WN *Feedback*

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Development

Framework Convention on foods and diet Come and join us and make it work

Access May 2014 Big Food Watch on letter to Mexican President here
Access May 2014 Consumers International-World Obesity document here
Access June 2014 Development on return to regulation for world health here
Access this issue 2014 Big Food Watch on the Alliance for Healthy Food here



Kids throughout the world are bombarded with publicity for junk food, as shown above by the poster from Mexico denouncing ultra-processed product marketing. Binding regulation is needed right now

Alejandro Calvillo writes:

El Poder del Consumidor, (Consumer Power), of which I am founder and director, is indeed a supporter of a framework convention on food and health, as reported in *WN* in June (1).

This initiative has been planned for some time now. Several years ago, together with other consumer defence and advocacy organisations, we began to discuss the relevance of proposing a *Framework Convention on Healthy Foods and Diet*, or a similar

title, inspired by the WHO *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*. We believed it was important to begin to circulate and discuss this idea.

In 2008, Consumers International and the International Association for the Study of Obesity (now the World Obesity Federation) jointly took the initiative to call upon the World Health Organization to establish an international code on marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children. WHO took action on this topic, and in 2010 presented a series of recommendations to governments to protect children from this kind of marketing.

At the 67th World Health Assembly this May, Consumers International, of which *El Poder del Consumidor* is a member, and World Obesity, presented initial recommendations towards a global convention to protect and promote healthy diets (2). This has been widely welcomed, and is a beacon for us in Mexico, with our additional *Alianza por la Salud Alimentaria* (Alliance for Healthy Food), also a member of the *Big Food Watch* network, campaigning nationally and internationally, as reported in *Update* in this issue of *World Nutrition* (3).

The framework convention on food and health that we now propose, is supported by UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food Olivier de Schutter, who was present at the launch of this global initiative in Geneva, and who has stated: 'Unhealthy diets are now a greater threat to global health than tobacco'.

What Consumers International says

Consumers International director Amanda Long explains the reasons for a tough approach and a call for action now, *as follows:*

> As Margaret Chan said in her opening address in May to this year's World Health Assembly: 'We see no good evidence that the prevalence of obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases is receding anywhere. Highly processed foods and beverages loaded with sugar are ubiquitous, convenient, and cheap'… Our collective response is lagging far behind what is needed.
>
> Calling for a global convention inevitably draws comparisons with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Of course food is not the same as tobacco – but in public health terms we are facing a similar, or even greater, crisis. The point is about impact. When it comes to the scale and scope of the impact, tobacco and unhealthy food are directly and very worryingly comparable.
>
> Smoking still kills six million people a year and rates continue to rise in many countries. In some countries however, rates are decreasing; in large part because concerted efforts by governments to put public health ahead of the commercial interests. The FCTC is a major part of this story. It was a ground breaking international agreement that built political will and led to co-ordinated action around the world.

> The shocking truth is that, today, poor diet is the number 1 cause of premature death globally – more than smoking. As we seek to tackle poor diets we need to learn from the FCTC success, without repeating the 30 years of debate that led to its adoption. We cannot afford to allow the food industry to repeat the foot-dragging strategy taken by the tobacco lobby.
>
> How many times have we said to ourselves – if we knew then the harm caused by tobacco, we'd have done things sooner? Well, we do know the damage of unhealthy diets– let's make amends and prevent a similar catastrophe. We believe that the global community can, and must, do better than the story of tobacco controls. The vast majority of deaths from unhealthy eating are preventable. There is widespread agreement about the policies that will have an impact – but we are not doing enough, and we are not taking action fast enough.

Come and join us

Recommendations towards a Global Framework to protect and promote healthy diets is a draft document – work in progress. It will require additional collective thought and contributions from throughout the world to strengthen its initial recommendations, such as work on long-established and traditional food systems and supplies and dietary patterns, among other issues. For example, in Mexico, with our cuisine as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and also our hunger and malnutrition rates, we have special opportunities and concerns for preserving traditional diets.

Nonetheless, together we have taken an important first step in putting this proposal on the table, calling for a global Framework Convention on healthy human diets. The game is just beginning and it will be critical to bring more voices to the table to enrich this proposal and make it a reality.

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Development

Structural determinants must be addressed

Access May 2014 Consumers International-World Obesity document here
Access June 2014 Update on return to regulation for world health here



What makes the world go round now, is an unfair and unjust political and economic system which drives the current disastrous world food system. Structural determinants of health must be addressed

Leigh Haynes, David Legge, Leslie London, David McCoy, David Sanders write:

The June issue of *World Nutrition* reports on the launch on the occasion of this year's WHO World Health Assembly, of a proposal for a 'Global Convention to Protect and Promote Healthy Diets' (1,2). We have already published a critique of an analogous proposal, for a framework convention on health in general, and refer readers to *our paper in full, available here* (3). We believe that what we then wrote, in general applies also to this narrower proposal.

First, efforts to challenge and eventually replace the current dominant global health and nutrition governance structures must, we believe, be based on explicit and robust analysis of the global political economy from which emerge the drivers of inequality, and denial of the right to health and to nutrition. Thus, re-labelling international aid (as the proposed health framework does) as an obligation rather than charity, while important, basically will not change global power relations, which still direct net resource flows from the South to the North. Limiting the project to questions of inter-governmental fiscal transfers and eventually binding arrangements, neglects the underlying structural determinants of health and nutrition injustice. Worse, it tends to legitimise the current dominant unjust, unstable and unsustainable global political and economic regime. We have the same concern with the 'healthy diets' proposal.

Second, we question the feasibility of a campaign to put a new framework convention in place. The great effort involved would distract good people from other vital work. And would the effort succeed? This is not a period of history in which powerful member states want to give the UN system more authority. The US and

Europe are very unlikely to sign up to any such framework convention to be administered through UN agencies, bearing in mind their persistent strategy to control these agencies through their financial contributions to earmarked projects that suit their own policies.

Third, for any meaningful framework convention to be adopted, it must be built on popular mobilisation around the diverse priorities of communities, organisations and movements, understood within a global perspective. We agree that the current increasingly dominant world food system being imposed by transnational corporations has to be addressed effectively. We agree that this fact is now well understood by public interest organisations and social movements and by consumers and citizens throughout the world. But we submit that only a broader approach to the purposes of any proposed framework convention could help to build such a unified global movement. This should focus on protecting, preserving and strengthening public health, including its food and nutrition aspects, particularly in parts of the world that have held out against corporate takeover. These examples need to be better known. Any framework should also focus on effective general regulations to protect public health and public goods, in ways that improve the health, nutrition and well-being of people and populations.

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Source

Circumstances change choices

Access September 2005 Public Health Nutrition 'Choices' section here
Access June 2014 Source by Geoffrey Cannon and Claus Leitzmann here
Access this issue Tony McMichael on climate change here



Tony McMichael at the Giessen meeting after which sources were chosen (left). (Right) at Giessen, with then Public Health Nutrition editor Barrie Margetts, and Mark Wahlqvist and Ibrahim Elmadfa, presidents of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences 2001-2005 and 2009-2013

Tony McMichael writes:

It was good to be reminded of our 2005 workshop at Giessen at which the environmental dimension of nutrition science was agreed. Good also to have the chance to update our 'Top 5' texts. Below are mine from 2005. They reflect concern that all concerned with food and nutrition security should see the 'big picture'. I would put these below on a 'long list' now. My 2014 'Top 5', in alphabetical not merit order, is different, and four of my choices now were published after 2005.

Tony McMichael 2005
Australian National University

Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, Francesco Cavalli-Sforza. *The Great Human Diaspora*
Jared Diamond. *Guns, Germs and Steel*
Stephen Jones (*et al, ed*). *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Human Evolution*
William McNeill. *Plagues and Peoples*
Stephen Stearns (*ed*). *Evolution in Health and Disease*

Tony McMichael 2014
Australian National University

Edward O Wilson. *The Social Conquest of Earth,* 2012
Julian Cribb. *The Coming Famine: The Global Food Crisis & What We Can Do to Avoid It, 2010*
Alison Bashford. *Global Population. History, Geopolitics and Life on Earth, 2014*
Thomas Picketty. *Capital in the 21st Century,* 2014
Stephen Boyden. *Western Civilization in Biological Perspective, Patterns in Biohistory,* 1990

Above is my list written now in the middle of 2014. As before, these books all bear on the wider social, environmental and cultural context within which population pressures, economic development, a declining agricultural resource base, climate change, and historical and evolutionary insights, relate to the prospects for future food, feeding and health. The *WN* editorial team has added some information below about them, from edited Amazon reviews.

Editor's note. The Amazon reviews, which are shortened, are as follows.

Edward O Wilson. Draws on remarkable knowledge of biology and social behaviour and demonstrates that group selection, not kin selection, is the premier driving force of human evolution. Explains how our innate drive to belong to a group is both a great blessing and a terrible curse. Demonstrating that the sources of morality, religion, and the creative arts are fundamentally biological in nature, he presents the clearest explanation ever produced as to the origin of the human condition and why it resulted in our domination of the Earth's biosphere.

Julian Cribb. A vivid picture of impending planetary crisis – a global food shortage that threatens to hit by mid-century. A comprehensive assessment pointing to a confluence of shortages of water, land, energy, technology, and knowledge, combined with an increased demand created by population and economic growth. Explains how the food system interacts with the environment and with armed conflict, poverty, and other societal factors. High food prices and regional shortages are already sending out shock-waves in the international community. Heightened risk of regional famines will have a planet-wide effect on food prices, trade, and conflict and will generate new waves of refugees.

Alison Bashford. Concern about the size of the world's population did not begin with the Baby Boomers. Overpopulation as a conceptual problem originated after World War I and was understood as an issue with far-reaching ecological, agricultural, economic, and geopolitical consequences. This study traces the idea of a world population problem as it developed from the 1920s through the 1950s, long before the late-1960s notion of a postwar 'population bomb.' Drawing on international conference transcripts, the volume reconstructs the twentieth-century discourse on population as an international issue concerned with migration, colonial expansion, sovereignty, and globalisation. It connects the genealogy of population discourse to

the rise of economically and demographically defined global regions, the characterisation of 'civilisations' with different standards of living, global attitudes toward 'development,' and first- and third-world designations

Thomas Piketty. He analyses a unique collection of data from twenty countries, ranging as far back as the eighteenth century, to uncover key economic and social patterns. His findings will transform debate and set the agenda for the next generation of thought about wealth and inequality. He shows that modern economic growth and the diffusion of knowledge have allowed us to avoid inequalities on the apocalyptic scale predicted by Karl Marx. But we have not modified the deep structures of capital and inequality as much as we thought in the optimistic decades following World War II. The main driver of inequality – the tendency of returns on capital to exceed the rate of economic growth – today threatens to generate extreme inequalities that stir discontent and undermine democratic values. A work of extraordinary ambition, originality, and rigour.

Stephen Boyden. This original and wide-ranging work draws upon extensive research to explore the interplay between biological and cultural processes in human affairs. Going beyond the conventional historical treatment of biological and human patterns, Boyden considers the early evolutionary emergence of humankind, and focuses on the productivity of ecosystems and the impact of social and technological developments on human health and well-being. Throughout the text he refers to evolutionary, ecological, and biosocial principles, and examines these concepts in relation to problems of survival in the modern world and in formulating societal options for the future.

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McMichael T. Source. Circumstances change choices
*[Feedback] World Nutrition July-August 2014, **5**, 7-8, 685-687*

Editor's note:

Source seems to be a nice addition to the *WN* range of topics. Claus Leitzmann's full contribution will appear in a coming issue. Hélène Delisle of the WHO Collaborating Center at the University of Montréal writes: 'This is a very interesting, astute and inspiring addition to *World Nutrition'*. Barry Popkin of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill points out an omission in the entry on Justus Liebig. 'I too have visited the Liebig museum in Giessen. You left off his major contribution to humankind: Marmite, the yeast extract made from brewery effluent. How dare you! Wilbur Atwater was there as a post-doc for several years. Also omitted was Justus Liebig's role as the creator of organic chemistry and other fields. A look at his lists of post-docs shows an astounding story. But Marmite was the major omission!'

Geoffrey Cannon adds:

Barry Popkin is right. In his note he says he disliked Marmite sandwiches when young. For me it was different. As a boy, I devoured Marmite 'soldiers' (fingers of toast with butter and Marmite to dip into soft-boiled eggs). Justus Liebig was a great re-cycler. His yeast extract (later branded as Marmite) was derived from effluent from the brewery trade. His better known beef extract (later branded as Bovril) was made at Fray Bentos in Uruguay, rendered down from cattle bred and slaughtered for their horns and hides, whose bodies were previously left on the pampas to rot. Justus Liebig also invented the first versions of baby formula, which as with all his main inventions he promoted inside and outside Europe with great entrepreneurial energy. He can be identified as the begetter of industrial ultra-processed products.

Protein. Kwashiorkor. Donald McLaren
The Lancet paper that changed history

Access Lancet 1974 Donald McLaren on the great protein fiasco here
Access WHO Bulletin 2003 Michael Krawinkel on kwashiorkor here
Access March 2014 Editorial on the meaning of 'kwashiorkor' here
Access March 2014 Geoffrey Cannon on Cicely Williams here
Access May 2014 Michael Krawinkel on kwashiorkor here



Definitions, prevalence and measurement of child malnutrition remain critical public health issues especially in Asia and Africa. Donald McLaren changed teaching and practice on protein deficiency

Claus Leitzmann writes:

WN has been publishing a number of contributions on kwashiorkor (accessed above) including by my colleague at the University of Giessen Michael Krawinkel. This is

welcome. When I worked at the anemia and malnutrition centre of the University of Chiang Mai in Thailand in the early 1970s, kwashiorkor sometimes was apparent in generally undernourished children. This very serious condition has not disappeared.

Here I write for an associated reason. With all the current upheaval in the Near East, and the possibility of a new configuration of Iraq, given the ambition of the ISIS forces to unify Iraq, Syria and Lebanon – three countries that were created a little under a century ago – it is appropriate to remember a epoch-breaking paper published in the *Lancet* exactly 40 years ago in this month of July. It was written by a nutrition scientist then working at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon.

This is of course 'The great protein fiasco' (1). *Here it is, attached.* My letter is also written to celebrate the life and work of its author Donald McLaren, 90 years old this year, who as well as writing one of the most trenchant, biting and influential papers on public health nutrition of all time, is an authority on vitamin A deficiency.

Voit's labourers

The right amount, quality and type of protein in diets – and therefore in food systems and supplies – has been the subject of debate since the mid 19th century. With hindsight, almost all recommendations made were far too high. One of the earliest proponents of a high-protein diet was Carl Voit (1831-1908, Germany). Since hard labourers in his time consumed an average of over 3,000 kilocalories a day, he recommended a protein intake of 118 grams a day (2), a value that became known as the 'Voit standard'. It was assumed that this protein needed to come from animal sources – meat, eggs, milk, in particular. The implications for food supplies and dietary patterns were stupendous.

Other scientists in Sweden, Italy, Russia, France, Scotland, the US (such as Wilbur Atwater, 1844-1907), and Germany (such as Max Rubner, 1854-1932) made similar observations with soldiers and workers and recommended protein intakes between 110 and 180 grams a day. Information on vegetarians and millions of people in Asia and Africa with diets containing less than half that amount of protein was largely ignored, although some experts were aware of this at the time (3).

Chittenden's athletes

Russell Chittenden (1856-1943, US), questioned the recommendations of a high protein intake (4). In an experiment conducted on himself for nine months with a diet of 40 grams of protein a day, his health remained excellent and he fully maintained his mental and physical activity (5). That result contradicted the official recommendations of his time. He subsequently conducted a series of additional experiments including on champion athletes, to prove the adequacy of diets lower in protein than commonly recommended. In spite of his findings, which were never plausibly refuted, the recommendations for protein intake remained high during the

following decades, and still based on protein from animal sources, with unforeseen consequences for underprivileged people and their malnourished children.

Williams' findings

This was first pointed out for the special case of childhood malnutrition by Donald McLaren in his 'The great protein fiasco' paper (1). He had worked in East Africa from 1957-1962, where kwashiorkor was the prevailing form of childhood malnutrition. Kwashiorkor was first described by Cicely Williams as a deficiency disease of infants in West Africa, which she took to be a condition in which a deficiency of some amino acids or protein could not be excluded (6).Since kwashiorkor could be cured with skim milk, in the next two decades kwashiorkor became known as protein malnutrition, which led to the conclusion that childhood malnutrition in general had to be treated with protein.

In the UN, both the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization embraced this concept. They promoted the problem of protein shortage which actually occurred mainly in rural areas of some African countries, stating that it was a world-wide 'protein gap' or even a protein crisis. Preventive measures therefore concentrated mainly on protein, which triggered boosting of sources of animal protein such as meat and milk, the discovery of new protein foods, and the invention of a number of products with a high content of protein.

McLaren's revelation

After Donald McLaren moved to Beirut, Lebanon, in 1962, he hardly saw any kwashiorkor. Almost every severely malnourished child suffered from marasmus (wasting, with no signs of kwashiorkor) as was the case in many urban areas in the world. Marasmus, which is to say the obvious common-sense consequence of starvation, had been recognised for centuries in various parts of the world long before kwashiorkor was identified in the early 1930s.

With this experience, he analysed the pathogenesis of these two conditions and came to the conclusion that more and higher quality protein is appropriate for the treatment of the regionally and locally observed kwashiorkor, but not for the solution of world-wide childhood malnutrition mainly appearing in the form of marasmus. He very strongly criticised the UN agencies and particularly the UN Protein Advisory Group, which had even attempted to establish a world council on protein which have transformed world agriculture and food systems. On the basis of several surveys, the UN agencies had declared that kwashiorkor was the most serious and widespread nutritional disorder known to medical and nutritional science. With that statement, at that time the treatment of childhood malnutrition with protein became a dogma.

Donald McLaren proved that the UN-based dogma was – to say the least – an over-simplification, and that the wide distribution of marasmus had been neglected. He

understood that the treatment of kwashiorkor was not suitable or necessary to cure marasmus and other forms of malnutrition throughout the world. He recognised that the much more common form of marasmus and childhood malnutrition in general is usually not a deficiency of protein, but a lack of food, including carbohydrates and fat. He challenged the philosophy behind the development of protein-rich food mixtures that were advocated not only to treat kwashiorkor, but also as a main effort to prevent childhood malnutrition.

Based on his experience, the sensible and practical approach, which is not to prevent and treat malnutrition with imported protein-enriched products or new protein foods but with customary local foods began slowly to be accepted in international policy.

What we should know now

It is or should now be well-known that the amount of protein required is determined by a number of factors, such as the need for essential amino acids, body weight and composition, physical activity level, and carbohydrate intake. On this basis, the generally accepted dietary allowance for protein now is 0.8 grams per kilogram of bodyweight a day, which amounts to a daily intake usually of 40 - 60 grams of protein. (Requirements are greater during childhood, pregnancy, and breastfeeding, after an operation, illness, injury, or malnutrition, and can be greater for certain athletes and the elderly).

Currently, there is a growing tendency to recommend a higher protein intake, especially as part of the popular low carbohydrate diets mainly designed to reduce body weight. This development may lead to a different type of protein fiasco, since the long-term effects of a high protein diets have not been well studied. In addition to its potentially adverse health effects, high protein intake tends to mean eating more animal foods, with damaging ecological consequences and ethical concerns (7).

'The great protein fiasco' changed forever, teaching and practice on the real priority in treating and preventing malnutrition. What I learned, and have taught and practiced ever since, is that adequate amounts of locally produced plain whole freshly prepared food always beats the myth of any 'supplementation', 'fortification' or 'enrichment' of expensive processed food products.

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Human size
Short men live longer

Access March 2011 Thomas Samaras on reasons to be small here
Access August 2013 Thomas Samaras on more reasons to be small here



The heads of state of India and of the United States of America. It is still assumed that to be taller is to be superior. Obviously an ecological mistake, evidence mounts that it may be wrong biologically

Thomas Samaras writes:

This follows up my *World Nutrition* contributions of 2011, 2013 and 2014 (1-3), which have been supported by other contributions in WN mainly in the environmental aspects of human stature (4,5).

A new paper on height and longevity by a Hawaiian research team has been published (6). This finds that mortality increases with increasing height in mid-life and shorter height predicts a longer lifespan. Shorter height is also correlated with

decreased cancer mortality. The study followed 8006 Japanese-Americans for more than 40 years. The mean age at baseline was 55 years. No significant difference in survival was found among different height groups before 80 years of age, but after this age, a significant difference was found.

An abbreviated listing of previous supportive studies follows. For a list of my papers, books and chapters, see http://www.humanbodysize.com

- Salaris *et al.* found that shorter men lived two years longer than taller men in a remote village in Sardinia, Italy (7).
- Wilhelmsen *et al.* found that Swedish men who were shorter at 67 years of age were more likely to reach 90 years of age (8).
- Holzenberger, *et al.* tracked 1.3 million Spanish men over a 70-year period and found that shorter men had better survival than taller ones (9).
- The US Department of Health and Human Services found that Asians had the lowest age-adjusted mortality of all US ethnic groups. From 1985-1999, the mortality rate was higher for Latinos and Native Americans and blacks and whites had the highest mortality rate—almost twice that of the Asians. The Asians were the shortest and the Latinos and Native Americans were taller but shorter than blacks and whites (10)
- Shorter women live longer than men. I found that US males averaged 9 per cent taller and had a 9 per cent shorter life expectancy (11).
- I have summarised the longevity findings for 10 different populations. These include baseball players, US veterans, celebrities, elderly Swedes, Harvard male athletes, and 19th century French men and women. Life expectancy differences between taller males and shorter females were also included from 22 countries. I find an average loss of longevity of half a year per every centimetre increase in height. The range for the entire population set varied from 0.35 through 0.70 year per cm (11).
- Okinawans are shorter than mainland Japanese and are noted for their exceptionally high percentage of centenarians (12).

In the Okinawa study the researchers concluded that if you want to reach 100 years of age, being short and thin increased your chances. However, while most centenarians are short, there are men over 183 cm that reach 100 years of age. With advances in modern medicine, many tall people will enter the 100-year mark in the future. This should not derail objective evaluation of how increasing height has many health and environmental hazards.

There are many biological reasons for smaller size people having a greater potential for longer survival. These included longer telomeres and decreased insulin, IGF-1, C-reactive protein, and left ventricular mass (11). Tall people have lower heart rates and resting metabolic rates, which appear to be advantageous. In addition, tall people tended to have lower body mass indexes until recently. But when tall and

short people of the same body proportions are compared, there is no evidence for biological mechanisms that favour larger human size (13). The environmental benefits of being relatively small should now be self-evident, and I suggest a general UN-originated campaign to promote this as part of the strategy of sustainability.

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Rights. Justice
Equ(al)ity #2

Access May 2014 Geoffrey Cannon on equity and equality here
Access June 2014 Geoffrey Cannon on equity and equality here
Access June 2014 Claudio Schuftan on equity and equality here



Urban Jonsson writes:

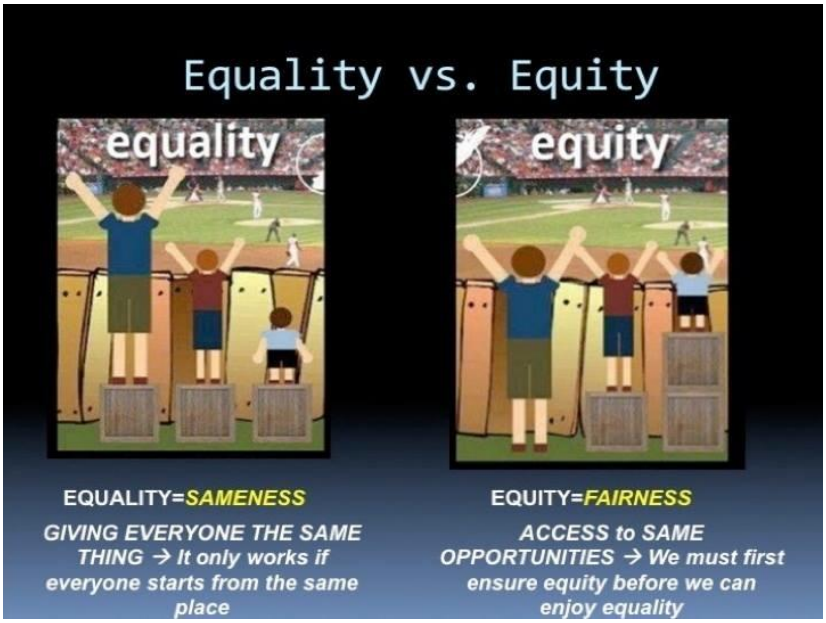
This is in response to *Geoffrey Cannon's What do you think?* June *WN* column (1), and to *Claudio Schuftan's letter* in the same issue (2).

Equality is a human rights principle and is scientifically defined as 'the same'. Equity is a justice concept, meaning 'fairness'. This is where the ambiguity of the term 'equity' becomes obvious. Originally a law concept, created exactly to allow judges that particular ambiguity, 'equity' has now been adopted in development discussions, which raises the question of 'fair according to whom?'

'Equity' is not even mentioned in either the UN Charter or the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. There is no single definition of 'equity'. Any interpretation reflects a value judgment. The difference between 'equality' and 'equity' is illustrated by the following example. Two people doing the same job with the same result should have equal pay, while people doing different jobs, requiring very different skills, should have different amounts of pay in the name of fairness – which is to say, an equitable pay. While in the first case a scientific comparison can be done, that is not possible in the second case. There is no scientific way to assess 'fairness', because it is based on a judgment.

A common misconception about 'equality' is the idea that because equality can never fully be achieved, it is not a useful concept in development planning and practice.

Aspirational goals are valuable



However, development, democracy, justice, freedoms and human rights are all equally important, but also share another characteristic – they all represent un-achievable goals in practice! But that does not mean that these aspirations are not in one way or another guiding most people and countries in their development efforts. Few would claim that we should give up the idea of democracy just because of the fact that no country has achieved or is likely to ever achieve complete democracy.

Finally, a new way of thinking about 'equity' and 'equality' would be to interpret these two concepts within the reconstruction of 'development' in the Outcome and the Process dimensions, which allows for the definition of four types of uses, namely (1) equity of the process; (2) equity of the outcome; (3) equality of the process; and (4) equality of the outcome.

Thus Affirmative Action, a concept often used in efforts to achieve gender equality in outcomes, for example improved gender balance in high-level jobs like physicians or judges, by giving women advantages (positive discrimination) in the selection of students in medicine or law. Such 'affirmative action' would then mean the use of an equitable (morally defendable un-equal) process to achieve equality in outcomes.

An example is shown above, used by some of those affected by the current 'equity hysteria'. The two pictures show three children of different ages and different heights trying to watch a cricket match. The title of the show, as you see, is 'Equality vs. Equity', with the first picture reflecting 'equality' and the second one reflecting 'equity'. From this simplistic comparison, most would agree that the right picture labelled 'equity' is a much better choice than the left picture labeled 'equality'. The problem, however, is that a large number of people in development are trying to make that choice permanent – equity should be used – not equality!

Either-or, or else both-and

The graphic above is a typical example of the reduction of a two-dimensional problem or situation is reduced to a one-dimensional one. Each of the pictures actually reflect two dimensions of the situation. One is the way the three children are positioned behind the wall (the process). The other is the actual amount each can see (the desirable outcome). The first picture illustrates a situation where an equal process of positioning the children results in a great in-equality of the outcome. The second picture illustrates a situation an equitable process of positioning the children results in an equal outcome. All would agree that the second picture represents the desirable choice between the two. This picture reflects the earlier Affirmative Action where a morally acceptable in-equality or equity results in equality of the outcomes.

With these new definitions, both equality and equity are important in development, but should each be applied where and when each of them is the appropriate choice, based on their different meanings in different contexts. For example, while equality plays an important role in a human right-based approach, equity is also often required in the process of development (affirmative action) in order to progressively achieve equal results.

In conclusion, it is not either equity or equality – It is both! Or as reflected in the Introduction of the *Universal Declaration of human Rights*, it is not either justice or human rights – It is both!

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As a footnote, it is interesting to know that in one of the richest and most equal countries in the world, Sweden, the country of which I am a citizen, the late Prime Minister Olof Palme, the key actor in the creation of the Swedish welfare state, always emphasised that development should always give equal emphasis on 'justice and equality' (*Rättvisa och Jämlikhet*)

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1 Cannon G. Sigfried Giedion. The machine is the master, and other stories. What do you think? [*Column*] *World Nutrition*, June 2014, **5**, 6, 572-585.
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Further reading

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*[Feedback] World Nutrition July-August 2014, **5,** 7-8, 695-698*



***WN** Farming*
Family farming essential in Latin America

Access June 2014 Enrique Jacoby et al on family farming here
Access this issue Update on G77 Santa Cruz Declaration here
Access this issue Fabio Gomes on ICN2 preparations here

Lautaro Viscay writes:

We are trapped in an era whose central paradigm still remains ever-increasing production and higher revenues. Quantity has become the supreme God. This obsession has broken our ancestral deep connection with nature, and with the production of food, cooking following the traditions learned at home and in the kitchen, and the sharing meals.

We are losing the fundamental human and social value of conviviality. The distance of urban consumers from agriculture nowadays is formidable. The emptiness of this has been filled with endless loads of colourful cans, boxes and containers of all sorts of ultra-processed products including soft drinks that promote ill-health and death.

As *the WN June commentary* by Enrique Jacoby and his many colleagues clearly proposes, the answer is to be found in the protection, promotion and strengthening of family and peasant agriculture. In fact, family agriculture in particular in Latin America is crucial to rebuild a missing bridge that will reconnect the human right to healthy and quality food of citizens and those who produce food with respect for the environment and natural resources. To facilitate and stimulate public policies in order to rebuild that bridge will be part of shifting the paradigm. It is shifting already,

generally and in the Southern cone of Latin America, thanks to so much work of which your commentary and report is an example. It is critical to our right to health and the fight against hunger in the world.

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Arnoldo de Campos writes:

The Brazilian government expresses great satisfaction to receive *the WN June commentary* and accompanying report that proposes decisions and actions for the integration of family agriculture, food and nutrition security, the protection of natural resources, and the care of health and nutrition.

Brazil has made investments in actions such as our food acquisition programme, recognising that family farming is the key to the development of sustainable food systems. These systems contribute to local development by building more just social dynamics, the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, and the production of healthy food. They act to prevent malnutrition-related diseases, such as under-nutrition and obesity.

Arnoldo de Campos
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Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome, Brasilia, Brazil
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Berta Sanseverino writes:

The WN June commentary and accompanying report will help us here in Uruguay to shape up the much-needed alliance of governments, legislators, UN agencies, non-government and civil society organisations within the Latin American region. We must commit ourselves to addressing the grave problems of our time: poverty, malnutrition, and unsustainable development. Only integrated work with clear objectives and precise goals will enable the necessary change to secure the wellbeing of our people.

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Viscay L, de Campos A, Sanseverino S. Farming. Family farming essential in Latin America. [Feedback] World Nutrition July-August 2014, ***5,*** *7-8, 688-699*



Big Food Watch
Kick transnationals out of sport

Access May 2014 Update Thiago de Sa on Coca-Cola at conferences here
Access July 2014 The Lancet Thiago de Sa on Coca-Cola at conferences here
Access July 2014 The Lancet editorial on sponsorship of World Cup here



It takes massive corporate self-confidence to position Christ the Redeemer as an advertisement for Coca-Cola, as done by Coke and FIFA executives at the start of Coke's World Cup campaign

Thiago Herick de Sa writes:

As a new and young member of the *WN* editorial team, I thank my colleagues for their support and mentoring. In May *WN* published an *Update* by me on Coca-Coca 'support' of scientific conferences. Encouraged, I wrote a letter to *The Lancet,* which they have now published, with a supportive editorial. (See above for the links).

The Lancet says: 'This partnering is disgraceful. Health and medical conferences must raise their ethical standards and avoid such financial links'. The editorial also addresses FIFA, saying: 'Supporting physical activity and healthy eating efforts should be a natural link for a sporting federation. Kicking the unhealthy sponsorship habit would be an excellent start'. This all started with *WN*.

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De Sa T. Big Food. Coca-Cola and sport. Kick the transnationals out. [Feedback]. World Nutrition July-August 2014, ***5,*** *7-8, 701*

Big Food Watch convenor Fabio Gomes adds:

In June we announced our commitment to draw up guidelines for organisers, which will show how to keep conferences free from conflicted industry 'support'. Thiago de Sa points out that these should include physical activity as well as nutrition conferences. We will be able to draw on the success of our *Rio2012* conference, which was supported and funded solely by registration fees, and by Brazil's public authorities at federal, state and municipal levels. We will communicate our commitment to *The Lancet* editor Richard Horton.

WN editor Geoffrey Cannon adds:

This is written from Manaus on family vacation with our football-mad 10 year old Gabriel, who watched the England-Italy and Portugal-US games with some gloom. Bigger losers at the World Cup venues are Brazilian long-established food and drink cultures. This is particularly appalling here in equatorial Amazonia, a world centre for astounding abundance of delicious tropical fruits. The airport has been turned into an advertisement for Coca-Cola. The organisers and hosts of big sporting events have a duty to promote local healthy food systems and culture, including fresh local fruit drinks. From now on they better had.

The task now is to encourage the International Olympic Committee to see this, looking forward to the Games also in Brazil in 2016. This should be easy. The Brazilian government has learned a hard lesson, as should all other hosts of the World Cup and the Olympics. Whichever ´parties form a new government in Brazil as a result of the elections late this year, will be eager to show that despite the horrible sponsorship of Coca-Cola and McDonald's, the Olympics will be a festival of all the best fresh food and meals in Brazil. Indeed, this is now an election issue. This is a message for visitors from all over the world to take away with them.

The alternative will be more street demonstrations, and more denunciations. The people of Brazil have exposed the sports transnational FIFA. This issue will not go away. The coincidence of the Olympics also being in Brazil in 2016 is an opportunity that will never come again. Meanwhile, congratulations to Thiago, the most recent member of the *WN* editorial team.

How to respond

Feedback is edited by Isabela Sattamini. Please address letters for publication to wn.letters@gmail.com. Letters usually respond to or comment on contributions to *World Nutrition*. More general letters will also be considered. Usual length for main text of letters is between 350 and 1,000 words but they can be shorter or longer. Any references should usually be limited to up to 12. Letters are edited for length and style, may be shortened or developed, and once edited are sent to the author for approval.