



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

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## International Federation for Home Economics

### IFHE Position Statement

#### International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) “better nutrition better lives” 19-21 November 2014, Rome Italy FAO - WHO

#### Intension

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, to the theme “**better nutrition better lives**”, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in close collaboration with many other related organisations. Two documents are expected to come out of the ICN2 - a political outcome document and a framework of action for its implementation.

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

IFHE Members are Home Economists and other related disciplines. The IFHE Members have an excellent educational background. As experts in distinguished professional fields of nutrition, food, and health they are active in IFHE Programme Committees initiating concepts for grass-root projects and programmes focussed on elements of healthy food systems. The members of IFHE are drawn from academia, community based occupations and corporate consumer services as well as hospitality and service-based organisations.

IFHE collaborates with allied groups and organisations in serving the needs of individuals and families and in meeting its core objectives.

The following **Position Statement** is intending to serve as the IFHE contribution to the discussions at the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), and especially as a reference to the goals of the “**Zero Hunger Challenge**” to be reached 2050.

## 1. Key Aspects and Aims

### Key Aspects

The FAO and WHO indicate the following reasons to conduct the ICN2:

- More than half of the world's population is adversely affected by malnutrition; ICN2 will keep nutrition high on the international and national development agendas.
- ICN2 will be the first global intergovernmental conference to address the world's nutrition problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ICN2 goal is to improve nutrition through national policies and effective international cooperation.
- Global economy, food systems and the nutritional status of populations have changed markedly since the first ICN in 1992. A new policy framework and more appropriate responses are needed.
- Global problems require global solutions, only an intergovernmental conference can legitimately identify the commitments of stakeholders to act decisively to address malnutrition.

([http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/WHO\\_FAO\\_announce\\_ICN2/en/index1.html](http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/WHO_FAO_announce_ICN2/en/index1.html))

### Aims of the ICN2

ICN2 will build upon ongoing global political processes and initiatives to contribute to the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, including identifying priority areas and nutrition development goals, as well as the policies that will be required to achieve, measure and account for them. The outcomes of ICN2 will contribute to the UN Secretary General's call for a high degree of policy coherence at global, regional, national and sub-national levels and a global partnership for development at all levels. ICN2 will also bolster the Secretary General's call to leaders gathered at the Rio+20 Summit to take up the "**Zero Hunger Challenge**".



(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

### **Hunger can be eliminated in our lifetimes**

This requires comprehensive efforts to ensure that every man, woman and child enjoy their “**Right to Adequate Food**”; women are empowered; priority is given to family farming; and food systems everywhere are sustainable and resilient.

(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

As an outcome of the ICN2 the Rome Declaration on Nutrition will focus on the following aspects:

- Multiple threats of malnutrition are a major challenge to sustainable development.
- A vision for global action to end all forms of malnutrition.
- Commitment to action.

Based on **paragraph 13**: of the draft of the Rome Declaration:

“Commitment d) encourage and facilitate contributions by all stakeholders in society and promote collaboration within and across countries, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation”; IFHE will strengthen its contribution to the “**Zero Hunger Challenge**”.

([http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/ICN2\\_revised\\_draft](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/ICN2_revised_draft))

## **2. Home Economics Relation to the ICN2**

IFHE takes its responsibility as an international non-governmental organisation and supports the aims and outcomes of the ICN2 most of all the “**Zero Hunger Challenge**”.

IFHE is concerned with the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families and communities: As professionals IFHE Members are advocates for individuals, families and communities.

Key-subjects of Home Economics in all its dimensions are quantitative and qualitative food security including sustainable consumption to improve sustainable development and avoid food waste.

The dimensions of Home Economics are the:

- **Academic field**, in which new scholars are educated, to conduct research and to create new knowledge and ways of thinking for professionals and for society. Findings and research results are generated by Home Economists for example in the subjects nutrition science, consumer behaviour, food literacy, household technology, they focus on challenges such as appropriate related diets, malnutrition, obesity, food allergy and intolerance, risks of diseases, food insecurity, food waste, clean cooking etc..

- **Field for counselling** for families and communities, which are coping everyday with life challenges for the well-being of their members. Families as the smallest social units develop human growth potential, secure human necessities and meet the basic needs of its members. Home Economics deals with the aims and tasks of individuals, families and communities to realise food security and healthy food, safe drinking water, sustainable food production and processing, as well as storage, sustainable cooking for example with clean cookstoves and avoidance of food waste.
- **Educational field** that facilitates students and people to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life. Home Economics competencies/Home Economics literacy most of all food literacy and ecological literacy enables individuals, families and communities to improve food security, healthy eating and sustainable resource management to support the “**Zero Hunger Challenges**”.
- **As an advocacy field** to influence and develop policy to advocate for individuals, families and communities to achieve empowerment and wellbeing, to utilise transformative practices, and to facilitate sustainable futures. The International Federation for Home Economics with its members around the world supports the “**Zero Hunger Challenge**” and contribute to discussions, demands governments, stakeholders to strengthen their commitment and to act resolutely to reach the aim of zero hunger latest in 2050.

For IFHE Home Economics Position Statement 2008 “Home Economics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” please see under <http://www.ifhe.org/175.html> .

## 2.1 Focus on education in Home Economics

Home Economics education can improve knowledge of best possible practices, techniques and acting as a member in consumer society in the changing world. Home Economics education and best practice includes for example resource management of households, gender equality, sanitation and water use, income generation skills, sustainable household production as well as food production, nutrition skills and health.

By turning the knowledge into everyday life skills, individuals, families and communities in both, developed and developing countries, can make the best use of the scarce resources available and also add value to them in a sustainable manner. As shown through these few examples, Home Economics skills can effectively contribute to the reduction of poverty and hunger.

The Home Economics profession and Home Economics education are able to recognise the occurring problems and hear the voices from the grass-roots level, as households are the arena of everyday living. As a reaction to the constantly changing world, new ideas, practices and research results in Home Economics can be developed, distributed globally and taken advantage where needed.

The Household, as the special interest and context and concern of the Home Economics profession, is the place to put the newly developed knowledge into action in an effective way.

With their expertise of everyday life of individuals, families and communities, Home Economists can bring the perceptions about the requirements to reduce poverty and hunger further and act at the governance and policy making level. IFHE promotes Home Economics education since 1908.

### **3. The Role of IFHE in the “Zero Hunger Challenge”**

With its focus on the socio-economic and ecological challenges IFHE and its members greatly contribute to sustainable development. IFHE strives to implement sustainability in the context of regional culture and traditions, which is essential to manage everyday life of individuals and families. They support families in the way of managing household processes, make crucial decisions in everyday life and advise in resource management to satisfy their needs which are necessary for sustainable development and food security. IFHE members as Home Economists contribute significantly to the sustainability by the targeted use of sustainable technologies, like water and energy management, through education impacts, knowledge and skills in nutrition, health, gardening, and small holders farming. In a changing world new skills are needed to survive and to fulfil one’s basic needs. Disasters, military conflicts, migration, urbanisation, economic collapse for example, changes the patterns of food consumption, as abilities to produce one’s own food are narrow. This means that IFHE has to focus on political conditions and socio-economic regions.

IFHE focuses on the fundamental needs and practical concerns of managing everyday life resources. An actual publication of the IFHE **“Family Socioeconomic and Cultural Issues: A Continuing Home Economics Concern”** (<http://www.ifhe.org/epaper-family-2014/>) demonstrates different scientific approaches and valuable research results. IFHE is also concerned with the issues impacting individuals’ and families’ well-being at the societal and global levels in an ever changing and ever challenging environment. The ultimate goal of the Federation is the improvement of the quality of everyday life for individuals, families and households.

The contributions from Home Economists to reduce hunger and to get access to secure food to improve healthy nutrition are multifaceted.



## 4. Special Aspects of Home Economics and IFHE to the “Zero Hunger Challenge”

### 4.1 Zero stunted Children less than 2 Years

“162 million children under the age of five were estimated to be stunted or chronically malnourished (low height-for-age) in 2012, and 51 million children under five were estimated to be wasted or acutely malnourished (low weight-for-height). Maternal and childhood nutrition is a key priority for ICN2. Participants are advocating for nutrition interventions that start from the early stages of life, before and during pregnancy for mothers, and for the first 1000 days of children’s lives, to promote and support adequate breast feeding and appropriate complementary feeding, as well as healthy eating in the home and at school during childhood.”

(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

Home Economics experts in extension services, in family related projects, as teachers in schools and adult learning education, in Home Economics associations or action in community based programmes at regional and national levels promote healthy nutrition during pregnancy for mothers and adequate breast feeding. For example Home Economists conduct trainings in gardening to enable women/families to cultivate unused land or community land and plant vegetables and fruits not only in rural areas but also in urban areas. Women are also trained to make healthy food and canning or drying of vegetables or fruits.

(<http://he.ifhe.org/915.html>)

### 4.2 100% Access to adequate food all Year round

“Year-around access to sufficient, affordable and culturally acceptable food, adequate both in quantity and quality, is a key determinant of good nutrition. In an effort to improve access to adequate food, FAO is raising awareness and gathering support for nutrition sensitive agriculture and food systems. This approach puts nutritionally-rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the heart of overcoming malnutrition, while simultaneously supporting rural livelihoods.”

(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

Home Economists all over the world do excellent research and project activities around the theme “**Food Security and Malnutrition**”. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. IFHE supports the work through its Programme Committee Food Security & Nutrition & Nutritional Health, through its representatives at FAO and through its contribution to the “**Global Food Security and Nutrition Dialogue**”. The fight against malnutrition and hunger has been on the IFHE Agenda for a long time. With its members and member organisations IFHE support projects and efforts to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty in every region of the world. Project examples can be found under <http://he.ifhe.org/915.html> and <http://he.ifhe.org/711.html> .

### 4.3 All Food Systems are sustainable

“Good nutrition requires sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems. ICN2 is predicated on the agreement that food systems should be sustainable, and all components for food production, processing and distribution (including land, soil, seeds, fertilisers, water, energy, harvesting, storage and transport) should be managed in a sustainable way, with due attention to environmental and climatic impacts.”  
(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

Most important to IFHE is the movement to combine national efforts to improve food production, increase food access to all citizens and increase the affordability of quality foods to all people in a sustainable way.

Home Economists who work in developing countries **provide education** for people about the growing and harvesting of healthy products in a sustainable way. Project examples can be found under <http://he.ifhe.org/915.html>. This is especially evident with the production of food in domestic gardens and in small agricultural properties – an important part of the food supply chain in developing countries. Utilising food preservation technologies is a fundamental Home Economics skill.

**A set of posters** detailing the Best Practices for the sustainable use of household technology and resources were developed by IFHE Experts and are distributed around the world, please have a look under <http://he.ifhe.org/857.html>.

The posters and accompanying materials, including FAQs sheets, are designed to be used worldwide as teaching materials to help reduce energy and water consumption in households while also improving the hygiene and comfort of families. Growing population and the changing lifestyles of recent decades have made the consumption of resources and environmental pollution skyrocket worldwide. A large proportion of this resource consumption and pollution can be traced back to households and, with increasing technology and mechanisation; it is likely that this trend in the future will only intensify. This means that the responsible use of energy, water and other resources such as food is more important today than ever before. For this reason, the international team of experts developed scientifically based recommendations in key areas of work in the household such as food preparation, preservation and storage for own household use as well as for producing food and products for local markets to generate income.

Home Economics educates especially women in developing countries to produce and process food for selling. For food production, as well as for food processing technical equipment and devices are necessary. As a co-operative agent, women are able to finance the required facilities, use them together and transport products to the markets.

In addition Home Economists educate and support families in managing the resources and finances of their households.

Financial management of a household does not only mean to manage the spending of money but also the income generation. Home Economists empower women and men to run their own business by selling their products.

As a global network of Home Economist the IFHE and its members support projects and efforts to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty in every region of the world. It supports the exchange of experiences and promotes the role of Home Economics in reaching the UN MDGs. An overview about UN MDGs related projects, including projects in the area of agricultural cooperatives, is available at [www.ifhe.org](http://www.ifhe.org).

IFHE promotes the aims and advocates the ideas and implications of **“Sustainable Food Systems”** focussed on Food Security including high quality nutrient-rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification. With the sequel to the E-book, **“Global Sustainable Development: A Challenge for Consumer Citizens”**, the Consumers and Sustainable Development Committee of the IFHE continues a successful approach to presenting current projects and research reports on related Home Economics issues. This approach includes compiling information, ideas, theories, practices, perspectives and recommendations from Home Economics experts in order to improve sustainable consumption and education for consumer citizens all over the world.  
(<http://www.ifhe.org/140.html#c5911>)

#### 4.4 100% Increase in Smallholder Productivity and Income

“Supporting smallholder farming has the dual benefit of reducing rural poverty and increasing the availability of healthy, culturally appropriate food. FAO is raising the profile of family and smallholder farming through initiatives such as the International Year of Family Farming. One of the goals of ICN2 is to reshape food systems in a way that will ultimately strengthen local farmers and ensure the health of the population at large.”

(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

A major aspect of IFHE and Home Economists is the gender approach. Women and men dominate in different parts in food systems and in the household, which although vary, dependence by region and culture. Especially the role of women as a key person in nutrition, from agricultural production, food provision, and care to implementing innovative technologies and realising sustainable lifestyles should be empowered by focus on gender-sensitive interventions to improve nutritional outcomes around the world.

(<http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf> and [http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice\\_and\\_agency\\_LOWRES.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice_and_agency_LOWRES.pdf)).



As part of the global UN MDGs in reducing hunger and poverty, traditional and indigenous food and farming patterns and the access to land for women need to be reconsidered, especially in developing countries. The cultural traditions in this countries does not provide a special education for girls or women, moreover the tradition often exclude them from the basic education, that is the reason why Home Economics focused to educate especially women and to strengthen their role in the societies. Women receive education in efficient farming technologies and in strategies to improve the nutritional and health status of their families. A wide knowledge and skills in sustainable home gardening and food processing technologies also contribute to sustainable production patterns. Examples see <http://he.ifhe.org/711.html> .

#### **4.5 Zero Loss or Waste of Food**

“FAO and ICN2 stakeholders also recognize that efforts should be made to reduce post-harvest losses and food waste throughout the food chain, including consumption, as these can negatively impact sustainability and nutrition security.”

(<http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>)

To create and strengthen “**Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition**” the IFHE is with regard to the FAO recommendations “**Food System Interventions for better Nutrition**” (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3300e/i3300e.pdf>) committed to the following aims: a sustainable intensification of production as well as of nutrition-promoting farming system, nutrient-preserving processing, packaging, transport and storage, reduced waste and increased technical and economic efficiency, food safety, sustainable lifestyle in families by strengthening efficient resource management strategies and consumption patterns in households; nutrition education and information focussed on sensitising individuals; households and families acting in a sustainable way reflecting the ecological; social and economic dimensions.

#### **Final Remarks**

“No matter how it is defined, nutrition starts with what we eat, the products of the food and agriculture sector. By working on our food systems, on the way we produce, collect, store, transport, transform and distribute foods, we can improve our diets, our health and our impact on natural resources. In lack or in excess, problems of nutrition always encompass inappropriate choices and practices. Nutrition education is an important step in empowering the consumer to make healthy food choices.”

(<http://www.fao.org/nutrition/en/>)

**“We are all part of the solution: how can we help?  
IFHE and Home Economists take action!**