

Outcome of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Introduction

Item 6.1 was one of the topics considered by the 136th session of the Executive Board (EB) under the category 6 dedicated to Non Communicable Diseases.

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) is an intergovernmental conference jointly organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in Rome in November 2014.

In January 2014 the Executive Board (EB) requested the Director General to report to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly on the outcome of the ICN2 through the Executive Board at its 136th session. The document [EB136/8](#) describes the outcomes of the Conference and WHO's role in its follow-up. Under this item the EB considered also a draft decision contained in document [EB136/CONF./8 Rev.1](#).

Report of the discussion at EB136

All Member States who took the floor welcomed the outcomes of the ICN2.

The Russian Federation as well as Egypt and Saudi Arabia stressed the importance for nutrition to have a proper place in the post-2015 agenda.

South Africa recalled the importance of addressing the social, economic, political and cultural factors related to nutrition. This is one of the comments raised also by PHM in the pre-EB analysis of this item available [here](#).

Argentina as well as Ecuador pointed out the need to build national capacities and they were backed by China who asked WHO to support countries to design national plans.

Maldives raised the thorny issue of processed food with high level of fat and sugar. Furthermore Maldives together with Japan, Nepal, Iran and Zambia asked for multisectoral actions that go beyond the health sector and Brazil requested WHO to join the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

Saudi Arabia asked for a high level of policy coherence between economy and healthy diet and stressed the need for monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Uruguay, Indonesia and Thailand requested to pay attention to the issue of conflict of interest that can arise with profit driven industries like the food companies.

One of the more controversial passages of the EB discussion was a proposal made by Italy for a review of the procedures for the development of WHO's technical guidelines in particular with regard to the implementation of the Framework for Action. Italy had already made a similar proposal during the first day of the EB asking for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item called "WHO guidelines development and governance" ([EB136/1 Add.1](#)). This proposal was rejected, but Italy raised again this issue during the discussion on the outcomes of the ICN2.

The US delegate replied to Italy saying that such a proposal could diminish the rigour of the WHO guidelines and undermine the scientific process of guideline development because of particular national interests. However, at the same time, US said that even if they do not want to open up the guideline setting process, they would like to pay further attention at the sugar guidelines and at the

scientific data they are based on.

Also Zambia replied to the Italian proposal saying that they align with US and do not support the involvement of Member States in guidelines development because this should remain a technical process.

After the non EB Members, several NGOs took the floor. The NGO statements are available [here](#). PHM and MMI delivered a statement ([here](#)) stressing in particular the need for new international instruments to regulate Transnational Corporations in areas where their profit objectives run counter to public policy objectives, particularly in food sovereignty and environmental sustainability. PHM stressed the need to clearly articulate the barriers to food security and food sovereignty in current trade and investment agreements and urged opposition to the use of Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions to prevent regulatory strategies. PHM raised also the issue of conflict of interests and asked for caution in relation to “multi-stakeholder platforms” in the nutrition field. Finally, PHM aligned with Brazil urging WHO to join the CFS secretariat.

After the NGO statements, the Director General Dr Margareth Chan took the floor and addressed some of the issues raised by Member States. Concerning the Italian proposal on WHO guidelines, she replied that the technical process of guidelines development cannot be politically influenced. She said she is ready to look again at this process but it is a robust one and she will protect it with jealousy. Concerning the US request related to the sugar guidelines, she said that she will look at those guidelines again but the Secretariat cannot omit evidence that are coming forward. She also recalled the difference between strong and conditional recommendations.

After the DG speech the EB noted the report and adopted the draft decision as amended by Belgium that asked to include in para 3(b) an amendment to stress the voluntary nature of the recommendations contained in the Framework for Action.