Argentina INFOODS Declaration

The 150 delegates from 37 countries attending the 12th International Food Data Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 11–13 October 2017,

Recognizing

- that micronutrient deficiencies and hunger rates remain high while overweight and obesity with related non-communicable diseases are on the rise causing enormous economic burden to many health systems and families
- that the success of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition or the Sustainable Development Goals will depend on the extent to which programs and policies are coherent using the food-system approach and based on reliable data, including food consumption and composition data;
- that food composition data have to be recent, relevant and easily available for most produced and consumed foods so that they will be used in programmes and policies in nutrition, health and agriculture, but also in the food industry to improve food products and in labelling;
- that these food composition data, especially on vitamins, are lacking for the majority of produced and consumed foods in all countries worldwide, but more severely in developing countries, where in extreme cases we observe a quasi-absence of data;
- that the collaboration between nutrition and agriculture is indispensable to implement nutrition-sensitive agriculture and produce the foods and nutrients needed for healthy and diverse diets worldwide, and that the existing wealth of biodiversity is a worldwide resource that will more likely be used when its nutrient and non-nutrient compositions have been properly analyzed, documented and disseminated; and
- that many food-related data sets are often described and classified using different systems not able to cross communicate and thus making data linkage and usage difficult;

Agree

- that well-targeted advocacy and dynamic communication are necessary to encourage decision-makers in understanding the importance of high-quality food composition data and then prioritize and finance their analysis, management and dissemination, so that they can assist in moving to whole food system to a more healthy and nutritious one through an enhanced collaboration between nutrition, health, agriculture and the food industry in the food chain; and
- that the support from governments, international organizations or other donors, in terms of human and financial resources, are vital to generate, compile and disseminate food composition data in user-friendly formats – without which adequate food composition data are often absent, obsolete or extremely limited.

And therefore urgently request

- that in all countries the investment be significantly increased for the generation, compilation and dissemination of food composition data and databases. It should include revisiting basic data in food composition such as conversion factors, but also the determination of various components in processed, cooked and biodiverse foods,
- that stakeholders in nutrition, agriculture and the private sector utilize existing food composition data, and clearly communicate to national and international decision-makers which food composition data are missing to carry out their work effectively, as this might assist in identifying knowledge gaps and collaborations needed to close these gaps;
- that public and private data holders share their compositional data within the food composition community for inclusion into global, regional or national food composition tables and databases – and to code their data using global coding systems such as FoodEx2 to facilitate data linkage and harmonization;
- that food composition should become an integral part of the curricula of nutrition, food science, food chemistry or related areas, through e.g. using the FAO/INFOODS e-learning Course on Food Composition Data; and
- that all relevant stakeholders collaborate more effectively together, especially among nutrition, health, agriculture and the food industry so that the foods and nutrients needed for healthy and sustainable diets are produced, available in the food system and wanted by consumers.

Once these points are achieved, we expect a healthier world population, reversed trends in malnutrition[1] and less expenses for nutrition-related diseases, and thus higher achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals.

---

[1] Malnutrition includes undernutrition, hunger, overweight, obesity and micronutrient deficiency.