

Second International Conference on Nutrition

19-21 November 2014



NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

WHAT

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture is a food-based approach to agricultural development that puts nutritionally rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the heart of overcoming malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. This approach stresses the multiple benefits derived from enjoying a variety of foods, recognizing the nutritional value of food for



©FAO/Giuseppe Bizzarri

good nutrition, and the importance and social significance of the food and agricultural sector for supporting rural livelihoods. The overall objective of nutrition-sensitive agriculture is to make the global food system better equipped to produce good nutritional outcomes.

KEY PARTNERS

In order to properly address the problem of malnutrition, interventions are needed throughout the entire food system, from production to processing, transport, consumption and waste management. Improvements will also be needed in complementary sectors such as health, education, water and sanitation to eliminate the spread of infectious diseases and to share knowledge on successful nutrition practices. Governments, too, must integrate nutrition-sensitive strategies into their agricultural development policies to ensure nutrition-sensitive programs are funded and implemented. Cross-sectoral coordination is essential for sustainable, comprehensive advancements in eliminating malnutrition. **The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)** will promote coordination by bringing together major stakeholders from across sectors to develop policies to improve global nutrition outcomes.

HOW

Nutrition-sensitive agricultural production can be implemented in three main areas:

1. **Making food more available and accessible.** Increasing agricultural production makes more food available and affordable, which improves both the health and the economic status of the community. Sustained income growth in turn has a sizeable effect on reducing malnutrition.
2. **Making food more diverse and production more sustainable.** Increasing diversity in food production and promoting sustainable production practices like conservation agriculture, water management and integrated pest management can improve nutrition

levels without depleting natural resources. Family farming, home gardens and homestead food production projects can make a wider variety of crops available at the local level.

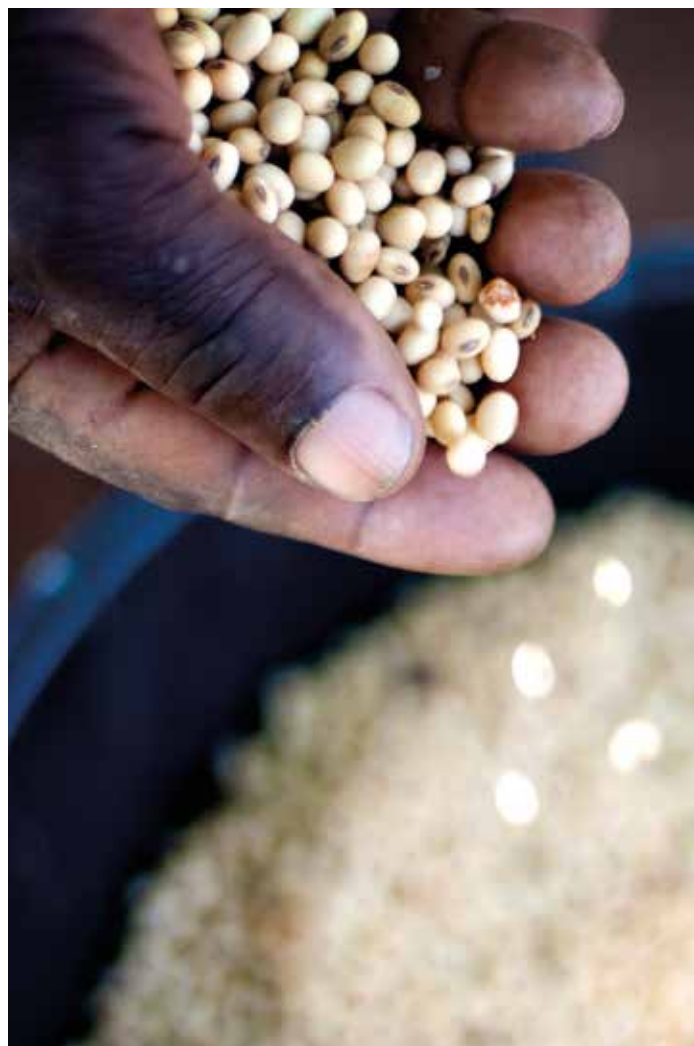
3. **Making food itself more nutritious.** Fortification can prevent micronutrient deficiencies by enhancing micronutrient content in foods through processing, plant breeding and improved soil fertility.

In addition to changes in the agriculture sector, governments can promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture by incorporating nutrition-sensitive concepts into relevant farm policies and programs.

FAO STRATEGY AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The **FAO's strategy for combating malnutrition** advocates for a holistic approach, incorporating explicit nutrition objectives into agriculture, health, education, economic and social protection policies in developing countries. FAO's role in achieving this vision is to support Member Nations in their efforts to increase the effectiveness of food systems in improving nutrition for their populations. Expected outcomes include:

- Increased knowledge and evidence to maximize the impact of food and agricultural systems, achieved mainly through creating and promoting relevant databases and critical reports, as well as identifying and addressing knowledge gaps.
- Improved food and agricultural systems governance for nutrition, by working with countries to shape more inclusive, evidence-based systems of governance.
- Strengthened national, regional and local capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status.



©FAO/Christena Dowsett

BENEFITS

Healthy, well-nourished people are both the outcome of successful social and economic development as well as an essential input into the development process. Agriculture is the main source of food, employment and income for 70 to 80 percent of people suffering from hunger in developing countries. As such, food security is unlikely to be achieved without considerable attention to the food and agriculture sector. However, progress in promoting and implementing nutrition-sensitive strategies for improved micronutrient status

has been slow. Until recently, the focus has been primarily on micronutrient supplementation, which is essential for high risk populations and emergencies, but cannot provide the long-term nutrition, social and economic benefits that agriculture can. Started early, a nutrition-sensitive approach can contribute to physiological, mental and social development, enhance learning potential, reduce nutritional disorders and contribute to the prevention of diet-related diseases later in life.

