



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union with the kind sponsorship of the Italian Parliament

Parliaments for better nutrition

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

A high-level inter-governmental meeting, the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), will be held in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014. Centred on the theme *Better nutrition for better lives*, the Conference will bring together senior national policymakers from food, agriculture, health and other relevant ministries and agencies, government officials, parliamentarians, senior representatives of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, researchers, private sector and civil society representatives in order to motivate, mobilize and commit to policy priorities on how national and global food, health and related systems and reforms can improve nutritional outcomes.

The recent *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014* found that, while the number of people experiencing hunger was reduced by 100 million over the past decade, today, 805 million people remain chronically hungry, 161 million children are still stunted, acute malnutrition (wasting) affects 51 million children, 42 million children are overweight, and over 500 million adults are obese. Overall, throughout the planet, two billion people continue to suffer from various micronutrient deficiencies.

Through the *Rome Declaration on Nutrition* and its companion *Framework for Action*, expected to be adopted on 19 November 2014, senior policy makers assembled at the Second International Conference on Nutrition will collectively commit to eliminating global hunger and preventing all forms of malnutrition worldwide. They will also recommend to the United Nations General Assembly to endorse both the *Rome Declaration* and the *Framework for Action*, and to consider declaring a *Decade of Action on Nutrition* from 2016 to 2025, taking into account the post-2015 development agenda process. The *Rome Declaration* and the *Framework for Action* are available on the ICN2 website at: www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/documents/en/.

The political commitments set forth in the *Rome Declaration* will entail decisive and urgent action, including the development of national laws, policies, strategies, plans and programmes to enhance food systems, improve nutrition and ensure healthy diets. Greater efforts will also be needed to strengthen human and institutional capacities to address hunger and malnutrition, as well as to increase investments for effective interventions. Relevant UN bodies and other organizations, especially FAO and WHO, will be called upon to support governments in their national initiatives to eliminate hunger and combat malnutrition.

Strong engagement of parliaments will be crucial in ensuring that the necessary legislative tools on food security and nutrition are put in place. Thus, it is important that

they be actively involved in the global policy debate on food security and nutrition to secure their timely contributions, through their respective legislative bodies, in carrying out – at country level – the political commitments in the *Rome Declaration*.

IPU is tackling the issue of nutrition with its ongoing work with parliaments on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) as well as child rights. Particular attention is paid to law-making, oversight, and representation powers parliamentarians can deploy to help reduce malnutrition rates and thereby improve the health and development outcomes.

It is IPU's practice to organize parliamentary meetings in connection with major UN conferences and it would represent a continuum with the parliamentary meeting that was held on the occasion of the FAO World Summit on Food in November 2009. Also this year, on the occasion of ICN2, a Parliamentary Meeting will be organized on 18 November 2014, under the title: *Parliaments for better nutrition* – echoing the main theme of the Conference. Organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union with the kind sponsorship of the Italian Parliament, this pre-ICN2 event will be hosted by the Municipality of Rome, in the Sala Protomoteca.

OBJECTIVE

- Provide information about the ICN2 and its expected outcome
- Articulate a parliamentary perspective on the key nutrition challenges and opportunities
- Identify parliamentary actions to support implementation of the ICN2 commitments
- Promote exchanges among parliamentarians on good parliamentary practice.

OUTCOME

- Sensitize participants to the importance of the national legal climate as an essential contributor to better nutrition
- Encourage participants to promote national dialogue, legislate, and conduct effective government oversight to advance the progress under the ICN2 commitments.

The outcome of the Parliamentary Meeting will be reported in a statement to the ICN2 on 21 November, and will be included in the final report of the Conference.

PARTICIPANTS

The Parliamentary Meeting is intended for members of parliaments worldwide. Invitations addressed to the Speakers of national parliaments are intended to inform of the Meeting all parliamentarians who will attend the ICN2 as part of their national delegation and facilitate their participation in the Meeting.

AGENDA

A Provisional programme for the Parliamentary Meeting is attached herewith.

LANGUAGES

The languages of the Parliamentary Meeting are English, French, Italian and Spanish.