



Draft Terms of Reference for the 16th ECOWAS Nutrition Forum

Monrovia, Liberia, 18-20 November 2019

Introduction

The ECOWAS Nutrition Forum is a regional platform that brings together the major stakeholders in nutrition to review nutrition policies and practices, progress in the reduction of malnutrition and diet-related diseases and innovative practices in the region. It started in 1996 as the West Africa Nutrition Focal Points network involving nine francophone West African countries belonging to the then *Organisation de Coordination et de Coopération pour la Lutte contre les Grandes Endémies* (OCCGE). In 1999, the network was extended to cover all 15 ECOWAS Member States. The West African Health Organisation (WAHO) took over the organization of the Forum in 2001, after its establishment in 2000. The initial annual periodicity changed to biennial in 2004.

Fifteen forums have so far been organized in 13 countries. Only Liberia and Nigeria have yet to host the Nutrition Forum. During the last Forum held in Bissau, Guinea Bissau on 24-27 October 2017, Liberia's offer to host the next forum in 2019 was accepted. Hence, in keeping with convention, the mid-term review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Bissau Forum was held in Monrovia, Liberia on 29-30 November 2018 with the participation of Dr Wilhemina Jallah, the Hon. Minister of Health of Liberia.

The last Forum was remarkable in the wide participation of all Member States, participation of four Parliamentarians and some NGOs. It was quite interactive with several panel discussions and lectures by experts. Most countries exhibited nutrition and food-related materials at the exhibition. The Monrovia 2019 will aim to sustain these positive observations from the previous forum.

The Bissau 2017 Forum was held under the theme "Nutrition surveillance: towards improved planning and evidence-based decision making on food and nutrition security in West Africa". The proposed theme for the Monrovia 2019 Forum is "**Adolescent nutrition: institutionalizing sustainable actions for improved outcomes in West Africa**".

Preparation for the 16th ECOWAS Nutrition Forum

The 16th ECOWAS Nutrition Forum will take place over three days, on 18-20 November 2019, as confirmed by Liberia.

About 120 participants including country nutrition Focal Points, SUN Movement Focal Points, Development Partners, regional bodies, International NGOs, civil society, academics, local delegates as well as support staff and interpreters are expected to participate.

As in previous forums, three Planning Committees will be constituted to prepare the Forum. The host country has already constituted a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) with various sub-committees. There is also the International Planning Committee (IPC) comprising the following members:

1. WAHO
2. Liberia LOC
 - Heads of Sub-Committees
 - Nutrition Focal Point
 - WAHO Focal Point
3. Regional UN Agencies
 - UNICEF
 - WHO
 - FAO
 - WFP
4. Regional Institutions
 - CILSS
 - UEMOA
5. International NGOs and research
 - Nutrition International
 - HKI
 - IFPRI
 - Save the Children
 - Alive and Thrive
6. Facilitator / Consultant for the Forum

WAHO will present the initial thoughts including the potential agenda items, venue, dates and costs to the Regional Nutrition Working Group (RNWG) in Dakar in June. Most of the IPC Partners based in Dakar are members of the RNWG.

Then, WAHO will hold a preliminary meeting with the LOC in Liberia in June, soon after the meeting with the RNWG in order to orient them on Nutrition Forum in general while seeking a consensus on WAHO, Partner's and host country's expectations of the Forum.

ToRs finalization	April 2019
Draft agenda, potential dates to be presented to RNWG in Dakar	June 2019
Preliminary meeting WAHO-LOC in Monrovia	June 2019
International Planning Committee meeting in Monrovia	September 2019
International Planning Committee meeting in Monrovia	October 2019
Forum in Monrovia	November 2019

It is expected that the IPC will hold two meetings with the LOC in Monrovia – one in September and another just before the Forum. The actual dates will depend on how much progress has been made towards the hosting of the Forum.

Forum Objectives

The overall expected outcome of the Forum is to accelerate the Adolescent Nutrition agenda in West Africa, which remains a marginalized population in most of public health programmes.

The specific objectives of the 2019 Nutrition Forum are as follows:

- To update participants on the regional nutrition situation and current initiatives for adolescents
- To review the current state of adolescent diet-related diseases, risk factors, consequences, co-morbidities and current response in the region
- To evaluate the current (nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive) policies, programmes, interventions and best practices to improve and sustain adolescent nutrition in the region
- To explore mechanisms for strengthening health systems and financing for adolescent nutrition
- To analyze existing surveillance systems and the needed information on adolescent nutrition in the region

Draft Agenda

A draft agenda for the Forum is shown in the Annex. In keeping with the general format of previous forums, there will be an Opening and Closing Ceremonies; Media briefing / Ad hoc interviews; Exhibition of posters and other communication materials on nutrition and products; delegates' group meetings, social events (cultural events, dinner gala) and a technical session. There will also be an evaluation of the organization and conduct of the Forum by participants.

There will be presentations by regional institutions, countries and Partners followed by discussion. There will be panel discussions, group work and plenary. All ECOWAS Member States will have the opportunity to deliver a presentation or participate in a panel discussion on a sub-theme relating to adolescent nutrition.

The Monrovia 2019 Forum will be different in present an opportunity for the following:

- Presentation of the results on adolescent nutrition and health in West and Central Africa from a study commissioned by UNICEF
- Presentation of the preliminary results by countries from the Countdown to 2030 nutrition data analysis workshops.
- Presentation of protocol on innovative nationwide micronutrient survey in Burkina Faso by CDC Atlanta.
- Preliminary results from the external evaluation of the ECOWAS nutrition forums since 1996, if available

Forum Consultant / Facilitator

A Facilitator will be engaged by UNICEF under the RISING project funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), in collaboration with WAHO, to provide technical assistance for the organization of the Forum. He/she will contribute to the preparation of the agenda and the conduct of the technical sessions of the meeting in line with the Forum objectives. He/she will also be responsible for writing the Forum report.

Lead Technical Partner

UNICEF will serve as the Lead Technical Partner for the Forum. It will provide support for the preparation and implementation of a high-quality technical programme for the Forum. UNICEF, within the framework of the RISING Project, will also finance and lead the process of recruiting a Consultant for the external evaluation of the Nutrition Forums.

Funding

The Forum will be financed by WAHO and Partners. Partners may decide to provide budgetary support to WAHO or directly fund selected aspects of the Forum. The Government of the Republic of Liberia, as host of the Forum, may draw on its own resources, and well as on funds mobilized from her local Partners and the Private Sector to organize the Forum.

Interpretation Services

Simultaneous interpretation in the three working languages of ECOWAS (English, French, and Portuguese) will be provided during the Forum.

Key Contacts

The Minister of Health, Liberia and the Director-General, WAHO will have overall responsibility for the conduct of the Nutrition Forum.

Further information may be obtained from the following persons:

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