in place, and the potential of the proposed WHO multi-site survey of breastfeeding children (evaluation of infant growth to determine new growth standards for exclusively breastfed children) was reviewed; it was difficult to ensure a sufficient sample size, however, since exclusive breastfeeding rates were in general very low. But exclusive breastfeeding had enormous implications for a human rights perspective, and society did not understand precisely how important exclusive breastfeeding was. The challenge was to convince all levels of society - men, women, policy makers, employers and health-care providers - of not only the worth of exclusive breastfeeding but also how it could be achieved. Those decisions were ultimately in the hands of women and must be their choice.

58. It was noted that UNICEF maintained a database that focused on gathering information on the progress of the baby-friendly health initiative (BFHI) and other targets contained in the Innocenti Declaration. WHO maintained the Global Data Bank on Breastfeeding, which contained information on 55 countries.

59. UNICEF and WHO reported on the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes, highlighting the importance of World Health Assembly resolution 47.5 of May 1994, in which the Assembly had stated that there should be no donations of free or subsidized supplies of breast milk substitutes and other products covered under the scope of the Code in any part of the health-care system.

60. It was felt that a number of the targets of the Innocenti Declaration, such as establishing effective national breastfeeding coordinators and committees with the capacity to implement actions, and providing imaginative legislation and legal support for working breastfeeding women, needed more attention. The group resolved to become more active in reaching towards and beyond the Innocenti targets.

61. SCN noted its appreciation for the work of the group, and endorsed the proposal to establish an action-oriented approach in moving ahead and developing strategies for doing so. One possible occasion for the meeting of the group would be the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action global forum on the theme "Children's health, children's rights: action for the twenty-first century", to be held in Thailand in December 1996. The outcomes of all the group's meetings would be reported to SCN at its annual sessions.

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J. Iodine deficiency disorders

62. The Chairperson of the working group was G. Clugston, the Secretary F. Delange. WHO was updating its 1992 overview of global and regional prevalences of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) for the World Health Assembly in May 1996. Because of the great increase in awareness of the problem at all levels during the intervening years, an apparent increase in the prevalence of goitre in Africa and Asia was undoubtedly a reflection of more effective surveillance and reporting. During that period, a further 48 countries had established substantial salt iodization programmes, so that of 118 countries in which IDD was known to be a significant public health problem, 83 had national salt iodization programmes that were well under way. Virtually every UNICEF country programme contained a universal salt iodization (USI) component; as a result, the number of children with mental disabilities related to IDD was estimated to have fallen during the last decade from about 50 million worldwide to about 5 million.

63. The Executive Director of the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD) reported on an evaluation of IDD in 12 countries in Europe, which showed that there was still cause for concern in about half of them. The study developed a methodology that was standardized, inexpensive and efficient, which could be used elsewhere with minor modifications. The participants recognized the importance of strengthening national capacity for monitoring, and noted with appreciation WHO Executive Board resolution EB97R9 on prevention and control of iodine deficiency disorders, in which the Board urged member States to ensure the sustainability of the elimination of IDD by providing continued monitoring, training and technical support, including advice on appropriate health legislation, in cooperation with ICCIDD and other non-governmental organizations, as required. The resolution, in which the Board also requested WHO to establish a mechanism for verifying the elimination of IDD and to report to the World Health Assembly in 1999, was discussed and adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 1996.

64. A progress report on the WHO/ICCIDD/UNICEF multi-centre study on the impact of salt iodization on iodine status was presented by the Executive Director of ICCIDD. The study, conducted in seven African countries, was prompted by reports of iodine induced thyrotoxicosis (IIT) in a few adults in Zimbabwe and north-eastern Zaire following the introduction of iodized salt from Botswana. The intention was to assess the potential risk and, if possible, identify cases of IIT in other countries supplied by the same source, and in general to evaluate whether the reported cases were occasional or corresponded to a more general phenomenon; the final outcome of the study could lead to revised recommendations for iodine levels in salt. Preliminary results had shown a potential risk in some areas but no further cases of IIT. The programmatic implications would be examined when the study was completed in autumn 1996. Meanwhile, the scientific and medical aspects of the problem (pathogenesis, diagnosis and therapy) were being reviewed by ICCIDD. It was the firm conviction of ICCIDD that the phenomenon of IIT in no way called into question the major benefits of the USI strategy for sustained IDD elimination.

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65. The working group discussed situations where there were different iodine levels in salt under different conditions and the need for better information on rates of iodine loss. The importance of ensuring the sustainability of programmes for permanent elimination was reiterated, particularly the importance of ensuring adequate monitoring, training and infrastructure-building, quality control and legislation. Progress in IDD control in Ghana and other West African countries was described, and international agencies and bilaterals briefly summarized their activities towards the goal of eliminating IDD.

#### K. Iron

66. The working group (Chair: N. Scrimshaw; Secretary: F. Viteri) noted that although iron was the most widespread nutritional deficiency in developing countries and its multiple functional consequences were a serious impediment to development, preventive efforts were lagging far behind those for the other critical micronutrients, vitamin A and iodine. The group reviewed the progress that had been made in fortification methodologies and new approaches to supplementation, as well as the contribution that could be made by dietary improvements. There was a strong consensus that the time had come for the concerned international and bilateral agencies to give increased priority to the prevention of iron deficiency and to establish more specific goals for doing so.

67. The group noted that early completion of the WHO publication on the prevalence of iron deficiency was needed to facilitate advocacy. The effectiveness and low cost of ferrous sulphate for the fortification of cereal flours was recognized, although it was not suitable for all countries because of its limited shelf-life. The safety, greater stability and improved absorption of chelated iron were discussed, along with approaches for lowering its cost. Sustainable dietary modification that would increase the use of fruits as a source of ascorbic acid and of leafy green vegetables would be equally helpful in improving vitamin A status.

68. The secretariat summarized a number of studies conducted in China, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia and the United States of America, which had demonstrated that the weekly administration of iron was as effective as daily administration and had fewer side effects. SCN agreed that those results were promising but decided - as recommended by the Advisory Group on Nutrition - that it would be premature to recommend large-scale programme implementation until those and additional studies in progress could be reviewed and their data standardized in a form suitable for independent meta-analysis.

69. In addition, the Advisory Group suggested that the SCN secretariat examine what was being done by the agencies/groups concerned to evaluate the effectiveness of the various alternative strategies available to prevent anaemia; an evaluation of the issue should be undertaken and the policy implications resulting from the comparison should be determined.

70. Although the value of delaying the clamping of the umbilical cord to increase the red cell content of the newborn was a procedure that had been known for decades, it had been neglected as a simple measure for improving the iron store of infants. The beneficial effects of a one-minute delay in clamping the

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cord had been known to last up to 8 months of age. SCN urged that the practice be promoted within the programmes of the relevant agencies.

71. Reports submitted by WHO, FAO, UNICEF, the World Bank and a number of the bilateral agencies described a variety of activities designed to prevent iron deficiencies. The multi-sponsored micronutrient initiative hosted by the Canadian International Development Research Centre had adopted a promising new approach to the double fortification of salt with iodine and iron that was about to be field-tested. The World Bank would pursue the action-oriented research activities that it had identified, in consultation with other agencies, as appropriate.

72. SCN took note of recent investigations into supplementation, fortification and other food-based approaches to combating iron deficiency, and endorsed Advisory Group proposals for their follow-up. There was a need to establish goals for iron comparable to those established for iodine and vitamin A, as well as to articulate at the highest policy levels the functional consequences of iron deficiency in terms of its effects on reproduction, cognition and economic activity.

#### L. Vitamin A

73. The working group session was chaired by G. Clugston (WHO) since the appointed Chair (D. Alnwick) and Secretary (B. Underwood) were unable to attend. The WHO/UNICEF publication entitled "Global prevalence of vitamin A deficiency" was made available, together with updates on information up to February 1996.

74. Reports were submitted on the status of control programmes. For example, 18 of 46 countries in Africa had supplementation programmes and major programmes existed in Asia. UNICEF made use of the EPI programme for providing supplements, particularly with measles immunization at the age of nine months. A meta-analysis commissioned by WHO and published in the WHO Bulletin had showed that vitamin A had no impact in either direction on respiratory disease. New WHO/UNICEF/International Vitamin A Consultative Group guidelines on the use of vitamin A supplements had been prepared.

75. It was noted that 11 countries were fortifying sugar and other foods (cow's milk, vegetables, fat, margarine, maize and a drink mix) with vitamin A; 10 countries are also fortifying wheat flour, maize flour or a drink mix with iron. The Micronutrient Initiative had developed a pre-mix of vitamin A-fortified rice. The policy on fortified sugar was that no attempts were being made to promote consumption of the vehicle. A meeting was held in Ottawa on food fabrication, with the active participation of industry.

76. WFP policy on fortification was to request that all vegetable oil be fortified with vitamin A and all salt with iodine. Blended foods were fortified with a vitamin/mineral mix, and wheat flour with iron and B vitamins.

77. FAO support for the control of vitamin A deficiency through dietary diversification was continuing and was being documented. A workshop on food-based approaches to preventing micronutrient malnutrition had been held in Salt

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Lake City in November 1995. It had concluded that food-based systems offered sustainable solutions to malnutrition, including the health problems caused by micronutrient deficiencies, thus making material improvements to the health, well-being and productivity of millions of people. There was a clear synergy among the food-based approaches to many nutrient deficiencies, especially deficiencies of vitamin A, iron and vitamin C, and field strategies for community activities needed to consider appropriate "packaging" to maximize mutual benefits.

78. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported on isotope research on vitamin A stores in the whole body and their relation to breast milk retinol concentration and other indicators.

M. Network for research and training to improve nutrition programmes

79. SCN received a report from the interim steering committee established to follow up the conference held in Bellagio, Italy, in November 1994, at the initiative of the World Bank, on the theme "Unmet training and research needs for addressing the 'How' questions in nutrition". A total of 800 people had responded positively to the invitation in the Bellagio Declaration, indicating an interest in participating.

80. The interim committee proposed a programme of regional activities that would require \$1.67 million over a 3-year period. It further proposed that it be replaced by a permanent network steering committee.

81. Discussion revealed broad support for more effective research that should pay special attention to universities and seek to harmonize the interests of all agencies with an interest in training; the Advisory Group on Nutrition, which gave full support to the proposal, suggested that a working group be established to facilitate such harmonization and report to SCN on an annual basis.

N. Nutrition as a risk factor in the global burden of disease

82. The World Bank congratulated the SCN secretariat for undertaking its work on nutrition as a risk factor. SCN noted with satisfaction that WHO was contributing four additional chapters on protein-energy malnutrition, Vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency disorders and iron-deficiency anaemia to a forthcoming WHO/World Bank publication on the global burden of disease; SCN recognized that the five chapters would have an important advocacy potential. The total exercise should be completed before the end of 1996, and the results should then be given wide publicity.

83. SCN requested the Advisory Group to prepare a statement on the implications of the studies for its next session.

O. Activities supported by the United Nations University

84. The 1995 annual report of the International Dietary Energy Consultative Group was distributed, and its Executive Director referred to some of its recent publications. It was noted that the report of a United Nations University/WHO/FAO/International Union of Nutritional Sciences-sponsored technical meeting to assess the evidence for a future updating of FAO/WHO/UNU recommendations for energy and protein allowances was currently available.

85. The 1995 annual report of the International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS) was also distributed. The Network represented excellent harmonization between UNU and FAO, which in 1995 became partners in the joint promotion of INFOODS; the Network will soon include every region in the world.

P. Report of the Advisory Group on Nutrition

86. The Chair of the Advisory Group on Nutrition reported that the Advisory Group had contributed most of its comments under earlier agenda items; the agenda of the Advisory Group was as follows:

1. Introduction to the work of SCN.
2. Symposium on the theme "Effective programmes in Africa for improving nutrition, including household food security, following the International Conference on Nutrition".
3. Report on the World Nutrition Situation and Report on the Eastern and Southern Africa Nutrition Situation.
4. Reporting on the follow-up to ICN.
5. Networks for research and training to improve nutrition programmes.
6. Nutrition of refugees and displaced people.
7. Plant breeding for micronutrients.
8. Nutrition as a risk factor in the global burden of disease.
9. Iron supplementation: research on the biological effectiveness of weekly iron supplementation for the prevention of iron deficiency.
10. Options and continuity of SCN work.

The conclusions on the symposium have been noted in paragraph 20 above, as well as in the appropriate sections of the present report.

87. In her presentation, the Chair made particular reference to suggestions on ICN follow-up (see para. 22 above) and the urgency of moving ahead with training for improving the nutrition of refugees in Africa, for which the Advisory Group would be pleased to review proposals.

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88. One item considered by the Advisory Group concerned plant breeding for micronutrients. In brief, its suggestions were to examine and pilot test the promotion for consumption of some existing commodities, such as high zinc wheat, high iron rice, high protein quality maize and high carotene rice, and their nutritional effects.

89. Advisory Group views and recommendations were available in its report, which was before SCN in draft form.

Q. Report of the bilateral group

90. The representative of the bilateral group made a final statement, which is contained in annex X.

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Micronutrient Deficiency Information System Working Paper, No. 2 (Geneva, World Health Organization, 1995).

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: Dr. R. Jolly

Technical Secretary: Dr. J. B. Mason

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Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Item	Background material	Code
Symposium	Abstracts of presentations to be made at the twenty-second session. Provisional list of papers to be presented. Overview paper by E. J. R. Heyward, entitled "Reversing negative nutrition trends in Africa"	
SCN 22	Report on the twenty-second session of SCN	SCN 96 SCN22 Rep
AGN	Report on the meeting of the Advisory Group on Nutrition (June 1995)	SCN 96 AGN Rep
Nutrition of refugees and displaced people	Agenda for working group meeting Report of a workshop on the improvement of the nutrition of refugees and displaced people in Africa (Machakos, Kenya, December 94) RNIS #13 Note for the <u>World Health Report 1996</u> on nutrition of refugees and displaced people (19/1/96) Note on UNHCR training workshop on tools and strategies for needs assessment and the management of food and nutrition programmes for refugees and displaced populations (Addis Ababa, October 1995)	SCN 96 Refs Agenda SCN 96 Refs Machakos  RNIS #13 SCN 96 Refs Update  SCN 96 Refs Addis
Nutrition, ethics and human rights	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 Hrights Agenda
Iodine deficiency disorders	Report on the IDD Working Group meeting at the twenty-second session of ICN (June 1995) Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 Iodine  SCN 96 Iodine Agenda
Iron deficiency control	Report on an iron deficiency control meeting at the twenty-second session of ICN (June 1995) Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 Iron  SCN 96 Iron Agenda
Options for strengthening the functions of SCN	Options strengthening the SCN/summary of options proposed Future options for SCN (10 May 1995; previously distributed as SCN 95 Options)	SCN 96 Options A SCN 96 Options B

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Item	Background material	Code
Executive session	Agenda and background material	
<u>Report on the World Nutrition Situation</u>	Draft preliminary results for the third <u>Report on the World Nutrition Situation</u>	SCN 96 RWNS
Nutrition in the global burden of disease	Note on nutrition as a risk factor in the global burden of disease	SCN 96 GBD A
	Extracts from a paper entitled "Investing in health research and development"	SCN 96 GBD B
	SCN 95 GBD distributed at the twenty-second session of SCN (June 1995)	SCN 95 GBD
	Draft entitled "Nutrition as a risk factor in the global burden of disease" (29/3/95)	SCN 96 GBD
	Cost-effectiveness section expected from the World Bank	
Network for research and training to improve nutrition programmes	Proposal for support from interim steering committee	SCN 96 ResTrain
Follow-up to ICN	Verbal reports from participants and the Advisory Group on Nutrition	
Nutritional education and behavioural change	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 NEd Agenda
Breastfeeding and complementary feeding	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 Bfdg Agenda
Household food security	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 HFS Agenda
Nutrition of the school-age child	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 School Agenda
Vitamin A	Report of working group meeting at the twenty-second session of SCN (June 1995)	SCN 96 Vita
	Agenda for working group meeting	SCN 96 Vita Agenda
IDECG	1995 Annual report	

Annex III

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

1. Symposium on nutrition and poverty.
2. Nutrition of refugees and displaced people, including report of working group.
3. Nutrition, ethics and human rights, including report of working group.
4. Iodine deficiency disorders, including report of working group.
5. Iron deficiency control, including report of working group.
6. Report on the World Nutrition Situation.
7. Nutrition in the global burden of disease.
8. Network for research and training to improve nutrition programmes.
9. International Dietary Energy Consultative Group, International Network on Food Data Systems, and International Food Intake Data project (United Nations University programmes).
10. Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition.
11. Nutrition education and behavioural change, including report of working group.
12. Breastfeeding and complementary feeding, including report of working group.
13. Household food security, including report of working group.
14. Nutrition of the school-age child, including report of working group.
15. Vitamin A, including report of working group.

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Annex IV

BILATERAL STATEMENT ON THE EVALUATION REPORT

The bilateral group is pleased with the outcome of the work of the evaluation team and agrees with most of its recommendations. We especially agree with the team's conclusions that although SCN has made many positive contributions in recent years, its functioning can be strengthened while maintaining its current position as a subsidiary body within ACC.

The bilateral group feels that SCN is evolving in a positive and appropriate way towards improved coordination and collaboration. We are especially pleased with the new spirit of openness and transparency that is embodied, for example, in the recent decision to accept bilateral representation at SCN executive sessions.

As to the specific recommendations of the evaluation report, we wish to make the observations set out below.

1. Donor countries have in recent years provided substantial support to various SCN activities. In so doing, they aimed to achieve high-quality products that would illustrate the benefits of harmonization and cooperation within the United Nations system in the field of nutrition. We endorse the recommendation that SCN member agencies should gradually assume responsibility for core activities and key programmes, such as the Refugee Nutrition Information System, which must continue in the future. We would like to see the relevant United Nations agencies, each within the limits of their own mandates, sharing the work in the field of nutrition under the coordination of SCN. SCN would then be able to give more attention and resources to new emerging issues.
2. In that context, the SCN secretariat should seek ways to assist member agencies in sustainable institutional capacity-building. We therefore propose that when recruiting new staff for the SCN secretariat, special attention be given to candidates who have skills in and have expressed interest in building institutional capacity and the facilitation of institutional collaboration.
3. We agree with the evaluation team's recommendation that some way needs to be found to increase developing country participation in SCN. In addition, advisers should be recruited not only with expertise in science but also with experience in implementation and expertise in programme planning and management. It is desirable that such advisers be skilled in institutional management, especially in relation to the United Nations system. We do feel, however, that it is essential to integrate scientific and management advisory functions.
4. This improvement in its advisory capacity would provide the basis for a more effective SCN response to fulfil its mandate to mobilize and integrate nutrition activities at the country level. We agree that this is an ambitious objective that will mean adopting a strategic approach to build

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experience and capacity for coordination among member agencies. Nevertheless, it must remain a key goal for any United Nations coordination effort to arrive at successful approaches at the country level.

We see the evaluation report as a useful background document for discussing the future role of the Subcommittee on Nutrition.

Annex V

NOTE ON POSSIBLE IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SCN MEMBERS  
IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME PRIORITY AREAS

1. Inventory of nutrition policies and programmes,  
country-by-country, by region

The idea has been briefly discussed in previous sessions, and was included under "Policy harmonization and monitoring" (item 3) in the proposals for extrabudgetary funding. The concept is being considered along the lines of the UNFPA compilations in the population field, which give about four pages of country-by-country information (three volumes, 1987-1991) using a standardized format.

For nutrition, the concept would be a valuable reference for country activities and would provide material for monitoring follow-up to ICN. Again, some standardization of format would be desirable.

The work could be overseen by a working group of SCN and undertaken by member agencies through their field offices. The compilation of results could be undertaken by agencies or the SCN secretariat.

2. Inputs to feature chapters of the World Nutrition Report

Feature chapters of the World Nutrition Report have provided a way of describing important topics in the past, including women's nutritional status, diet-related non-communicable diseases, projections of trends in underweight children and the nutrition of refugees. A number of additional topics have been proposed by the Advisory Group on Nutrition for the future. Some suggested topics, for which SCN member agencies may wish to take responsibility, bringing out their policy implications, are:

(a) Projections of food availability and numbers of people with inadequate food intake to 2010 (FAO);

(b) Trends in stunting and wasting on a country case-study basis, with possible causality (WHO);

(c) Long-term trends in underlying factors tending to improve nutrition, notably fertility decline, literacy and women's status (UNFPA, UNESCO);

(d) Gender differentials (or absence of) in early child growth when there are morbidity/mortality differentials (e.g., South Asia) and possible explanations;

(e) Effects of care in explaining differentials in child malnutrition (UNICEF).

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### 3. Case studies on ICN follow-up

The case studies presented in Adelaide on nutrition trends, policies and programmes could be used to provide background (up to about 1993) to be built on for assessing ICN follow-up. Seven studies have been published (Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Tanzania, Thailand and Zimbabwe), and three are available as draft reports (Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan) and one as a national report (Malaysia); a synthesis of their results will be published shortly.

Follow-up case studies in some or all of these countries, often working with the institutions or authors of the original books, would provide a useful opportunity for looking at policy and programme development and nutritional outcome from about 1993 onwards. In that event, perhaps different agencies could take the lead at the country level.

Annex VI

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING GROUPS

SCN agreed on the guidelines for working groups set out below.

1. Working groups will have individual terms of reference, specifying the tasks assigned to them by SCN; they need not be purely technical discussion groups.

2. Their function will be to render advice to SCN members with a clear focus on harmonization and coordination in relation to more effective action.

3. Working groups will be the responsibility of an SCN member. They will normally function without cost to the SCN. The Chair will be held by an SCN member.

4. Working groups will meet and do their work during the year, if possible just before but not during SCN sessions, presenting a report to SCN sessions for discussion.

5. The reports of the working groups will specify their recommendations and conclusions, and may include proposals for future work.

6. Reporting on meetings during SCN sessions will normally not exceed 90 minutes.

7. Working groups will be open to all SCN members and observers, and will be announced to all SCN members. The SCN technical secretariat will keep a calendar of meetings, and will regularly issue a bulletin of forthcoming working group meetings.

8. Reports must be submitted at least one month before SCN sessions to allow for prior distribution. Without submission of a report, the working group will not be included in the SCN session.

9. Depending on the nature of the working group, reports can be issued at intervals longer than one year.

10. Working groups are encouraged to include representatives from developing countries and to hold meetings in developing countries.

11. The SCN secretariat will provide services, such as announcing working group meetings, distributing the agenda, and preparing background documents and reports.

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Annex VII

AGENDA OF A SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEME "EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES  
IN AFRICA FOR IMPROVING NUTRITION, INCLUDING HOUSEHOLD  
FOOD SECURITY, FOLLOWING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
NUTRITION"

(Accra, 24 and 25 February 1996)

Saturday, 24 February 1996

- 10.45-11.30     Household food security in Kenya, Ruth Oniango (Jomo Kenyatta University)
- Household food security in Ghana, Rosetta Tetebo (MOA, Ghana)
- Urban Household Food Security in Madagascar, Jayshree Balachander (World Bank)
- 11.30-11.50     Discussion opened by Eileen Kennedy
- 11.50-12.35     Food security and nutrition programme in Benin, Joyce Gbegbelegbe (PILSA)
- Child survival and development programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania, Wilbald Lorri (TFNC)
- Community-based nutrition programmes in the Niger, Jean Michel Ndiaye (UNICEF WCARO)
- 12.35-12.55     Discussion opened by Kraisd Tontisirin
- 12.55-1.45       Lunch
- 1.45-2.30       Effective programmes for improving nutrition in Ghana, Rosanna Agble (MOH, Ghana)
- Community food and nutrition programme in Zimbabwe, Julia Tagwireyi (Nutrition Department, MOH)
- Nutrition Surveillance and Intervention in South Africa, Robert Fincham (University of Natal)
- 2.30-2.50       Discussion opened by Sadia Chowdhury
- 2.50-3.20       Vitamin A programme in Uganda, J. Sabiiti (UNICEF Uganda)
- Salt iodization programmes in Africa, Festo Kavishe (UNICEF ESARO)
- 3.20-3.40       Discussion opened by Ricardo Uauy

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3.40-4.10      Coffee break

4.10-4.40      West Africa nutrition network, K. A. Okyere (SADAOC)

Regional training needs in ECSA countries to improve nutrition  
programmes, Catherine Siandwazi (CRHCS/ECSA)

4.40-5.10      Overview: Reversing negative nutrition trends in Africa,  
Richard Heyward

5.10-6.00      General discussion

Sunday, 25 February 1996

8.30-9.00      General discussion (continued)

9.00-9.30      Summing up and final discussion

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Annex VIII

SCN STATEMENT ON THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

1. Malnutrition kills, maims and disables. At present, about 800 million people, mostly in developing countries, still do not have access to enough food to meet their daily nutrition needs. Currently, about 180 million children under five years of age, or nearly one third of the world's children, are estimated to be malnourished. About 2 billion people, particularly infants, young children and women of child-bearing age, are at risk from micronutrient deficiencies, especially iodine deficiency, vitamin A deficiency and anaemia. As a result millions suffer brain damage, cretinism, reduced learning capacity, blindness, stunted growth, decreased resistance to infection, increased illness, decreased productivity and death.
2. Countries of the world pledged, in the 1992 World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition, to make all efforts to eliminate or substantially reduce before the year 2000 famine, malnutrition in its several forms, starvation and widespread chronic hunger.
3. The United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Nutrition (SCN) sends this message to the World Food Summit to be held in Rome in November 1996 and to countries for use in their preparations for the Summit. We do this because SCN is charged with harmonizing international activities to improve nutrition. We also do this as representatives to SCN from all concerned United Nations agencies, as independent expert advisers, and observers from bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, and developing countries. And we do this from Accra at the twenty-third session of SCN (24 February to 1 March 1996). We found that properly prepared and implemented programmes with an emphasis on food security and as follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), which include strong community participation, can bring about significant improvement of nutrition in Africa, particularly among the most vulnerable groups.
4. SCN has noted with grave concern the continuing global burden of malnutrition, especially the increasing prevalence of malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 1995, and a slowing down and stagnation of nutritional improvement in many other developing areas of the world, including South Asia, where over half the world's malnourished infants, children and women are found. The gravity of malnutrition cannot be overemphasized. Malnutrition is the most extensive risk factor in causing ill health globally. Poor nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood has irreversible effects, whether caused by poverty, lack of food, ill health, inadequate care, inappropriate food choices or a combination of all these factors; it reduces intelligence, educability, disease resistance, productivity and activity. For the same reasons, reducing or preventing malnutrition offers widespread, tangible benefits for individuals and countries.
5. SCN strongly supports the World Food Summit. It welcomes the attention and focus it would bring to problems of hunger and malnutrition and to sustainable strategies for addressing them, particularly in view of current and projected

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world population growth and its impact on the environment. It recalls and endorses its statement at its twenty-first session, in March 1994, on the world food problem, hunger and malnutrition, which made the following points:

(a) Since the World Food Conference of 1974, the questions of food production and how that food is distributed have remained at the centre of concern;

(b) Emphasis has been on access to food and on distribution, rather than on supply;

(c) Importance should also be given to food entitlements, household and individual food security, and matters related to the quality and safety of food for human consumption;

(d) There is continuing concern about undernutrition, rising population, increasing urbanization and household food security;

(e) Emphasis must be given to agricultural research and investment, taking into account the changing geographical and socio-economic characteristics of hunger in the world;

(f) Account must also be taken of poor people's perceptions of their malnutrition-related problems;

(g) Increased attention must be given to the production potential of poor people living in resource-poor areas, to the promotion of secure and sustainable livelihoods in Africa, to the needs of female-headed households and peri-urban populations, and to measures that will mitigate the effects of severe drought and conflict on food supply, food prices and the command over food by poor people;

(h) A sustainable and sufficient world food supply requires investments in agriculture, including research, to be kept under review;

(i) Additional resources required to address world food supply should not be sought at the expense of resources needed to strengthen the effective demand of the deprived for food, health and household care;

(j) Household access to food remains one of the most urgent food problems for the foreseeable future.

6. SCN emphasizes the importance of assuring sustainable access by all to an adequate supply of good quality, varied and safe foods, including fruits, legumes and other vegetables, to meet all energy and nutrient needs, making optimum use of traditional indigenous foods, and opportunities for urban cultivation. SCN stresses the need to resolve the continued nutritional and other problems that confront refugees and other people displaced by conflicts and natural disasters. SCN emphasizes that urgent attention should be given to problems related to population growth, and to recognizing and improving the role of women in agriculture and in assuring household food security.

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7. It is clear that greater supportive action at the global level is needed. Larger allocations of development assistance in support of household food security and nutrition are required from bilateral and international aid agencies, with a clearer focus on support for effective country action. At the same time, more effective monitoring of each country's nutrition, health and food situation, linked with changes in priorities and policies for sustainable development, is feasible and must be pursued, in the common interest of the world as a whole.

8. SCN notes that the World Food Summit will give emphasis and strength to work under way to achieve the goals of previous summits and conferences, including the World Food Conference, the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Nutrition, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. It stresses that the World Food Summit should synthesize appropriate aspects of all those forums in arriving at a global statement and plan of action for sustainable national, community, household and individual food security.

9. SCN members and observers expressed their interest in the arrangements made for preparing and holding the World Food Summit and their intention to play an active part in this process. They urged FAO to give wide dissemination to all background documentation and to take all possible steps to assure the widest possible participation in the preparation and holding of the World Food Summit to assure broad participation in the implementation of Summit recommendations and commitments.

10. Political leadership at the highest level of government can make a decisive difference in all these areas of action. The world is not trapped in irreversible downward trends. Many countries have shown how to improve the nutritional status of their people, especially the most vulnerable. If clear action is taken seriously and soon, improvements in nutrition will soon be evident, with positive results for today's society and future generations.

Accra, 1 March 1996

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Annex IX

A SHORT STATEMENT BY SCN ON THE WORLD  
FOOD SUMMIT AND NUTRITION<sup>a</sup>

Malnutrition robs a country of its best minds and bodies and the lives of its children. In the two decades since the World Food Conference of 1974, the questions of how much food the world grows and how that food is distributed have rightly remained at the centre of international debate and concern. However, emphasis on large and small-scale food production must be linked to access to food and its utilization by households and communities. In sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of undernutrition increased between 1990 and 1995, and nutritional improvement in most other developing areas of the world is slowing down or stagnating. The gravity of malnutrition cannot be overemphasized. Malnutrition reduces intelligence, educability, disease resistance, productivity and activity. Furthermore, it is passed along to the next generation if the pregnant woman is malnourished. Reducing or preventing malnutrition offers widespread, tangible benefits for individuals and countries.

SCN strongly supports the World Food Summit, which will be organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its Rome headquarters in November 1996. It welcomes the attention and focus that the Summit will bring to the problems of hunger and malnutrition, and to adopting sustainable strategies to address them, particularly in view of current and projected world population growth, concerns about the environment, and problems of global, national and household food security. We urge all participating member Governments, international organizations, bilateral and non-governmental organizations to review all background documents to assure that adequate attention is paid to malnutrition and to assure the widest possible participation in the preparation for, deliberations at and follow-up to the World Food Summit.

Agricultural development will have the greatest impact on reducing malnutrition if it is coupled with efforts to improve family income, the health environment and nutrition behaviours. Agricultural production must be linked to household food security, improved education and appropriate care practices. To assure a sustainable and sufficient world food supply, it is necessary to keep under review investments in agricultural development affecting supply. It is also imperative to increase the production and consumption of legumes, fruits and vegetables to address micronutrient malnutrition. However, those necessary steps are not enough. We believe that increased investments in those areas must be matched with programmes of action on nutrition to achieve the goals set by the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition.

It is clear that continued supportive action at the global level is needed. Since the World Food Conference and the International Conference on Nutrition, we have learned much about what works to address malnutrition. It is now clear that a variety of approaches can work within the resource constraints of developing countries. What is common in those approaches is that they involve the family and the community in finding the appropriate solutions to the nutrition problem.

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Neither financial resources nor technology are binding constraints. What is required is political commitment and a sound strategy in each country. The world is not trapped in irreversible downward trends. Many countries have shown how to improve the nutritional status of their people, especially the most vulnerable. If clear action is taken seriously and soon, improvements in nutrition will become evident, with positive results for today's society and for future generations.

Accra, 1 March 1996

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> The United Nations Administrative Coordination Committee Subcommittee on Nutrition (SCN) is charged with coordinating international activities to improve nutrition. It is comprised of representatives of all concerned United Nations agencies and observers from bilateral agencies and developing countries. This is the consensus statement of SCN at its twenty-first session (Accra, 24 February-1 March 1996).

Annex X

REPORT OF THE BILATERAL GROUP

The bilateral group held several meetings in Accra. We want to state that the FAO offer to hold this SCN session at one of their regional offices is much appreciated. Both the symposium and the working group meetings were well attended by participants from Africa, in particular, Ghana and neighbouring countries. For the first time, all the presentations in the symposium were made by experts from African countries. We hope you will continue to hold meetings in the regions with which we are most concerned.

Regarding the Advisory Group on Nutrition, we want to state that it was a pleasure for us to meet with a new Advisory Group. We are impressed with the range of representation from developing countries, a good mix of scientific expertise and programme experience. We would like to encourage you to continue to look for a balance, and since Julia Tagwireyi is leaving the Advisory Group we would like to emphasize the importance of recruiting new programme people for the Advisory Group.

Usually, the bilaterals discuss a lot of policy issues. This year, the future of SCN was the main topic, due to the fact that the bilateral evaluation of SCN,<sup>a</sup> which was finalized just before and presented at this SCN session, is very important for the future of SCN. We are extremely pleased that the evaluation report was so well received and well discussed during the session. Thus, it fulfilled its intended purpose. We interpret this as a recognition and a reconfirmation that the bilaterals are part of SCN. We continue to support the purpose of SCN, plan to continue to support it and urge its member agencies to consider doing likewise.

We have spent a lot of time discussing the problems that face SCN at the moment, induced by budgetary concerns raised by imminent changes in the financial contributions of SCN members. We appreciate being fully involved in the executive sessions and the open process in discussions on the future of SCN and the procedure for selecting a new Technical Secretary. This is one of the illustrations of the spirit of continued openness that we think has been further enhanced by the new Chairperson. We are pleased that SCN will issue a statement on the World Food Summit. This will contribute to addressing issues of consumption and nutrition during the Summit.

We would like to go on record that we thank John Mason for all the energy and commitment that he has contributed to international nutrition.

Notes

<sup>a</sup> An executive summary of the bilateral evaluation is contained in appendix I to the present report. A letter from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Secretary-General of the United Nations dated 16 February 1996, forwarding the report, with comments, is contained in appendix II. The reply of the Secretary-General dated 4 June 1996 is contained in appendix III.

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## Appendix I

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE BILATERAL EVALUATION OF SCN

#### PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation study has been carried out for the bilateral development agencies of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America. The evaluation is intended to contribute to the ongoing improvement of the United Nations Subcommittee for Nutrition (SCN) and to support the ongoing effectiveness of SCN. Specifically, the evaluation has the following three key objectives:

- (a) To critically review the SCN mandate and to document its performance to date;
- (b) To provide guidance on how to maintain or increase SCN effectiveness in the future;
- (c) To assess possible other roles, structures and administrative arrangements for SCN.

#### KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

In the interest of brevity, this executive summary does not present the evidence from which the evaluation team has derived its key findings. This evidence is presented at length in the report itself. Rather, the evaluation team has chosen to present the key findings and recommendations of the report along with highlights of the analysis informing each of the key findings and recommendations.

#### The global nutrition situation and the need for SCN

While an overall trend away from undernutrition and towards problems related to diet-related chronic diseases is discernible among developing countries over the past three decades, this trend masks patterns of persistent undernutrition in many countries and absolute increases in the numbers of malnourished. In addition, the emphasis on solutions and responses to malnutrition have changed over time (from protein, to food supply to micronutrients) as much due to the search for implementable solutions as to any underlying change in the situation. Thus, the current emphasis on micronutrient deficiencies does not necessarily indicate an increase in prevalence of these nutritional problems but rather the identification of a problem, albeit serious, that is felt to be resolvable with, perhaps, a relatively low level of investment when compared to the problem of overall food deficiency.

What remains consistent is the fact that the problems of nutrition are not resolved by simple solutions; the complex aetiologies of nutrition problems demand multidisciplinary solutions. A coordinating body is therefore much

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needed to harmonize the nutritional activities of the United Nations agencies as well as other institutions. There are a number of specific reasons why no single United Nations organization can provide adequate harmonization/coordination services across all the areas required in nutrition programming. For example:

(a) In formulating nutrition policies and plans of action. Specialized United Nations agencies might tend to give priority to nutritional problems related to their specific field. A global non-biased multidisciplinary approach through SCN members facilitates the adoption of balanced nutrition policies and plans of action;

(b) In considering various important factors influencing nutrition that might not represent a priority for certain United Nations agencies. Examples include the socio-behavioural sciences, cultural questions and political factors related to nutrition;

(c) In harmonizing the various nutrition training activities of specialized United Nations agencies to minimize duplication, save costs and ensure balanced and adequate coverage of various subjects;

(d) In monitoring and evaluating the world nutrition situation based on data inputs from a number of United Nations agencies, as well as from countries. Proper interpretation and evaluation through standardized methodologies is an important activity of SCN;

(e) In advocacy for nutrition among scientists, decision makers and the public is an area where a multidisciplinary nutrition body is needed;

(f) In motivating some bilateral donors to increase their contribution to nutritional activities. Some donors may be more willing to donate to integrated activities or research projects in nutrition and SCN represents one body that is capable of promoting this integration. Indeed, budget data reviewed indicate (see section 3.1, p. 10 of the report) that bilateral donors have continued to be strong supporters of the analytical work of the SCN.

In summary, it seems clear that a demonstrable need exists for the continuation of a body at least similar to SCN. In the absence of SCN, it would be necessary to establish a forum for inter-agency United Nations coordination for nutrition. Such a body, even without its substantive programme of work, would represent the minimal requirement for an inter-agency, inter-disciplinary approach to nutrition.

#### The SCN mandate

In fact, there has been very little variation in the mandate of the SCN over time. The four key elements of the SCN mandate can be summarized as follows:

1. Serving as a point of convergence and harmonization of the policies and activities of the United Nations system in the area of nutrition;

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2. Examining the existing and projected activities of the United Nations system in implementing the resolutions of the World Food Conference related to nutritional improvement, taking into account the relevant decisions of the governing bodies of the agencies concerned;
3. Determining, in cooperation with Governments at all levels, whether the efforts of the system are fully mobilized and integrated in order to achieve maximum impact at the country level, taking into account programmes being undertaken at a bilateral level;
4. Considering whether existing arrangements and resources can respond effectively to the major nutritional problems of the developing world.

The essential point to emphasize in relation to the mandate of SCN is that it has remained stable over time, and the activities of the Secretariat and member agencies have consistently remained within the approved mandate and suggested activity set of SCN. What has changed over time is a shift towards a more activist Secretariat, with the agencies taking relatively less of a direct role in the SCN substantive programme of work. This shift has occurred for operational reasons and is addressed throughout the evaluation report. It cannot be argued, however, that the shift in operational responsibilities for SCN activities from the agencies to the Secretariat has led either the SCN as a whole or the Secretariat to undertake activities outside its mandate.

The most important difficulties with the mandate of SCN concern: (a) the capacity of such a body to effectively determine if United Nations agencies, Governments and bilateral donors engage in integrated activities for nutrition at developing country level, and (b) the lack of a specific advocacy dimension to the mandate. Rather than altering the formal mandate of SCN to eliminate country-level activities or to make formal references to advocacy, the evaluation team recommends that SCN concentrate on developing guidelines and demonstrating best practices for system integration at the country level, and that members acknowledge that the mandate of SCN does place a responsibility for advocacy on SCN and its members. Evaluation team members are aware that SCN has experienced some real difficulties in making its mandate at the country level effective. For that reason, our suggestions in this area are limited, they envisage an SCN that undertakes very selective and focused efforts to assess system integration for nutrition intervention at the developing country level.

In summary, the evaluation team finds that the formal mandate of SCN, as written, remains relevant in the nutritional and organizational situation of the 1990s. The activities of SCN have been consistent with that mandate, but there is some scope for emphasizing advocacy as a legitimate element in the mandate. The team also feels, however, that the formal mandate of SCN is overly ambitious with regard to country-level roles for SCN, and recommends that SCN develop a very selective and focused approach to any effort to meet the country-level component of its formal mandate.

The effectiveness of SCN

Effectiveness in achieving the mandate

An extensive discussion is provided below of the extent to which SCN has succeeded in each of the four key areas of its mandate. In summary, the relative levels of success by SCN in pursuing the four aspects of its mandate are quite closely related to the apparent priority place on those four elements as a result of the activities undertaken by SCN members and the Secretariat. In short, the harmonization and country-level integration aspects of the mandate have received relatively little emphasis, and not surprisingly SCN has been less effective in these areas.

As to SCN effectiveness in meeting the harmonization/coordination element of its mandate, the evaluation team assessed SCN achievement in four areas of harmonization:

(a) Serving as a forum for the discussion of major issues related to nutrition policy and practice;

(b) Assisting United Nations agencies and other agencies active in nutrition at an international level in developing a concrete understanding and reaching agreement regarding specialization and collaboration in nutrition programming. This would involve member agencies of SCN in agreeing on how best to utilize their comparative advantages in nutrition programming to avoid duplication of effort and to collaborate on special initiatives at a global and regional level where such opportunities become evident, such as in follow-up to international conferences;

(c) Assisting United Nations agencies in collaborating in the further development of scientific and technical work related to nutrition as an input to policy development;

(d) Encouraging United Nations agencies to collaborate on specific scientific and programmatic issues raised in SCN, either by work-sharing, with various agencies undertaking specific projects, or collaboration by more than one agency on shared tasks (obviously this is only possible where agencies have sufficient capacity).

While SCN has been effective in the forum function of this four-element model of harmonization/coordination, there is little evidence that suggests that SCN has been a truly effective means for agencies to achieve an appreciable level of harmonization in their programme priorities for nutrition, or in inter-agency collaboration in specific programmes and initiatives.

On the other hand, SCN has emphasized information and data gathering and analysis for the purpose of assessing nutritional needs and using that data as an analytical and advocacy tool relating to the adequacy of resource flows and the response of the United Nations system. In this way, the elements of the mandate related to tracking United Nations system responses to nutritional needs of developing countries on a global and regional level have been dealt with more successfully by SCN and its members.

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Some of the technical work of SCN has also contributed to conversion of policies among SCN members. Nonetheless, it remains clear that SCN has been most effective at providing a forum for information exchange and contributing substantively to ongoing debates on technical problems and solutions, as well as in providing an ongoing analysis of the link between nutrition problems and resource flows. The evaluation team argues in its report that steps can be identified to strengthen the performance of SCN with regard to those elements of its mandate related to harmonization/coordination, and, at least to some extent, to the integration of system activities at the country level.

#### Effectiveness of activities and products of SCN

The evaluation team has reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of SCN activities and products under the following headings:

- (a) Forum activities:
  - (i) SCN regular agenda;
  - (ii) Symposium;
  - (iii) Meetings of the ad hoc groups;
  - (iv) Meetings of the Advisory Group on Nutrition;
  - (v) Meetings of the bilateral representatives;
- (b) Publications:
  - (i) Report on the World Nutrition Situation and updates;
  - (ii) SCN News;
  - (iii) Refugee nutrition information system;
  - (iv) State-of-the-art reports.

Each of the activities and publications of SCN is assessed by the evaluation team as presenting varied strengths and weaknesses. The forum functions vary in their utility when viewed by participants, with the ad hoc groups receiving perhaps the most positive response (with variations across the ad hoc groups themselves). One key problem area that needs to be addressed in the forum functions concerns more meaningful participation by persons from developing countries. This weakness contributes to a perceived failing of SCN forum activities related to programmatic issues of how to effectively develop and administer nutrition programmes when faced with administrative and resource constraints that confront many developing countries (notwithstanding some examples of SCN activities related to programmatic issues at the country level). The forum activities of SCN are also judged by participants as sometimes overly characterized by conflict rather than cooperation.

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SCN publications are judged by the evaluation team as representing an important contribution to advocacy, networking and helping developing country nutritionists to stay informed of emerging issues. SCN publications are perceived as perhaps less directly useful in programming decisions, with some examples provided by bilaterals of use of the refugee nutrition information system in allocation decisions. This does not so much represent a negative finding as a reinforcement of the role of SCN in advocacy at many levels, regionally, globally and within multilateral and bilateral development agencies and international non-governmental organizations.

Both the forum and publication activities of SCN are viewed by the evaluation team as cost-effective in financial terms. This is often cited as one reason for ongoing support of SCN activities by bilateral donors. The current operational style of SCN, with its very strong emphasis on the role of the secretariat in carrying out all aspects of the SCN programme of work, does seem to result in some costs in terms of how agencies identify with the work of SCN, and may diminish its effectiveness as a body for encouraging harmonization and coordination. On the other hand, greater reliance by SCN on its member agencies for carrying out portions of the programme of work will be feasible only to the extent that they have the technical capacity to carry out the work assigned.

#### Administrative arrangements of SCN

The evaluation team has not encountered any compelling evidence to suggest that the current administrative headquarters of SCN represents an important constraint on its effectiveness in meeting its mandate. Some difficulties have occurred over questions relating to the staffing of the Secretary's position, but these might occur in any of the member agencies from time to time, especially at a time when practices concerning such staffing actions are evolving. While the present administrative headquarters does incur some costs in terms of location, the disruption in activities and costs of a move might outweigh any gains made. Hosting the SCN secretariat does not seem to confer any unfair advantage on the agency acting as its administrative headquarters.

#### SCN in the organizational structure of ACC

Perhaps more serious from the point of view of SCN effectiveness are any constraints resulting from its organizational location within the reporting structure of ACC.

The key to the real effect that guidelines and other emerging rules and practices of ACC will produce on the SCN lies not in their specifics but in the way that they will be interpreted by CCPOQ and by ACC and the degree of latitude that SCN may be provided within them. The United Nations Secretariat and CCPOQ have both indicated a strong preference for allowing SCN a fair degree of flexibility within the ACC structure as a means of retaining the relevance of what is largely viewed as the most effective substantive body among the technical subcommittees. All persons interviewed in the United Nations Secretariat and CCPOQ indicated that it was important for the United Nations

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system to find a way to accommodate bodies like the SCN, which both represent inter-agency coordinating mechanisms and carry on a substantive programme of work.

In summary, at least in a formal sense, the flexibility exists within the ACC system to permit the effective functioning of SCN. There also appears to be a willingness to use that flexibility on behalf of SCN. The most important constraint at the moment appears to be in reaching a consensus among SCN members themselves on how much and what type of flexibility is required. If the bodies to which SCN reports are consistently presented with conflicting views from its members on just how the guidelines should be applied, they cannot be faulted for falling back on the exact wording of various guidelines. In the view of the evaluation team, ACC has not yet been presented with a clear and precise definition of the way in which SCN itself chooses to interpret the guidelines so that it can assess the level of relative autonomy required for SCN to work effectively.

#### THE FUTURE OF SCN

##### Possible models for a future SCN

In order to develop a recommendation for the future of SCN, the evaluation team has reviewed and assessed four possible models for this Subcommittee. The first model consists of SCN as it now operates. The second model reviewed may be termed a restricted model and refers to an SCN that concentrates solely on its forum functions and providing a venue for information exchange and dialogue on nutritional issues and nutritional programmes for the member agencies. It would be very much an internal United Nations body and would have no difficulty in conforming to any possible interpretation of ACC guidelines or reporting requirements. The third model reviewed has been proposed as a possible option by a number of persons and agencies. This would consist of a non-United Nations council formed by one or more agencies active in nutrition and open to participation by United Nations and non-United Nations agencies alike. While such a body would be linked to the United Nations through the participation of some United Nations agencies, it would be in no sense a United Nations body. It could, of course, be combined with the restricted model of SCN just mentioned. Indeed, one member agency interviewed was of the view that this would be the most likely outcome of any effort to restrict the current operations of SCN.

The evaluation team felt that all three of the models of SCN just listed presented important deficiencies when compared with a fourth possible model. This model has been termed the reformed SCN model, and would function within the existing mandate of SCN and remain a part of the ACC structure. At the same time, it would more precisely delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat and member agencies (as well as observers), and would provide for greater participation by developing country experts in SCN.

Each of the four models (the current SCN, a restricted SCN, a non-United Nations body and a reformed SCN) were examined by the evaluation team in relation to the following set of dimensions or criteria:

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- (a) Differential emphases on the elements in SCN's four-part mandate;
- (b) The relative roles of the Secretariat and member agencies;
- (c) The breadth of membership and participation;
- (d) Decision-making processes and procedures;
- (e) Budgeting and securing funding;
- (f) Conformity to ACC guidelines and fit within the ACC system.

Each of the first three models (the current model, the restricted model and the non-United Nations body) were analysed as presenting serious deficiencies in meeting critical aspects of the mandate of SCN. The current model was seen as being deficient in meeting the harmonization/coordination aspects of the SCN mandate. It was also seen to lack sufficient developing country participation and to require improvements in its decision-making processes. The restricted model would seriously under-perform in areas of the mandate related to monitoring and assessing the nutritional situation and resource flows, and would fail to attract continued support from bilaterals, as well as a number of the participating agencies. The non-United Nations body was seen to face important constraints as a means of promoting United Nations agency coordination. It was also clear from the evaluation team's consultations and interviews that most of the agencies and virtually all of the bilateral donors had no interest in financially supporting the creation and operations of a non-United Nations council on nutrition and development.

The evaluation team is strongly of the view that the most effective future SCN would consist of a reformed SCN located firmly within the United Nations structure. The team also believes that most of the difficulty associated with the ACC structure has resulted either from problems in the clarity of decision-making and recording processes of SCN itself or from conflicts among SCN member agencies. These would not be resolved if SCN were to operate outside the ACC structure. SCN, if reformed and permitted to function effectively by its own members, will gain from its location within the ACC structure (as a heads-of-agencies committee it is better positioned to follow through on coordination agreements) and will continue to provide the strongest example of a substantive committee working within ACC.

#### A REFORMED MODEL FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE SCN

##### Characteristics of the model

The evaluation team recommends that SCN implement the necessary reforms to establish the proposed reform model that is discussed throughout sections 4.0 and 5.0 of its report. The key areas of reform can be summarized under the following headings:

- A new mandate emphasis on the harmonization/coordination elements of the SCN mandate;

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- More integrated roles for the activities of the Secretariat and member agencies, with the agencies more active in the substantive programme of work;
- Formal membership limited to United Nation agencies (with observers having the right to participate in discussions and be present at Executive Committee meetings with specific codified exceptions) but participation broadened through the establishment of an operational advisory group of developing country specialists;
- Decision-making processes re-examined and reformed to promote greater clarity and transparency in reaching and recording the decisions of SCN;
- Presentation of a unified budget for SCN that allows the core and extrabudgetary funds associated with an activity to be tracked for each element of the programme of work;
- Clarified SCN requirements for and ACC position on the enforcement of ACC guidelines.

The key elements of the reform model of SCN are described in detail in section 4.0 of the report, and are summarized in the table below.

Key characteristics of the reformed SCN

Dimensions of the reformed model	Key characteristics
Emphasis in the mandate	<p>Strengthens emphasis on harmonization and coordination in the United Nations system</p> <p>Increased emphasis on system integration at the country level, but only in case studies, development of approaches, guidelines and methodologies</p>
Roles of Secretariat and members	<p>Secretariat continues to implement elements of programme of work and to seek EVE, but within defined priorities</p> <p>Elements of programme of work that are implemented by the Secretariat also attempt to rely on closer collaboration with staff of concerned member agencies</p> <p>Member agencies are designated, by decision of SCN, to undertake some elements of the programme of work</p>

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Dimensions of the reformed model	Key characteristics
Membership and participation	<p>Formal membership is still limited to United Nations agencies</p> <p>Participation is broadened to include more representation from senior administrators/managers of national nutrition programmes</p> <p>Developing country participation encouraged through the establishment of operational advisory group to work in parallel to AGN, renamed the scientific advisory group</p>
Decision-making processes	<p>Agenda setting and raising of issues broadened through use of the operational advisory group</p> <p>SCN takes decisions, with the advice of the Secretariat on appropriate allocations of tasks in the programme of work</p> <p>Decisions of SCN are clearly recorded during meetings and approved by all members prior to completion of any SCN session</p> <p>Members refrain from challenging decisions of the SCN at higher-level bodies of ACC</p> <p>Decisions of the Executive Committee are made by all full SCN members, with observers in attendance, except for specific designated decisions, such as nomination and approval of a new chair</p>
Budgeting and finance	<p>Unified presentation of core and EBF budgets</p> <p>Specification of core and EBF budget resources allocated to each element of the approved programme of work</p> <p>Development of strategies for moving high-priority recurrent activities from EBF to core funding over time</p> <p>A continuing role for the Secretariat in seeking EBF, but such activities to be accounted for in the budget</p>

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Dimensions of the reformed model	Key characteristics
Relation to the ACC structure	<p>Requires flexibility of ACC in applying guidelines</p> <p>ACC concurrence on longer term for Technical Secretary and right to hire from outside member agencies to be secured by SCN</p> <p>Requires solidarity among SCN members regarding approval of budgets and programmes of work by higher bodies in the ACC structure</p>

#### Decisions required to implement the reformed model

A number of the key decisions leading to the implementation of the reformed model are consistent with the direction taken by SCN at its twenty-second session. The key decisions required can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Secure ACC approval for the recruiting of a Technical Secretary from outside the member agencies, based on a search for the most qualified available candidate, to serve a term of five years, extendable to seven;
- (b) Take the necessary steps to establish an operational advisory group;
- (c) Direct the Secretariat to prepare a unified, comprehensive budget linking both core and extrabudgetary expenditures to the elements of the programme of work;
- (d) Set out the terms of reference for the scientific and operational advisory groups, and have these approved by ACC;
- (e) Develop explicit rules, procedures and criteria for the nomination and approval of nominees for membership of the operational advisory group and the scientific advisory group;
- (f) Prepare clear guidelines, objectives and time-frames for the ad hoc groups;
- (g) Alter procedures for SCN meetings to make clear SCN members' responsibility for deciding on the allocation of specific tasks in the programme of work;
- (h) Request member agencies to present to the SCN plans for closer collaboration between the Secretariat and specific member agencies on the preparation of publications, reports etc.;
- (i) Clarify the responsibility of the Secretariat for the final preparation of documents and publications, and the right of agencies to be consulted but not to veto SCN publications;

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(j) Establish a format for a concise record of decisions to be produced at the close of each session of SCN.

Most of these decisions can be taken by SCN acting within its own area of competence, although members may wish to consult with representatives of the United Nations Secretariat on each decision. The only area where a direct release from current ACC practice will need to be sought is in the recruiting and terms of employment of the Technical Secretary.

#### Strengths of the reformed SCN model

The key strengths of such a reformed SCN can be expected to be as follows:

(a) It maintains SCN within both the United Nations and the ACC structure, and will thereby be able to at least attempt to harmonize policies and programmes system-wide. This provides SCN with a chance to be successful in implementing the most important element of its mandate (harmonization and coordination), while at the same time, strengthening the system of technical subcommittees to ACC, an important coordinating mechanism for United Nations agencies;

(b) It seeks to integrate and involve member agencies more fully in the substantive programme of work of SCN. While this may have costs in terms of flexibility and speed, these can be managed if the Secretariat and the agencies work together, and if SCN monitors the performance of those agencies that have been delegated meaningful portions of the programme of work;

(c) It broadens the participation in SCN to the most critical group, which is underrepresented at present, namely, developing country administrators and managers of national nutrition programmes, while at the same time preserving the principle that full membership remains with United Nations agencies only;

(d) It will utilize clearer processes of designing and allocating a programme of work, setting priorities and establishing budgets. These clearer processes should reduce the conflict concerning the activities of the Secretariat, and should also reduce the frequency of SCN issues arising for conflict resolution at the CCPOQ and ACC level.

It should also be noted, however, that none of the proposed changes in SCN will, in and of themselves, impose a level of convergence on member agencies concerning any roles and policies that they are not ready to accept. If the agencies involved truly believe that their interests and the interests of the nations they serve are not compatible with those of other member agencies working in nutrition, no amount of organizational reform nor any creation of new organizations will overcome their differences. It is essential that member agencies take the opportunity to reform some of the operational characteristics of SCN as the foundation for a more open and collaborative relationship among United Nations agencies in nutrition.

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Appendix II

LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS  
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS DATED  
16 FEBRUARY 1996

It is with great pleasure that I forward to you the report of the evaluation of the United Nations ACC/Subcommittee on Nutrition on behalf of the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The initiative for this evaluation came from the Governments of Canada, Norway, Sweden, the United States and the Netherlands. A steering committee composed of representatives of those countries<sup>a</sup> wrote the terms of reference for the evaluation, selected the evaluation team and provided the funding. The evaluation team itself, however, is responsible for the content of the report.

The Steering Committee is pleased with the outcome of the work undertaken by the evaluation team, and agrees with most of its recommendations. We especially agree with the team's conclusion that the functioning of SCN can be strengthened while maintaining its current position as a subsidiary body within ACC.

We look forward to discussing, with both SCN members and participants in the executive sessions, their views on the recommendations and follow-up that may be agreed to. The steering committee is prepared to mobilize modest financial support for that exercise.

On 13 and 14 December 1995, a meeting was convened at The Hague, in which the members and ad hoc members of the steering committee<sup>a</sup> participated. The participants felt that SCN is evolving in a positive and appropriate way and is ready to move towards improved coordination and collaboration within the United Nations system. The participants were especially pleased with the new spirit of openness and transparency embodied, for example, in the recent decision to accept bilateral representation at the executive sessions of SCN.

As to specific recommendations, a number of observations are set out below.

- I. Donor countries have in recent years provided substantial support to various SCN activities. In so doing, they aimed to achieve high-quality products that would illustrate the benefits of harmonization and cooperation within the United Nations system in the field of nutrition. We endorse the recommendation that SCN member agencies gradually assume responsibility for core activities and key programmes, such as the refugee nutrition information system, which must continue in the future. We would like to see the relevant United Nations agencies, each within the limits of their own mandates, share their work in the field of nutrition under the coordination of SCN. SCN would then be able to give more attention and resources to new and emerging issues.

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- II. In that context, rather than utilizing external expertise, the SCN secretariat should seek ways to assist member agencies in sustainable institutional capacity-building. We therefore propose that when recruiting new staff for the SCN secretariat, special attention be given to candidates who are both skilled in and have expressed interest in building institutional capacity and the facilitation of institutional collaboration.
- III. We agree with the evaluation team's recommendation that some way needs to be found to increase developing country participation in SCN. Furthermore, advisers should be recruited not only with expertise in science but also with experience in implementation and expertise in programme planning and management. It is desirable that such advisers be skilled in institutional management, especially in relation to the United Nations system. We do feel, however, that it is essential to integrate scientific and management advisory functions.
- IV. This improvement in its advisory capacity would provide the basis for a more effective SCN response to fulfil its mandate to mobilize and integrate nutrition activities at the country level. We agree with the evaluation team that this is an ambitious objective, which will mean adopting a strategic approach to build experience and capacity for coordination among the member agencies, with at first a selective and focused effort. Nevertheless, it must remain a key goal for any United Nations coordination effort to arrive eventually at successful approaches at the country level.

We see the enclosed report as a useful background document for discussion at the twenty-third session of SCN, to be held in Accra, where the future role of the Subcommittee on Nutrition will be discussed.

(Signed) Dr. N. H. BIEGMAN  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> Members: A. Volkoff and S. Rabeneck (Canada), J. Berteling and E. Leemhuis-de Regt (Netherlands), I. Nordang and A. Oshaug (Norway), E. Wallstam and T. Greiner (Sweden), D. Oot and F. R. Davidson (United States of America); ad hoc members: D. Nabarro and P. R. Payne (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

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Appendix III

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS DATED 4 JUNE 1996

I thank you for your letter of 16 February 1996 transmitting the report on an evaluation of the United Nations ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition which was prepared by consultants on behalf of the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I would first like to congratulate the evaluation team for the comprehensive work undertaken in responding to the terms of reference given to them. I consider the evaluation to have been a good initiative on the part of the bilateral agencies participating in the work of the Subcommission on Nutrition (SCN). I am aware of the assistance provided by a number of bilaterals in support of the work of SCN, and hope that that assistance will continue at even higher levels. I understand that the evaluation report was well received by SCN at its twenty-third session, and the implementation of its recommendations will augur well for the future of SCN.

SCN has made a very positive contribution in the field of nutrition, and should continue to function as an integral part of the Administrative Committee on Coordination subsidiary machinery. In this connection, I note the suggestions of the evaluation team to improve the harmonization of the work of the United Nations organizations involved in the area of nutrition. Those suggestions may enhance inter-agency collaboration on specific programmes and initiatives in this area, thereby increasing the effectiveness of SCN, particularly at the country level.

I welcome the finding of the evaluation team that special efforts should be made to introduce developing country participation in the work of SCN. I believe that that finding should be explored further given the critical role of nutrition in the development of human resources, a key priority on the development agenda. In addition, SCN has played a leading role in monitoring the world nutrition situation, and that effort can best be continued and improved upon with more involved participation of bilateral agencies, including a broader representation from developing countries, where the problems of nutrition are possibly more acute. At the same time, it would also be important to devise a plan for national capacity-building for advocacy and programme development in order to bolster self-reliance in the long run.

I understand from your letter that SCN has decided to accept bilateral representation at the executive sessions of SCN. The extension of that arrangement makes the need to have developing country participation in SCN even more important. I am sure that you will agree, however, that there will continue to be occasions when member agencies/organizations of the United Nations system will need to have some executive sessions among themselves.

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I am confident that a reinvigorated SCN under the chairmanship of Dr. Jolly will enhance the United Nations system's capacity to continue to make significant contributions to improving the state of nutrition worldwide.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI  
Secretary-General

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