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Policy Perspectives

Acknowledgement of UN Nutrition's Rome Nutrition Week takeaway messages, but can we not go further?

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Highlights/Key Messages

- Rome Nutrition Week Takeaways are valid pointers towards sustainable access to healthy foods
- WPHNA supports more deference to local power and leaders to ensure right to food
- Now plans are needed that identify actions and hold actors responsible for them

At WPHNA, we read the recently posted UN Nutrition's Rome Nutrition Week 2026 Key Takeaways:

- Nutrition data must drive action, and turning data into nutrition impact requires capacity.
- Inclusive and locally driven innovation is the catalyst for scaling up and accelerating nutrition results.
- Resources should be directed toward national nutrition priorities, ensuring they reach those most in need.
- Integrated solutions are key to success, but integrated nutrition policy requires integrated nutrition financing.
- Local food systems must be prioritised.
- Local actors are central to success.
- Country-led, government-wide action is essential for lasting results.
- Addressing food environments is essential for healthy diets.
- Fragility must not be a barrier to nutrition action.
- Healthy diets and good nutrition are critical to sustaining development beyond 2030

These are all valid and valuable points. It is gratifying that UN Nutrition has affirmed much of what the PHN community has espoused for years, if not decades. But there are gaps, and where is the plan for action? We feel that sponsoring a full week in Rome would be better used to identify practical implementation steps and the actors responsible for them, not just to list takeaways identified long ago.

The last two WPHNA conferences focused on the Decade of Nutrition. On both occasions, in our journal World Nutrition, we critiqued the weaknesses in the uptake of these same takeaway messages (https://worldnutritionjournal.org/wn/article/view/741); (https://worldnutritionjournal.org/wn/article/view/1090). In them, we pointed to more structural solutions, beyond the undeniably useful ones that Rome Week highlighted.

Ominous global affairs have indeed negatively affected prospects for the success of the Decade of Nutrition and for achieving the SDGs by 2030. But the point remains that, in tackling the structural determinants and power imbalances in the global governance of nutrition, upstream issues are at the core of the right to food. WPHNA applauds Takeaways 2, 5 and 6 for recognition of local food systems, local knowledge and local actors as fundamental to sustainable access to healthy foods. Yet more deference to local power and leadership is needed

Keywords: **Rome Nutrition Week, right to food, nutrition governance, power, implementation**

A good example of tackling these core issues is the Nyeleni 3 political action plan (https://nyeleni.org › the-common-political-action-agenda), which brings together more than 15 global movements and more than 150 organisations in its implementation. WPHNA participates in this process. Another core issue in which WPHNA actively participates is negotiations on a binding treaty on the human rights responsibilities of transnational corporations, TNCs (https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/). A third WPHNA action-oriented commitment is in the UK, where WPHNA is a key promoter of Right to Food UK Commission's efforts to respond to community voices and to ensure respect for the universal right to food.

We think the above are the kinds of avenues needed now more than ever, as the entire multilateral system is in crisis. A useful additional point for the Takeaways is a call to bring the UN and multilateral systems closer to the positions of social movements that have long called for tackling the determinants listed above.

The passive verbs and verb phrases used in the Rome Takeaways highlight their weaknesses: must, requires, need to scale up, should be diverted, ensuring, is essential, must not be, and are critical. The next step is identifying who will do each of these things. Otherwise, it is like we are sending a letter to Santa Claus!

In short, the next iteration of Rome Nutrition Week should focus on the "duty bearers" identified in human rights declarations and their roles and obligations to implement the needed actions before 2030.

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