

An illustration on the left side of the cover features several stylized hands in various colors (red, orange, green, yellow) holding different food items. From top to bottom, the items include: a bunch of purple grapes, a whole pink chicken, a red bell pepper, a bunch of purple raspberries, a whole blue fish, a bunch of yellow bananas, a green pear, a bunch of red radishes, a bunch of green carrots, a purple cabbage, a glass pitcher of milk, two brown eggs, and a slice of white bread. At the bottom, a hand holds a bunch of orange carrots, and another hand holds a small bowl of nuts and seeds.

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OF THE
Technical
consultation

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measuring
healthy diets:

CONCEPTS, METHODS AND METRICS

Virtual meeting, 18–20 May 2021

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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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Acronyms

AHEI	Alternative Healthy Eating Index
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DQI	Diet Quality Index
DQ-Q	Diet Quality Questionnaire
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO/WHO GIFT	FAO/WHO Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool
FBS	Food balance sheet
FIES	Food insecurity experience scale
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GBD	Global Burden of Disease
GDD	Global Dietary Database
GDQS	Global Diet Quality Score
GDR	Global Dietary Recommendations
HCES	Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys
HEI	Healthy Eating Index
INDDEX	International Dietary Data Expansion
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
JME	Joint Malnutrition Estimates
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
MDD	Minimum dietary diversity
MDD-W	Minimum dietary diversity for women
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NCDs	Noncommunicable diseases
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUA	Supply utilization account
TEAM	Technical Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition Monitoring
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPF	Ultra-processed food
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Healthy diets are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 2, which aims to end all forms of malnutrition. Yet, there are no harmonized metrics for tracking how diets around the world are evolving and the impact of these changes on human health and the environment. While researchers have been developing concepts, metrics, methods and tools to characterize the healthfulness of diets, there is a need to share experiences, improve collaboration and coordination, harmonize and complement efforts, develop a common agenda, and accelerate progress around assessment and monitoring of characteristics of diets at global and national levels.

In response to this need, the WHO-UNICEF Technical Expert Advisory Group on Nutrition Monitoring (TEAM) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with technical and logistical support from USAID Advancing Nutrition, hosted a Technical Consultation on Measuring Healthy Diets: Concepts, Methods and Metrics.

The goal of the consultation was to promote increased communication, coordination and collaboration for the purpose of accelerating progress towards identifying or developing a parsimonious set of metrics for global monitoring of healthy diets for individuals over 2 years of age. Eighty-five participants took part in the consultation, representing a wide range of institutions and roles in the data value chain.

Expected outputs of the consultation were to: (1) identify areas of convergence and divergence on characteristics of healthy diets that could be monitored at global and national levels; (2) map existing metrics of healthy diets with associated tools and methods; and (3) identify next steps to establish mechanisms for collaboration and reach convergence on metrics for global and national use.

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