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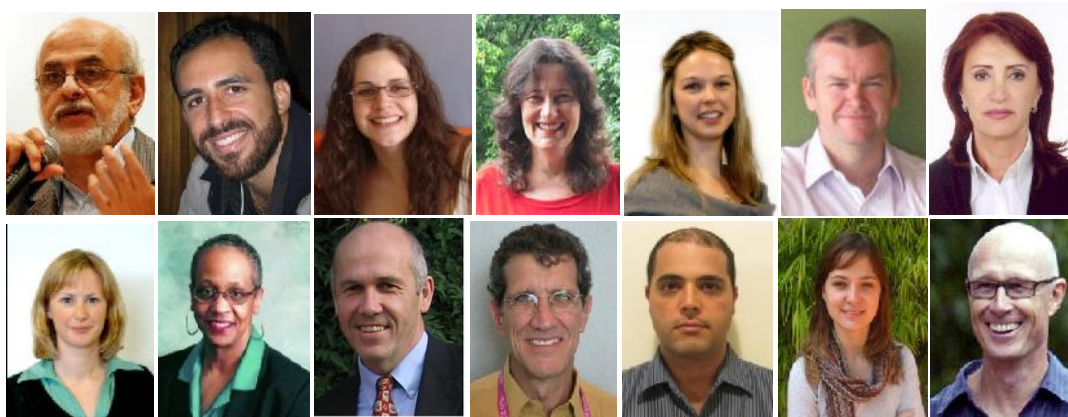
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Short communications. Rio2012. What next

Looking into the future, what do we see?



**Renato Maluf, Fabio Gomes, Sabrina Ionata, Inês Rugani
Asma Ali, Christina Black, Roger Hughes, Nahla Hwalla,
Sarah Kehoe, Shiriki Kumanyika, Mark Lawrence, Carlos Monteiro,
Jean-Claude Moubarac, Isabela Sattamini, Boyd Swinburn**

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Rio 2012. What next. Looking into the future, what do we see? [Short communications]

World Nutrition May 2012, 3, 5, 203-246

Introduction

This second series of short communications, introduces and celebrates the occasion of *World Nutrition Rio2012*, and looks ahead. The previous series was published last month.

The questions and answers

Our contributors have been asked to write within a standard framework, based on their knowledge and experience, in a style comparable with those of the news and comment sections of journals concerned with public health. Their contributions are judgements, as any policy statements are and must be. The first question is about *Rio2012* itself. The second question is addressed to young colleagues. This month we include a number of young leaders to whom this question is directly addressed. All the questions are designed to look forward and to advise, warn and encourage.

- 1 What do I hope *Rio2012* will achieve?
- 2 My advice to a young public health nutritionist
- 3 When I am optimistic, what is my vision?
- 4 When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?
- 5 My most highly recommended writer
- 6 One choice of my own publications

Who we chose to write, and why

In making the choices of writers, were we biased? In a basic sense, yes of course. You will not find any contributors explaining why burgers and cola drinks are the best things since mother's milk. The Association membership does not include executives or employees of the transnational products industries. You also will not find contributors foreseeing that *Rio2012* will be a travesty. Most of the contributors have been engaged in creating the conference or participating in it as speakers. Individually and collectively the contributions are advertisements for *Rio2012* and also for the Association's principles, policies and practices. So there!

This said, we have been moderately methodical in who we invited to contribute. We might even say systematic with tweaks. First, we invited the four *Rio2012* opening and closing plenary speakers. Marion Nestle from the US, Philip James from the UK,

and Reggie Annan from Ghana, we published last month, and Renato Maluf from Brazil, we publish below. Second, we invited the people from the Association and from our partners Abrasco who have had the most central responsibility for creating and organising *Rio2012*. Of these, we published the contributions of Catherine Geissler from the UK, Harriet Kuhnlein from Canada, and Barrie Margetts from the UK, last month, and Fabio Gomes, Sabrina Ionata and Inês Rugani from Brazil appear below this month. (This 'from' business is not straightforward. For example, Sabrina Ionata lived and worked in the UK until recently, and now lives and works in Norway. So let's say she is from Norway).

Third, we invited our website columnists, who all responded. Reggie Annan we mention above, and Geoffrey Cannon from Brazil (or some say the UK) and Claudio Schuftan from Vietnam (or some say Chile, or predictively the US) we published last month. Fourth, we invited all Association Council members, and all but two responded: Urban Jonsson from Kenya (or is it Tanzania, or Sweden) and Agneta Yngve from Sweden (or arguably Norway) last month, and this month Roger Hughes from Australia, Nahla Hwalla from Lebanon, Mark Lawrence from Australia, and Carlos Monteiro from Brazil. Others are already listed above. Then we invited the young Association members who are active workers on and contributors to our website or to *WN*. These, all of whom appear this month, are Christina Black from the UK, Sarah Kehoe from the UK, Jean-Claude Moubarac from Canada (or it is now Brazil), and Isabela Sattamini from Brazil. Here are some of our young leaders.

We also invited one brand-new member, who is Asma Ali from Malaysia (or you could say now, the UK). Then we jolly well chose some members who we knew would write super pieces, as they have done. These are Barry Popkin from the US (and all over) and Ricardo Uauy from Chile (and also points NEWS) last month, and Shiriki Kumanyika from the US, and Boyd Swinburn from Australia (and for those in the know, New Zealand), this month. All but Ricardo are speaking at *Rio2012*. Oh, and also last month's commentary writers: Tim Lang and Geof Rayner, both from the UK. That's 29. Quick check – yes, all mentioned.

What's wrong with this list reflects biases in our profession and our membership so far. Gender balance is not bad, with 12 women. If it had not been for the decision to include young contributors on principle as well as on merit, the average age would have been knocking on the time when sensible folks retire. Geography inevitably is slanted to our hosts Brazil, with 6 (or 7) of the 29, and the UK – and let it be said, Southampton – with 7. Of the 29, 3 are from the US and Australia and 2 from

Canada, and (bearing in mind the complications mentioned above) let's say 1 each from Chile; Ghana and Kenya; Malaysia and Vietnam; and Norway and Sweden.

This exposes a critical and urgent issue for the Association itself. There are here and last months, nobody from India, Indonesia, China or Japan. There are just two from Africa. There was nobody from the north Mediterranean countries, and only one from the Middle East. There was nobody from the Arab world, or from Eastern Europe or the former USSR. And perhaps most serious of all, though understandable, there was last month and this month, nobody from countries and territories being devastated by famine, invasion and internal wars.

The name of the game

The original plan was to run 12 short communications of more or less 1,000 words, give or take around 250 words, just in last month's issue. This plan went out the window. Last month we had 14 contributors. This month we have 15. In the short sections immediately below here, we extract some of the most striking, cogent and wise remarks in response to the first four questions. In each one, there is a highlighted 'editor's choice'.

Box 1

Analysis of and findings from this series

Below and last month we have set out our 29 contributors' responses to our questions. These are designed to address immediate and future crucial issues for the profession of public health nutrition. Or, some would say, public health and nutrition... The approach has not been abstract, as so many are. We have addressed our contributors personally, and we have been deeply impressed by the quality and energy of the responses. We sense that any other request for responses from another group of energetic, dedicated, independent and committed people in our and associated professions would elicit a similar response. We have also made some analyses of these responses, and pointed out striking and significant tendencies and trends. For example.... But no, these findings are not published right here, but in the associated editorial in this issue of *WN*. It has the provocative title 'Who do we think we are?' We suggest you read it after reading what's below. Thus you must have noticed that... no no, patience...

Selected answers

What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Editor's choice!

Asma Ali. 'I'm sure there are many issues to discuss. But my concern is mostly on the nutritional status of populations. I am so motivated to learn from *Rio2012* the root causes of the projected rise of the diet-related diseases from the worldwide view. So I am excited to see the topics of the plenary sessions especially Plenary 1 'How to assure human rights and equity in health and nutrition', Plenary 2 'Biosphere to values: what determines our food systems?', and Plenary 3 'From traditional foods to ultra-processing: policies for healthy eating'. I do hope that from *Rio2012* that we can come up with a *Rio2012 Declaration* and action plan and task forces. [Ed: these are planned!]

Renato Maluf. 'The Brazilian commitment to participatory democracy is enshrined in our national Constitution, and embodied by our National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA). I have had the honour to be President of CONSEA from 2007 to April 2011, on behalf of Brazilian civil society. CONSEA reports directly to the President of the Republic. It is a joint body of the Brazilian government, and of Brazilian civil society, at all levels from national, state, municipal and small communities. I hope that our example, achievements and aspirations will be evident in the conference and will inspire the international participants'.

Fabio Gomes. 'Up to now it's been assumed that nutrition conferences need funds and support from conflicted industry – and as much as possible. This has enabled conference organisers to book extremely expensive hotels and to lay on sumptuous gala dinners for speakers, with fancy venues to hold the conferences. Without money and conspicuous presence from conflicted industry, conferences are impossible. Or so it has been thought. ...So here is the main achievement I expect from *Rio2012*, as an historical turning point. Yes, we can organise a conference with no conflicted money or "support". It can be done. We have done it'.

Nabla Hwalla. 'I hope that *Rio2012* will be inclusive of all regions suffering most from diet-related non-communicable diseases, including my own Middle East and North African region where data, and intervention strategies, are seriously deficient. This

region has been highlighted in many publications as that suffering most from increased prevalence of obesity, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer’.

Sarah Kehoe: ‘I would like to see a set of clear objectives and tasks that can be implemented by public health nutritionists all over the world in order to achieve change’.

Boyd Swinburn: ‘Four of our major planetary challenges are entwined with food and nutrition. These are population growth, climate change, increasing inequities, and the enormous burden of chronic diseases. I hope that *Rio2012* will be able to focus food and nutrition within these global issues. But more than that, there is an onus on big picture conferences like *Rio2012* to clearly articulate the solutions – who should be doing what and when?’

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Editor’s choice!

Sabrina Ionata. Can I advise myself as well as fellow young public health nutritionists? [Ed: Yes, you can!] Believe there is a space for us, search for it, and participate. It can be quite intimidating to get involved in initiatives where most of your colleagues are senior professionals, but always believe that your knowledge and experience are also relevant. Yes, I know from my own experience how difficult this can be, and how hard it can be to work to gain respect and even to be heard. But it is worth it, and we young professionals need to believe in ourselves. There is a space that only we can fill. Let’s see this.

Inês Rugani. ‘Invest in reading and interaction from different areas, such as human rights, communication, ecology, human sciences, which relate to food and nutrition, to broaden your understanding and sense of the scope of the area you choose to work in. Engage in initiatives, networks, associations, and other kinds of collective processes that engage with public health nutrition and its mission’.

Shiriki Kumanyika. ‘Take up at least one other knowledge area besides nutrition science to add to your perspective and your toolbox. Consider economics, city planning, marketing, anthropology, social care, or any other area that is relevant to eating and feeding’.

Mark Lawrence. 'If you are attending *Rio2012*, actively participate in as many activities as possible. Take every opportunity to engage with experienced public health nutritionists and other young public health nutritionists – challenge them and learn from them. To mend the current broken food system means to challenge the predominant “business as usual” approach. You will need multiple competencies beyond knowledge of public health and nutrition, such as policy analysis, advocacy, research and communication’.

Isabela Sattamini. ‘This is me! I am just beginning. I envision a different world, where everybody can have the same access to great food as I do myself. The ability to choose, considering health and pleasure, social and biological profits, should and must be for all. We must always keep in mind our beliefs and never stray from them’.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

Editor’s choice!

Christina Black: ‘I dream of a world where the easiest choice is for people to eat predominantly healthy foods because they are widely available, widely promoted and are competitively priced in comparison to less healthy and unhealthy foods. I see this happening when economic gains are not the primary driving force of food companies and governments, but rather when human health, environmental health and global equality are considered alongside economic gain’.

Renato Maluf. ‘My vision is of increasing participation of civil society organisations, including those who have created and are participating in this congress, in the making, implementing and monitoring of public policies’.

Roger Hughes. ‘That we can rise up and fix the mess we make for others and ourselves. As animals we have big brains and big hearts, but we have to use them. At a professional level, I believe we can mobilise and organise to make a difference in nutrition and public health worldwide’.

Shiriki Kumanyika. ‘I envision a world in which the commitment of the dynamic global food system is to feed people well – meaning, to provide a healthful balance of food and inherently encourage people to eat wisely – in a way that allows them to survive and thrive in the environments in which they find themselves, however these environments have evolved. Once we figure out what that will look like, we will begin to create it, involving powerful stakeholders from multiple sectors’.

Jean-Claude Moubarac: 'I hope to see more dialogue between disciplines, and interdisciplinary work better to understand health and disease. We have accumulated tremendous knowledge about public health nutrition, both in the past and present. More work is needed now to weave it all together into a compelling pattern. Our understanding of human diversity, both in biology and culture, makes us realise that there are more fundamental similarities than differences between individuals, and between groups'.

Boyd Swinburn: 'Constitutional optimism is a requirement in public health, so I am optimistic most of the time. My vision in my most optimistic periods is for a global wave of food democracy, where information access and levers of influence shift away from the big players of governments and food corporations and towards the public. Increasing monitoring and accountability mechanisms can hopefully contribute to this shift in power'.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

Editor's choice!

Carlos Monteiro. The global food system controlled by transnational agribusiness, food processors, and retailers, only concerned with maximising their profits and their returns to shareholders, with no responsibility or real concern for public health or public goods'.

Fabio Gomes: 'I fear that all humans and living beings will be owned and controlled by a few. That rights will be turned into private goods, shared only when subjected to the exchange of money, power, and status. Increase in privatisation of fundamental and elemental public goods, leading to ownership of lives and slavery of the planet in favour of private interests'.

Isabela Sattamini. 'Greed. I fear the predominance of greed and the abuse of life. The bad use of our resources for unjustifiable ends is too dangerous. Sometimes I wonder if some of our world problems can ever be resolved. Is the political will there, to do what most matters in the public interest? Obviously, not yet'.

Here are all the answers

Rio2012 keynote plenary speakers

Rio2012 will be interactive. This means, among other things, that there will be no long plenary lectures presented by one person, with an audience sitting in silence, applauding at the end, and then Maybe a few 'Q&A'. Our opening keynote plenaries, that set the scene, will be brief. The time conventionally given to one speaker will be shared by our people from different parts of the world: Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe. They also have the challenge of summing up what they see is the vision coming from the conference, at its end. Three of these four keynote speakers are Reggie Annan from Ghana, Marion Nestle from the US, and Philip James from the UK, who we featured last month. Here we feature Renato Maluf from Brazil.

Renato Maluf



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I am of course delighted that this first independent public health nutrition conference is being held in Brazil. The Brazilian commitment to participatory democracy is enshrined in our national Constitution, and embodied by our National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA). I have had the honour to be President of CONSEA from 2007 to April 2011, on behalf of Brazilian civil society. CONSEA reports directly to the President of the Republic. It is a joint body of the

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Brazilian government, and of Brazilian civil society, at all levels from national, state, municipal and small communities. I hope that our example, achievements and aspirations will be evident in the conference and will inspire the international participants.

I hope and trust that the conference will face two challenges, and that its participants will continue after the conference to address them. The tasks are to face the global food crisis as a systemic crisis in order better to evaluate its impacts and the opportunities to change the world food system. Also, we need to surmount the institutional limits of the health sector in order to achieve and implement intersectoral actions on food and nutrition.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Work on an interdisciplinary understanding of food and nutrition issues. Take a human-rights based approach to them.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

My vision is of increasing participation of civil society organisations, including those who have created and are participating in this congress, in the making, implementing and monitoring of public policies.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

Loss of public regulation in the public interest and to protect public goods, over transnational corporations and the mass media in everything related to food production, consumption and advertising.

My most highly recommended writer

Harriet Friedman and Philip McMichael Thus I will recommend two, if I may. *[Ed. You may!]* These are Harriet Friedman, who is professor of geography and planning at the Munk school of global studies at the University of Toronto, Canada; and Philip McMichael, chair of the department of rural sociology at Cornell University, New York, USA. They work separately and also as colleagues. Specifically, I recommend their writings on food regimes and the recent food crises. A key paper written by Harriet Friedman published in *New Left Review* is referenced below. *[Editor's note. Philip McMichael is not to be confused with his brother Tony (AJ) Michael of the Australian National University in Canberra; often celebrated on the Association's website]*

Friedman H. The Political Economy of Food: a Global Crisis. *New Left Review* 1/197. January-February 1993.

Friedman H. What on earth is the modern world system? Foodgetting and territory in the modern era and beyond. *Journal of World Systems Research* 2000. 6, 2, 480-515.

McMichael P. Development and Social Change: A Global Analysis. Boulder CO: Pine Forge, 1996.

McMichael P. A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 2009. 36 (1): 139-169.

McMichael P. A food regime analysis of the 'world food crisis'. *Agriculture and Human Values* 2009. Springer/Science.

One choice of my own publications

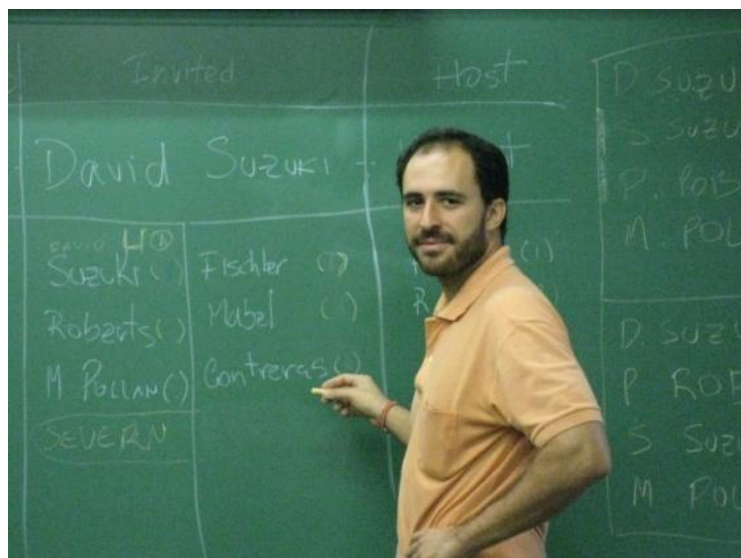
Research reports of my own can be found at: www.ufrj.br/cpda/ceresan. This is the Brazilian reference centre for scholarship on food and nutrition security. Here is a recent book. In English its title is *Food and Nutrition Security*. More details at www.vozes.com.br:

Maluf RS. *Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional*. Petrópolis RJ: Vozes, 2011

Rio2012 masterminds

Rio2012 has been governed and guided by principles agreed between the Association and our Brazilian partners the national public health organisation Abrasco. Thus, everybody attending the conference is invited to and will be able to be a participant. *Rio2012* sees nutrition as part of the public health movement, with social (including cultural), economic, political and environmental dimensions. Overall direction comes from the executive committee. The programme and operational committees each have two facilitators, one from the Association, one from Abrasco. Below we feature Fabio Gomes, in his role representing Abrasco on the programme committee, Sabrina Ionata in her role representing the Association on the operational committee, and overall mastermind Inês Rugani.

Fabio Gomes



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Up to now it's been assumed that nutrition conferences need funds and support from conflicted industry – and as much as possible. This has enabled conference organisers to book extremely expensive hotels and to lay on sumptuous gala dinners for speakers, with fancy venues to hold the conferences. Without money and conspicuous presence from conflicted industry, conferences are impossible. Or so it has been thought.

I'm not saying all nutrition organisers so far, have deliberately turned their conferences into trade fairs, and arranged sessions so that often it's impossible to know whether what is being presented is objective or disguised company propaganda. Most of them probably have probably just followed the *status quo*, the inertial way of reproducing conferences the same way that they have been organised for decades. So here is the main achievement I expect from *Rio2012*, as an historical turning point. Yes, we can organise a conference with no conflicted money or 'support'. It can be done. We have done it. We can now say and also show, 'It is possible!' 'Look around!', to inspire future conferences.

I expect that the second main achievement of *Rio2012* will be one of process as well as design and products. It is being conducted not as a bunch of separate sessions that

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happen to be at the same venue at the same time. The sessions will integrate presentations, discussions, questions, conclusions, action points and products, to progress public health nutrition in a grand sense. Conferences are usually focused only on knowledge sharing and production, so that action is restricted to reporting and sharing. They rarely trigger comprehensive and well articulated actions. I believe our conference really will, to quote our mission, progress from knowledge, to policy, to action!

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Your teachers are students. One of my greatest professors Denise Silva, director of the National School of Statistical Sciences of Brazil, once told me that I could learn everything she taught me from books, or even intuitively. I answered her saying that I need three hours to learn something solely from books, but she could inspire me in 30 minutes. She is right too, we need to read and discuss and think.

Learn from life. Bring what you live to your reading. Experience of life will give you connections and make you more prepared to talk, write and critically read about any topic. My friend Rafael Azeredo, professor of public health nutrition at the Federal University of Alagoas in North-east Brazil, once told me that when he was still an undergraduate student, his teacher asked him to talk about breastfeeding to mothers. He read a lot of books to get ready to talk, and then while talking to the mothers themselves, he found out everything needed was there, in their own daily experience, in their difficulties and joys. This encouraged Rafael to read and learn more about the actual lives of Brazilian mothers, rather than just about breastfeeding techniques.

There is more to your work and your life than your academic or personal curriculum. In due course like us all, you will be tempted to do things that will drive you to favour corporate interests, to be unethical, to favour your selfish personal interests. Do not be seduced. If you are, you will shut your doors of opportunity to make this planet and the planet your children will live in a better place.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

It is of people and living beings considered and treated respectfully. Sharing a world that is shared by all collectively, and that is not abused. As a result our food will be carefully grown and enjoyed, not eaten just as mere fuel as if for machines. The beauty and joy of eating well, and everything that relates to it, will be clear to all, as essential and simple. I see all this as a human right, as art, as an essence of life, as a sense of the divine.

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When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

I fear that all humans and living beings will be owned and controlled by a few. That rights will be turned into private goods, shared only when subjected to the exchange of money, power, and status. Increase in privatisation of fundamental and elemental public goods, leading to ownership of lives and slavery of the planet in favour of private interests.

My most highly recommended writer

Paulo Freire. Education beyond academia, beyond formal teaching and learning, and the way different aspects of knowledge interact: this is very hard to put in words. The great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire has achieved this in his books, which are also great expressions of his militancy for literacy, education, democracy, freedom. The book below is obtainable at: http://www.amazon.com/Pedagogy-Freedom-Democracy-Perspectives-Dedicated/dp/0847690474/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1333984306&sr=1-1.

Freire P. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

One choice of my own publications

My choice addresses and I think comprehensively an issue rarely discussed, although widely recognised as essential, closely related to my daily work. This is the protection of public health nutrition from private interests. It is obtainable at: http://www.unscn.org/files/Publications/SCN_News/SCNNEWS39_10.01_low_def.pdf

Gomes FS, Lobstein T. Food and beverage transnational corporations and nutrition policy. *UNSCN News* 39, 2011.

Sabrina Ionata



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope we will show the whole nutrition community a different way of doing things. We are trying to make a very interactive congress, where people will be able not only to listen, but also to participate. We are also inviting speakers to participate throughout the congress, so that everybody attending will have the chance for exchanges in intervals and other sessions.

Besides interactivity, we are also focusing on the financial independence of the congress from that part of the food industry whose interests conflict with those of public health. This in itself is a huge step forward. We hope to show how it is possible to have a high quality event without compromising our principles, and how crucial is the support of public bodies, like local and national governments, to bring the nutrition agenda forward.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Can I advise myself as well as fellow young public health nutritionists? [*Ed: Yes, you can!*] Believe there is a space for us, search for it, and participate. It can be quite intimidating to get involved in initiatives where most of your colleagues are senior professionals. But believe that your knowledge and experience are also relevant. Yes, I know from my own experience how difficult this can be, and how hard it can be to work to gain respect and even to be heard. But it is worth it, and we young professionals need to believe in ourselves. There is a space that only we can fill.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

That all ongoing national and international efforts to maintain and improve public health nutrition will succeed. That we will be able to achieve food and nutrition security for everybody, everywhere in the world, and that every human being will enjoy their right to adequate food.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

That personal and institutional interests will become more and more powerful than the common good. That such power relations will continue to hinder achievement of social and all other forms of equity, and that all our efforts will be in vain.

My most highly recommended writer

A difficult question; it depends on the purpose and on the occasion. Can I choose two? [Ed: yes you can].

Tim Lang. I quite like Tim Lang's book *Food Policy* (2009) and the links he and his co-authors make between food, nutrition, environment, agriculture and social justice.

Lang T, Barling D, Caraher M. *Food Policy. Integrating Health, Environment and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Olivier de Schutter. He is the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food. I value his reports on the right to adequate food, as this is a cross-cutting issue in all types of nutrition work.

De Schutter O. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. UN General Assembly. Human Rights Council 19th session, 26 December 2011.

One choice of my own publications

I choose this one because I have found that working with traditional communities brings new insights and general sensibility to my work. I recommend this.

Quilombos are communities in Brazil that are descended from those founded by escaped slaves before the time of emancipation. The 'Oliveira' is me.

Sales LR, Oliveira SI, Loureiro MA. Challenges in food and nutritional security: the case of actions in Afro-descendant 'quilombola' communities. *Cadernos de Estudos - Desenvolvimento Social em Debate* 2008, **9**, 67-76. (in Portuguese).

Sabrina Ionata is Association general secretary

Inês Rugani



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope *Rio2012* will achieve meaningful discussions and interactions between people from different areas, between researchers and policy makers, between senior and junior researchers and other professionals. I hope that this process will culminate with clear indications of our priorities for action for the next years and how to address them.

I believe that the atmosphere of the congress will promote in all participants' minds and hearts the idea that our collective action can make a difference towards a more democratic, fairer and sustainable world.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Invest in reading and interaction from different areas that relate to food and nutrition, such as human rights, communication, ecology, human sciences, to broaden your understanding and sense of the scope of the area you choose to work in. Engage in initiatives, networks, associations, and other kinds of collective processes that engage with public health nutrition and its mission.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

That consolidation of democracy and diversification of social movements are beginning to overcome the huge inequities we have in the world.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

That economic interests are so powerful and underdevelopment (in broad terms, including, for instance, gender inequalities) is so huge all over the world, that it will take many generations before a fairer and healthier world is achieved.

My most highly recommended writer

I'm not able to single out only one. Is this OK? [Ed: yes!] My suggestions are: Carlos Augusto Monteiro (on ultra-processed products), Tim Lang (on food policy), Paul Roberts (his book *The End of Food*), Boyd Swinburn (on obesity). Thus:

Monteiro C. The big issue is ultra-processing. [Commentary] *World Nutrition*, November 2010, 1, 6: 237-269. Obtainable at www.wphna.org

Lang T, Barling D, Caraher M. *Food Policy. Integrating Health, Environment and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Roberts P. *The End of Food*. Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

Swinburn B, Sacks G, Hall K, McPherson K, Finegood D, Moodie M, Gortmaker S. The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments. *The Lancet* 2011. 378, 9793, 804-814.

One choice of my own publications

I'd like to choose two, please. In the references below I am Castro IRR.

Portilho F, Casteñeda M, Castro IRR. A alimentação no contexto contemporâneo: consumo, ação política e sustentabilidade. *Ciência e Saúde Coletiva* 2011, V, 16, 99-106.

Castro IRR, Castro LMC, Gugelmim AM. Ações educativas, programas e políticas envolvidos nas mudanças alimentares. In: Diez-Garcia RW, Cervato-Mancuso AM. (eds). *Mudanças Alimentares e Educação Nutricional*. Rio de Janeiro, 2011.

*Ines Rugani is an Association member
She is executive secretary of Rio2012*

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Association members

We asked all Association Council members including those who are not part of the organisation of *Rio2012* for contributions. Here we feature Roger Hughes from Australia, Nahla Hwalla from Lebanon, Mark Lawrence from Australia, and Carlos Monteiro from Brazil. We also selected some Association members, senior and young, who will participate in Rio 2012. The senior members here are prominent *Rio2012* speakers. These are Shiriki Kumanyika from the US and Boyd Swinburn from Australia. The young members with one exception are contributors to our website or to **World Nutrition**. These are Christina Black from the UK, Sarah Kehoe also from the UK, Jean-Claude Moubarac from Canada, and Isabela Sattamini from Brazil. We also chose one brand-new member whose contribution is immediately below: Asma Ali from Malaysia.

Asma Ali



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I'm sure there are many issues to discuss. But my concern is mostly on the nutritional status of populations. I am so motivated to learn from *Rio2012* the root causes of the projected rise of the diet-related diseases from the worldwide view. So I am excited

to see the topics of the plenary sessions especially Plenary 1 'How to assure human rights and equity in health and nutrition', Plenary 2 'Biosphere to values: what determines our food systems?' and Plenary 3 'From traditional foods to ultra-processing: policies for healthy eating'. And once again, I do hope that from *Rio2012*

that we can come up with a *Rio2012 Declaration* and action plan and task forces. [Ed: *these are planned!*]

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Here are some of the things I tell myself....

Be committed. Be aware and concerned, participate, and contribute to finding the solutions of public health issues. Be active in our networks and society.

Be truly committed to what we are doing right now. We do face lots of challenges and obstacles through this rough journey of ours. It is not easy trying to speak out and insist that our governments take good care of food.

Improve our knowledge. If we want to be heard, we must know what we are saying. Then we can handle the issues surrounding us whether these be political, economic, scientific or specifically nutritional. Food relates with all these!

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

To be a nutritionist with an international reputation. To contribute to nutrition gaining in influence. Then I and we can have a say in making policies for food and drink, food regulation, and for the public interest generally.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

That impoverished countries will still struggle through so many hardships before they can supply good food to their people.

My most highly recommended writer

Roger Hughes and Barrie Margetts. Currently I am studying for my PhD and I read lots of papers and books. It's hard to choose one. But as a young public health nutritionist, I would like to recommend a practical handbook written for us. It is like a manual on how to set up an intervention or programme

Hughes R, Margetts BM. *Practical Public Health Nutrition*. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011

One choice of my own publications

I haven't written a book yet. I will! But I do have some published papers. Here is one:

Asma A, Nawalyah A, Rokiah M, Nasir M, Comparisons of food choice motives between Malay husbands and wives in an urban community. *Malaysian Journal of Nutrition* 2010, **16**, 1, 69-81.

Asma Ali is a new Association member.

Christina Black



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope *Rio2012* stirs every participant's passion for public health nutrition and enables all of us to leave with one or two key actions we can implement when returning home. The conference is providing opportunities for debate and discussion of key issues and so I believe passions will ignite. I hope the discussions encourage us to reflect on their current practice, where we fit in the public health nutrition agenda and how our efforts are part of the collective. Then each of us can identify an action we can implement to further move the agenda forward.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

This is advice for me also. Find a topic about which you feel strongly. Personal enthusiasm encourages foresight and the energy required for action. Learn from

people on the ground who are affected by the issue that makes you passionate. Inspire and support them to drive the solution forward. Identify a leader in the field that you admire, reflect on the skills that make them admirable and how you could adopt one of these skills in your current practice.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

I dream of a world where the easiest choice is for people to eat predominantly healthy foods because they are widely available, widely promoted and are competitively priced in comparison to less healthy and unhealthy foods. I see this happening when economic gains are not the primary driving force of food companies and governments, but rather when human health, environmental health and global equality are considered alongside economic gain. In this world people would value food: where it comes from, the resources used and how our bodies are nourished by food; food preparation and consumption would become a focal point of everyday life.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

A world where dietary patterns are a product of depleted natural resources and economic advancement remains the primary objective of commercial and government agencies. Where inequity in food availability grows wider and food becomes a source of competition and resentment. This picture is bleak and I will be part of the wider public health nutrition action to prevent it from happening.

My most highly recommended writer.

Clive Hamilton. Once described as an ‘economist with a conscience’, Clive Hamilton is an Australian public intellectual and former executive director of the Australia Institute. With others, he denounces the relentless drive to more and more economic growth and consumerism, and how little these contribute to improvement of current human happiness and health. His books, while a little heavy on economic theory at times, reflect on how the global focus on ‘economic growth’ is largely failing human and environmental health. He offers alternative indicators of human advancement. Visit:
http://www.clivehamilton.net.au/cms/index.php?page=growth_fetish

Hamilton C. *Growth Fetish*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003.

Hamilton C. Denniss R, *Affluenza. When Too Much is Never Enough*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2005.

One choice of my own publications

This is new for me. Having had my first paper rejected outright, I have been somewhat dismayed by the peer-review world of publishing! I have been told by my colleagues and superiors that it is all part of the ‘publishing waltz’; while there appears to be rhythm and structure to the process, for some reason one partner (papers can feel like partners at times) can be seamlessly smooth while another can be clumsy and step on your toes! I reflect on my rejected paper, and try to attribute part of my difficulty to the topic – the food environment – a mix of public health nutrition, geography, and marketing.

But then I realise that this is public health nutrition. The nature of our work is collaborating with sectors outside health, as for example education, psychology, policy, geography. Being able to absorb the concepts and ideas of different disciplines is an important part of being respected and understood. My research is investigating first, how environmental factors are associated with the quality of diets of mothers with young children and second, how these associations are mediated by individual and social factors.

This involves a comprehensive assessment of environmental factors and will be one of the first studies of its type in the UK. I am finding that while supermarkets offer the most healthful food shopping environment, they have more promotions on less healthy items, and price them lower than healthy items. To find out more about my research and the larger study within which it is nested, see below, and keep an eye out for my future publications – I’m sure that smooth waltzing will come my way soon!

Visit <http://www.mrc.soton.ac.uk/index.asp?page=291>

*Christina Black is an Association member
She is assistant to the treasurer*

Roger Hughes



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope *Rio2012* will be a turning point for public health nutrition as a professional discipline. I hope it inspires us to pull together irrespective of ideology, personality or reputation, and to get better at addressing malnutrition in its many forms. I hope it helps us to organise ourselves to build capacity in our professional community to do what we need to do to have an impact. I hope it is rich in debate and in opportunities to meet, befriend and learn from people from different countries. I want to talk to, and argue with, some of our legends in our discipline. I hope to understand my limitations better, and to learn in the process. I want to go home with a clearer vision of how I can personally contribute to our cause.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Above all have the courage to stand up and be counted, to make mistakes and possibly some enemies, but stay focused in making a difference. We all have leadership responsibilities. Consider public health nutrition to be a lifelong profession. Be intolerant of your own limitations, and continually strive to get better at what you do. Be inquisitive, argumentative and strive to learn from your elders (personal and professional). Plan to be much better and much sooner than your elders by making the most of their life-long learning. Team up with a mentor.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

That we can rise up and fix the mess we make for others and ourselves. As animals we have big brains and big hearts, but we have to use them. At a professional level, I

believe we can mobilise and organise to make a difference in nutrition and public health worldwide.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

I see little value in and have no excuse for being pessimistic.

My most highly recommended writer

I admit to not reading nearly enough and I recognise that my knowledge and world-view is limited by this.

Tim Lang. I always recommend the works of Tim Lang. He is a great writer, a great thinker, and very inspirational.

Lang T, Barling D, Caraher M. *Food Policy. Integrating Health, Environment and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Geoffrey Cannon. I am entertained and learn much, reading his column on the Association's website.

Cannon G. Keeping honest, and other stories [Column] Website of the World Public Health Nutrition Association, April 2012. Obtainable at www.wphna.org

One choice of my own publications

In 2011, I published my first book together with Barrie Margetts. Its purpose is to try and meet a need for a simple step-by-step capacity building model of public health nutrition practice for teaching students and encouraging better practice. This is a work in progress.

Hughes R, Margetts BM. *Practical Public Health Nutrition*. Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Roger Hughes is an Association Council member

Nahla Hwalla



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope that *Rio2012* will be inclusive of all regions suffering most from diet-related non-communicable diseases, including my own Middle East and North African region where data, and intervention strategies, are seriously deficient. This region has been highlighted in many publications as that suffering most from increased prevalence of obesity, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

My general hope is to see the Middle East and North African region highlighted, as a focus of attention for capacity building, research, and culturally appropriate interventions. By capacity building and support for our researchers and professionals, we can endeavour to combat and curb non-communicable diseases. So I hope that *Rio2012* will include reports from India, China, Russia, France and the US and also from Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and African countries.

We need to strengthen nutrition and physical activity in addressing non-communicable diseases. Most interventions now focus primarily on hypertension and smoking, which, although important, are not sufficient. Currently there are limited intervention studies with a nutritional component. Maybe the relevant professionals have inadequate nutrition knowledge and expertise. This needs to include practical experience: as Philip James succinctly put it: 'I had to learn nutrition on the job'.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Work as a member of a team with allied health professionals, key government bodies (promoting health in all policies), and also the private sector.

Advocate nutrition as vital for food security, non-communicable disease prevention and overall population health, with determination and perseverance.

Maintain your passion, and your vision of working towards healthy people, communities, societies and nations.

Keep up to date and advocate evidence-based policies and actions.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

That the importance of nutrition is leveraged, and that it is generally recognised as integral to food security and to public health policy, nationally and internationally.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

That nutrition will remain mostly restricted to dietitians in hospitals and clinics, never reaching the general public.

My most highly recommended writer

There are so many good writers. For my students I recommend a journal, *Nutrition Today*. This bi-monthly journal of the American Society for Nutrition, edited by Johanna Dwyer, presents science in an easy and accessible manner. It highlights and brings in focus current nutritional issues presented in an attractive manner. I find that it sparks students' interest in pursuing a career in nutrition.

One choice of my own publications

This is one of the early papers highlighting high-protein diets in weight loss and management of hyperinsulinemia. The article can be accessed online from <http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v23/n11/abs/0801064a.html>. I was the first author.

Baba NH, Sawaya S, Torbay N, Habbal Z, Azar S, Hashim S. High protein vs high carbohydrate hypoenergetic diet for the treatment of obese hyperinsulinemic subjects. *International Journal of Obesity* 1999, **23** (11), 1202-1206.

Nabla Hwalla is an Association Council member.

Sarah Kehoe



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope *Rio2012* will stimulate enthusiasm for tackling public health problems by researchers and practitioners at all stages of their careers. I would like to see a set of clear objectives and tasks that can be implemented by public health nutritionists all over the world in order to achieve change. I also think it will be a great opportunity to meet like-minded people and to develop local and global networks.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

This is also my advice to me. Read widely. Keep an open mind and be objective when reading published work or listening to talks. Talk to many people about the issues that are important to you, hopefully making lots of friends along the way!

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

I am optimistic most of the time! My vision is a reduction in the health inequities within and between countries. I also hope that governments and policy makers will implement policies that will change the 'obesogenic' environment that we live in.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

No change in how things now are now, and a widening gap between the economically rich and poor in terms of health outcomes.

My most highly recommended writer

Ben Goldacre. I don't always agree with his opinions but he encourages you to think critically and question scientific publications and data. He is clearly passionate about the topics he writes on. He has a very dry sense of humour and I often laugh out loud when reading his books or newspaper columns. He used to write a column for *The Guardian*, which is accessible on his own site: www.badsience.net

Goldacre B. *Bad Science*. London: Harper Collins, 2008.

One choice of my own publications

This is a chapter in a book about food-based approaches to reducing the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies and adverse health consequences. For six years, I have worked on the Mumbai Maternal Nutrition Project, a randomised controlled trial aimed at assessing the effect of consumption of a daily snack on the health of women and their children. This paper describes the way in which the snacks (containing only food ingredients) were developed with the input of the local community. The aim is that the intervention will be sustainable and will benefit the community as a whole both in terms of health outcomes and by providing employment. See: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am027e/am027e00.pdf>

Shivashankaran D, Gurumurthy S, Kehoe S, Chheda PS, Margetts BM, Muley-Lotankar P, Agarwal A, Brown N, Sahariah SA, Taskar V, Fall CHD, Potdar RD
Developing micronutrient-rich snacks for pre-conception and antenatal health: the Mumbai Maternal Nutrition Project. In: Thompson B, Amoroso L (eds) *Combating Micronutrient Deficiencies: Food-based Approaches*. CAB International, Wallingford, UK/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 2011.

Sarah Kehoe is an Association member.

She shares responsibility for our website social media section

Shiriki Kumanyika



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Determined dreamer-realist that I am, I hope that we will come away with a clearer understanding of what we can do about food – which is, after all, the way people get their nutrition. I refer primarily to the chronic tension between how public health thinks and feels about the food industry (production, manufacturing, marketing) and how or even whether the food industry as a whole thinks about public health.

I hope to resolve the dilemma of needing to bite (sometimes very, very hard) the hand that feeds us and then bracing for the harsh reactions that seem certain to come. I hope that we, as the academic and activist public health *food* community, will be strategic and brilliant in thinking through our options and opportunities.

Moreover, we will go forward with a plan that involves whomever and whatever it takes to put the world and its people back on the right food track. We needed to know what to do in the 21st century before the 21st century was upon us. Now that we are in it, the question becomes one of what the 22nd will look like. Seems far away, but it is certain to come, and we need to assure that the world's people will find themselves in a better place food-wise, when it does.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist?

Work hard to remember that 'no one sits down to a plate of nutrients' and that food really belongs to the social realm. Take up at least one other knowledge area besides nutrition science to add to your perspective and your toolbox.

Consider economics, city planning, marketing, anthropology, social care, or any other area that is relevant to eating and feeding.

Listen closely to those with whom you really disagree. Someone agrees with them. Figure out why? And then...

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

I envision a world in which the commitment of the dynamic global food system is to feed people well – meaning, to provide a healthful balance of food and inherently encourage people to eat wisely – in a way that allows them to survive and thrive in the environments in which they find themselves, however these environments have evolved. Once we figure out what that will look like, we will begin to create it, involving powerful stakeholders from multiple sectors.

This vision includes a central focus on equity. Inequities seem to crop up even when we are verbally, at least, committed to not having them, but especially when there is no such expressed commitment. This is not just for undernutrition. Even with obesity, ethnic minority populations in many different high-income societies become more obese than their respective general populations.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

I see us public health nutritionists backing ourselves into a corner, with finely honed arguments about ‘shoulds’, while repeatedly collecting and crunching data. We shout, but only at ourselves. No one else is listening. And I see us all overweight or obese.

My most highly recommended writer

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). This French sociologist and philosopher has to be my choice. I must confess that I have understood him more from the interpretations of other scholars than from direct references to his works. See, for example the scoping paper by Elaine Power for Health Canada, on determinants of healthy eating: <http://catspaw.its.queensu.ca/jspui/bitstream/1974/1223/7/EMP%20Final%20Determinants%20single.pdf>. Pierre Bourdieu came to mind immediately because applications of his work to nutrition and public health have helped me to understand social stratification, and how it affects the way people see and act in their worlds. He also introduced me to the concept of *habitus*. Informed understanding of human

nature is essential, if you are in public health nutrition and want to be helpful to anyone.

Bourdieu P. *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

One choice of my own publications

I choose to highlight an article that emerged from a conference on transformative consumer research (TCR), a convening of marketing and consumer researchers striving to use their science to do good (of the type public health people appreciate). I was invited by a colleague who is a marketing researcher and member of the TCR organisation, to be an ‘out of the box’ guest, to sit with their food and health track in a two-day dialogue. Picture a dozen or so of us sitting in a circle, thinking and sharing ideas, without powerpoints!). The result was a conceptual framework for ‘food well-being’ which we present in narrative and graphically. For me this concept of food well-being expresses elements that might be needed to begin putting a 22nd century food puzzle together in a way that comes up with a different picture. See what you think. <http://www.journals.marketingpower.com/doi/abs/10.1509/jppm.30.1.5>

Block L, Grier S, Childers T, Davis B, Ebert E, Kumanyika S, Laczniak R, Machin J, Motley C, Perrachio L, Pettigrew S, Scott M, van Ginkel Bieshaar M. From nutrients to nurturance: a conceptual introduction to food well-being. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 2011, **30**, 1, 5-13.

Shiriki Kumanyika is an Association member

She is co-chair of the International Obesity Task Force

Mark Lawrence



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

My hope is that our conference will stimulate critical and creative debate about the current broken overall global food system, and provide practical solutions so that it functions sustainably, healthily, economically and equitably in future. My belief is that *Rio2012* will provide the opportunity for participants to renew old friendships, form new alliances and share visions. As in Rio, I am sure that future Association conferences will provide wonderful forums to be with like-minded people.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Public health nutrition is an exceptionally important and relevant career path for anyone passionate about making a difference when it comes to protecting and promoting the health of populations. If you are attending *Rio2012*, actively participate in as many activities as possible. Take every opportunity to engage with experienced public health nutritionists and other young public health nutritionists – challenge them and learn from them. To mend the current broken food system means to challenge the predominant ‘business as usual’ approach’. You will need multiple competencies beyond knowledge of public health and nutrition, such as of policy analysis, advocacy, research and communication.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

My hope is that democratised and sustainable food systems will be achieved. This will require community based movements taking greater control, and through their abilities and commitment innovative solutions will be found.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

My fear is that the overall global food system will remain broken and even disintegrate further, while the governments remain disinterested or incapable of providing leadership to transform it. This scenario will be pre-destined if communities continue passively to accept the situation as it is.

My most highly recommended writer

Tim Lang. He combines critical analysis of the 'big picture' with practical and positive advice. I recommend:

Lang T, Heasman M. *Food Wars: The Global Battle For Mouths, Minds and Markets*, London: Earthscan, 2004.

Lang T, Barling D, Caraher M. *Food Policy: Integrating Health, Environment and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009

Rayner G, Lang T. *Ecological Public Health. Reshaping the Conditions for Good Health*. London: Routledge/Earthscan, 2012

One choice of my own publications

This reference book has proved to be very successful public health nutrition training resource. Personally it was a great opportunity to work with so many highly respected colleagues.

Lawrence M, Worsley T (editors). *Public Health Nutrition: from Principles to Practice*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2007.

Mark Lawrence is an Association Council member.

Carlos Monteiro



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Several things. These will I believe include a better understanding of the underlying and basic causes of nutrition-related health problems, and of the public actions needed to prevent and control them. One singular achievement of *Rio2012* will be, I am sure, to prove that it is possible to organise a successful and productive world class nutrition conference without funds or other support from conflicted sources.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Work hard, be independent, never be disheartened.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

One global food system which protects the environment, supports the diversity of food cultures, and promotes social justice and health and well-being for all. This will be possible only as a result of a giant effort from all of us who work in the public interest.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

The global food system controlled by transnational agribusiness, food processors, and retailers, only concerned with maximising their profits and their returns to shareholders, with no responsibility or real concern for public health or public goods.

My most highly recommended writer

Amartya Sen. Any of his books and papers in which he explains the concepts of ‘entitlements’ and ‘capabilities’ and defines development as a process of expanding people’s entitlements and capabilities, as in ‘Entitlements go beyond purely economic factors and consider political elements that affect people’s capability to command commodities, including food’. Solutions to food and nutrition problems and crises always require understanding of factors that go far beyond biological or individual considerations. For example, we in Brazil have found that key reasons for the sharp reduction in undernutrition in the North-Eastern region, include improvements in the education of girls, and in sanitation and safe water supplies. For me, Amartya Sen’s ideas are essential to understand the deep causes of hunger and malnutrition, and inspirational in identifying public actions to prevent them.

Sen A. Development: which way now? *The Economic Journal* 1983, **93**:745-762.

Sen A. *Inequality Reexamined*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Sen A. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

One choice of my own publications

For many years I felt that what is still the conventional view of nutrition and health, which is to focus on nutrients or on individual foods grouped according to nutrient profiles, and to ignore or overlook food processing, does not adequately explain the relationship between nutrition and diseases, particularly obesity and other non-communicable diseases. This sense of unease was steadily increased by the time-series analyses done by me and my colleagues at the University of São Paulo (USP) of national health and nutrition surveys and household food expenditure surveys carried out in Brazil since the 1970s. This work did not suggest that conventional approaches were wrong, but that they were very inadequate.

With my research group at USP, I became increasingly interested in broader approaches to nutrition and food systems, such as those of Tim Lang, Marion Nestle, and Michael Pollan. I then found that Geoffrey Cannon, my colleague and friend since his decision to live and work in Brazil in 2000, had also been thinking along the same lines regarding the overlook of food processing. So together we took the decision to propose and explore the concept that ‘with nutrition and health, the

issue is not nutrients, and not food, so much as what is done to food before it is purchased and consumed. That is to say, the big issue is food processing’.

But of course almost all food is processed in some sense. How to make sense of this idea? And so we coined the term ‘ultra-processing’, defined it, and divided everything that is consumed into foods, ingredients, and (ultra-processed) products. This concept works; and I am told that altogether, the UPP series in ***World Nutrition*** has so far been accessed more than 75,000 times. Here then is where we started on what has become a journey to hopefully give a new definition and direction to public health and to nutrition:

Monteiro C. The big issue is ultra-processing. [Commentary] *World Nutrition*, November 2010; 1, 6: 237-269. Obtainable at: www.wphna.org

*Carlos Monteiro is an Association Council member
He is author of the WN series of commentaries on ultra-processing*

Jean-Claude Moubarac



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

I hope *Rio 2012* will bring researchers and students to a consensus on the importance of addressing how modern techniques of food processing affect the overall quality of foods, and consequently human health. This is a priority for the next decade. Also, I hope this congress will foster future collaborations between researchers, not always from North to South, but also from South to North.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

This is advice that I myself, with a background in anthropology, have taken. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach. Read and attend meetings outside your specific area of expertise and your own cultural sphere. Be open-minded. Challenge orthodoxy and challenge the status quo. Reach out to senior researchers and benefit from their experience, and sometimes, wisdom. Never give up on a contribution you have worked hard on. Develop and maintain your networks in the research and social sphere.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

I hope to see more dialogue between disciplines, and interdisciplinary work better to understand health and disease. We have accumulated tremendous knowledge about public health nutrition, both in the past and present. More work is needed now to weave it all together into a compelling pattern. Our understanding of human diversity, both in biology and culture, makes us realise that there are more fundamental similarities than differences between individuals, and between groups.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

I am deeply worried about the expansion of the global food industry quasi-monopolies, and especially the power exerted by transnational industry over political and economic theory and practice, elected governments, and social institutions. Any concentration of power as intense as this must be detrimental to public health, and it seems worse when it comes to food. I wonder how much profits over food can be optimised without seriously damaging food quality. Similarly, I am worried about the conflicts of interest and pressures exerted by the food industry whose interests conflict with ours, on public health research.

My most highly recommended writer

Not a fair question! Right now, I strongly recommend Carlos Monteiro for his recent papers and commentaries on the new classification of food based on the nature, extent, and purpose of food processing. His new thesis about the importance of food processing in public health nutrition is groundbreaking.

In medical anthropology, I especially appreciate Gilles Bibeau, both for his writing and quality of research. No philosophers reach my mind like Jean-Jacques Rousseau did, especially in his work on governance in the *Contrat Social*. Noam Chomsky is another preferred author.

Monteiro CA, Levy RB, Claro RM, Castro IRR, Cannon G. A new classification of foods based on the extent and purpose of their processing. *Cadernos Saude Pública* 2010, **26**, 2039-2049.

Monteiro CA. The big issue is ultra-processing. *World Nutrition* November 2010, **1**, 237-269. Obtainable at: www.wphna.org

Bibeau G. *Le Québec Transgénique. Science, Marché, Nation*, Montréal : Boréal, 2004.

One choice of my own publications

I am proud of our upcoming publication, currently under review. In this paper, we reported that over three-fifths (61.7 per cent) of dietary energy in my native country of Canada comes from ultra-processed products, and that overall the national diet exceeds WHO upper limits for fat, saturated fat, free sugars and sodium density, with less dietary fibre than recommended. It also exceeds the average energy density target set in the 2007 World Cancer Research Fund report *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*. Can I include my recent *WN* commentary also? [Ed, *Aw shucks Jean-Claude, since it's you...*]

Moubarac J-C. The big issue is ultra-processing. Sexing up ultra-processed products. [Commentary] *World Nutrition*, March 2012, **3**, 3: 62-80. At: www.wphna.org

Moubarac J-C, Martins M, Claro RM, Levy RB, Cannon G, Monteiro CA. *Consumption of ultra-processed foods and likely impact on human health. Evidence from Canada*. (Submitted for publication).

Jean-Claude Moubarac is an Association member

Isabela Sattamini



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Rio2012 will take place in my home city and also in the university where I graduated as a nutritionist. So I am excited! The whole idea of gathering people from all around the world who work with similar principles and goals is an amazing achievement. I have great admiration for my teacher Inês Rugani, who is masterminding the congress as its executive secretary. She is truly great. I am very interested in international issues and learning from different cultures as well as in telling my own experiences, so the contact with professionals from other countries in my field, in my home city, is going to be a great privilege. Listening to other people's successes and failures will certainly help me a lot in my personal and professional journey in public health nutrition.

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

This is me! I am just beginning. I envision a different world, where everybody can have the same access to great food as I do myself. The ability to choose, considering health and pleasure, social and biological profits, should and must be for all. We must always keep in mind our beliefs and never stray from them. This is crucial to build a brilliant career and to achieve personal satisfaction with it. We must always be clear what our priorities are and never let ourselves down.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

Hope. I have faith in us humans and I believe we can find solutions to the problems we create ourselves. The ability to transform and to reinvent is endless. Therefore,

Cite as: Maluf R, Gomes F, Ionata S, Rugani I, Ali A, Black C, Hughes R, Hwalla N, Kehoe S, Kumanyika S, Lawrence M, Monteiro C, Moubarac J-C, Sattamini I, Swinburn B.

Rio 2012. What next. Looking into the future, what do we see? [Short communications]

World Nutrition May 2012, 3, 5, 203-246

optimistically, I see a world where sustainable great food will be available for all, and good health patterns will predominate as a result of smart public policies and personal choices. I believe public health nutrition and science will increasingly gain force. An example of that is the community participation in knowledge building along with traditional science, as well as the strengthening of minority groups in society.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

Greed. I fear the predominance of greed and the abuse of life. The bad use of our resources for unjustifiable ends is too dangerous. Sometimes I wonder if some of our world problems can ever be resolved. Is the political will there, to do what most matters in the public interest? Obviously, not yet.

My most highly recommended writer

Michael Pollan. This might be difficult for some scientists to accept, but Michael Pollan is a journalist and author who talks about food and nutrition better than anyone I have ever read. He gets to the point very well and, better than this, has the ability to write in clear language, in a very accessible way that can reach all types of public. He has travelled around many different places, among farms and food industries, to give his point of view a firm base. In his recent book he has laws for good eating. These highlight the importance of knowledge about food origin and production, natural food, fruits and vegetables. The last law is: break the laws once in a while. He sees the social side of nutrition, valuing cooking and conviviality, and also the importance of balance, in every choice. Access his website:

www.michaelpollan.com. May I choose more than one book? [Ed: *Why not, yes yes*]

Pollan M. *The Omnivore's Dilemma. The Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

Pollan M. *In Defense of Food. An Eater's Manifesto*. New York: Penguin Press, 2008.

Pollan M. *Food Rules. An Eater's Manual*. London: Penguin Books, 2009.

One choice of my own publications

My master's thesis dissertation. It is in preparation – I am writing it now! It analyses CONSEA, the Brazilian National Food and Nutrition Security Council, as an

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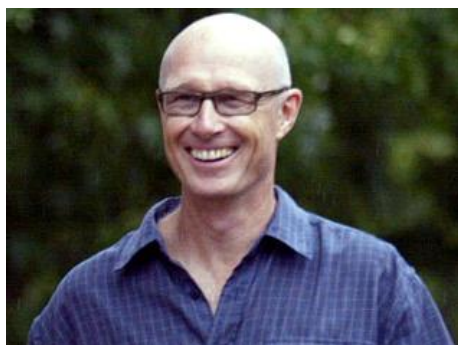
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institution and in action. I am also using in this analysis, data concerning the Brazilian burden of disease, in order to gauge the nutritional problems of Brazilian society.

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Boyd Swinburn



What do I hope Rio2012 will achieve?

Four of our major planetary challenges are entwined with food and nutrition. These are population growth, climate change, increasing inequities, and the enormous burden of chronic diseases. I hope that *Rio2012* will be able to focus food and nutrition within these global issues. But more than that, there is an onus on big picture conferences like *Rio2012* to clearly articulate the solutions – who should be doing what and when?

My advice to a young public health nutritionist

Let's hope there are many of you already preparing for action, for goodness knows, we need you. Get some exposure to global issues early in your career, if possible with internships, placements or positions within one of the global agencies, because so many population nutrition issues have significant global influences. Getting a feel for what it is like inside the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the World Bank, or other global or regional agencies, will

give you insights into their perspectives and their institutional strengths and weaknesses. In general, get connected globally. You can use membership in the Association this way. The greatest source of knowledge, shared experience and democratic movements is often through networks and we need those networks to be humming.

When I am optimistic, what is my vision?

Constitutional optimism is a requirement in public health, so I am optimistic most of the time. My vision in my most optimistic periods is for a global wave of food democracy, where information access and levers of influence shift away from the big players of governments and food corporations and towards the public. Increasing monitoring and accountability mechanisms can hopefully contribute to this shift in power.

When I am pessimistic, what do I foresee?

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ shows a depressing side of human nature. We seem unable to lift ourselves beyond our selfish circles to deal with large, chronic problems. The most pessimistic outlook is of the increasing influence of the oligarchies of power – be they countries or corporations or individuals – making the decisions for the rest of us.

My most highly recommended writer

Michael Pollan. For an accessible and fascinating story of food, start with his classic *Omnivore’s Dilemma*. (<http://michaelpollan.com/books/the-omnivores-dilemma/>). Being able to cut through the cacophony of nutrition research to come up with ‘Eat food, mainly plants, not too much’ is brilliant – if only more academics had that level of incisive thinking.

Pollan M. *The Omnivore’s Dilemma. The Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World*. London: Bloomsbury, 2006.

One choice of my own publications

In our recent *Lancet* series on obesity (27 August 2011; 378:804-847) <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/issue/current?tab=past>), we summarised the evidence on the drivers of the rise in obesity globally. We concluded that it has been ‘pushed’ by an oversupply of cheap, hyper-palatable, heavily-marketed, energy-

dense foods. The series also gives explanations for the 100-fold differences in the prevalence of obesity, which include variations in local environments including socio-cultural, built environments and transport systems. We also provided insights derived from physiological modelling on weight gain and weight loss for people and populations. The final paper in the series outlines the steps that need to be taken by the key actors to reverse this pandemic. See in particular:

Swinburn B, Sacks G, Hall K, McPherson K, Finegood D, Moodie M, Gortmaker S. The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments. *The Lancet* 2011, **378**, 9793, 804-814.

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