

Notes from the Roundtable

## **METRICS OF SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

Bioversity International  
Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso  
27<sup>th</sup> November, 2012  
Madrid, Spain

### Summary

Over 30 academics, scientists, policy makers and others came together for one day to hear and discuss sustainable diets and what is needed to measure, promote and evaluate sustainable diets in different contexts. A number of recommendations emerged:

- 1) Need for a solid evidence base to influence policy and programmes;
- 2) Establish a common language among the scientific community about what qualify as sustainable diets;
- 3) Further work is needed to understand the concept of sustainable diets and operationalize these in different contexts. Bioversity, with Carasso support, will begin work on this topic in early 2013. Continued collaboration with FAO and others is key to moving this agenda forward;
- 4) A major limitation is that we don't know what is in the food we eat or how much is eaten by whom. We need to have more specific data about food intake and consumption;
- 5) Need for a whole diet approach, not focusing only on single foods or nutrients, using new tools to optimize diets from multiple aspects; e.g. linear programming;
- 6) Develop research guidelines in consumption surveys to capture different diet dimensions;
- 7) Food grouping should be changed: via production rather than nutritional values;
- 8) Invest in research to drive consumer choice with more partnership with private sector where there is developed data;
- 9) Focus on consumers needs and expectations to drive new and innovative research with new data;
- 10) Change behaviours among producers of food as well as suppliers, manufacturers and marketers is critical to understand and influence sustainable diets;
- 11) Taking a multidisciplinary system approach to understand what transformations are necessary to create an enabling environment for sustainable diets;
- 12) At the policy level, interact with the European Union and others to introduce biodiversity indicators in their surveys on food consumption and dietary patterns;
- 13) Invest in new methods of measurement and improvements in the accuracy of data;
- 14) Establish accessible and credible global databases and partnerships;
- 15) Strengthen capacity in countries to provide the needed statistics with the need to invest in national data;
- 16) Build a network of researchers on the topic of sustainable diets;
- 17) Think prospectively. Sustainability emphasizes the need for foresight that can help anticipate change;
- 18) A strong conceptual foundation for sustainable diets alongside policy and programme area to do more in developed and developing countries;
- 19) The Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso are sponsoring a special symposium at the 20<sup>th</sup> International IUNS conference in Granada, Spain on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013. More information to follow with the Madrid Roundtable forming a base for the design and participation in Spain.
- 20) Publication of a background brief on metrics.

## 1. Background

The Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso together with Bioversity International is working with partners to undertake a new and important research agenda to describe, measure and influence policy and programmes on sustainable diets with the goal of improving nutrition and health. Particular focus will be given to the development of metrics to reflect the multiple dimensions of a healthy and sustainable diet.

There is an urgent need to research and advance innovative strategies to better understand measure and promote sustainable diets, emphasizing the positive role of food biodiversity in human health and nutrition. Looking forward, we need a future where food systems or food environments are constructed around human needs, but with a view to sustainability, where low carbon, accessible, culturally relevant and nutritionally adequate food is the norm.

The Madrid roundtable began a process to:

- Address gaps in our understanding of what constitutes a sustainable diet
- Build on the example of the Mediterranean Diet
- Understand the need to value biodiversity and nutrition plus other dimensions
- Propose new research on describing, measuring and promoting sustainable diets
- Identify a process for developing indicators and guidelines aimed at measuring the sustainability of diets worldwide

The roundtable had the following objectives:

- To identify approaches used to describe a sustainable diet, through specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time based descriptors
- To explore options on how to measure a sustainable diet, in a systematic and reproducible way
- To characterize the key determinants for a sustainable diet and how these determinants can be measured in a spatio-temporal way in perhaps a consolidated index.

Bioversity International, with the support of the Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso Foundation, has begun a research programme, based out of its Montpellier offices, to reach a consensus which characterizes and measures sustainable diets. Led by an econometrician, Dr. Thomas Allen, the work began in early 2013.

## Agenda

Roundtable on Metrics of Sustainable Diets and Food Systems

Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Moderator: Jeff Waage

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 8:30  | Welcome<br>Marina Nahmias, President, Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso  |
| 8:45  | Opening Remarks<br>Agnès Martin and Emile Frison  |
| 9:30  | Sustainable diets and policy: Why is it important?<br>Jennie Macdiarmid   |
| 10:15 | Coffee Break  |
| 10:45 | Health and nutrition implication of econutrition: Why sustainable diets are important<br>Richard Deckelbaum   |
| 11:30 | Metrics around sustainable diets<br>Lawrence Haddad   |
| 12:15 | Panel 1: Framing a research agenda for sustainable diets<br>Jessica Fanzo, Nicole Darmon, Barbara Burlingame  |
| 13:30 | Lunch   |
| 14:45 | Panel 2: Measurements, information systems and a way forward for a research agenda for Sustainable Diets<br>Marie-Claude Dop, Eileen Kennedy, Geoffrey Marks, Roseline Remans |
| 16:00 | Wrap-up and Closing   |

Location: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC), Madrid

## Participant List

### Roundtable on Metrics of Sustainable Diets and Food Systems

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| ALLEN, Thomas            | OECD   |
| BURLINGAME, Barbara      | FAO  |
| COGILL, Bruce            | Bioversity International   |
| CURCIO, Vanessa          | Bioversity International   |
| DARMON, Nicole           | INRA-Research Institute Agronomy                                     |
| DECKELBAUM, Richard      | Columbia University  |
| DOP, Marie-Claude        | IRD-Institute Research Development                                   |
| FANZO, Jessica           | WFP<br>Premio Daniel Carasso Award Winner                            |
| FRISON, Emile            | Bioversity International   |
| GUSTAFSON, Ellen         | 30 Project   |
| HADDAD, Lawrence         | IDS, Sussex University   |
| JACKSON, Alan            | University of Southampton  |
| JOHNS, Timothy           | McGill University  |
| KENNEDY, Eileen          | Tufts University   |
| MACDIARMID, Jennie       | Aberdeen University  |
| MARADEIX, Marie Stephane | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| MARKS, Geoffrey          | University of Queensland   |
| MARTIN, Agnès            | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| MATTEI, Federico         | Bioversity International   |
| NAHMIAS, Jacques         | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| NAHMIAS, Emmanuel        | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| NAHMIAS, Laurence        | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| NAHMIAS, Marina          | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| PADILLA, Martine         | IAMM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute                               |
| REMANS, Roseline         | Columbia University  |
| SORET, Sam               | Loma Linda University  |
| SOUTOU, Guilhem          | Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso                                     |
| TRICHOPOULOU, Antonia    | University of Athens   |
| WAAGE, Jeffrey           | Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health |

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KEY NOTE PRESENTATIONS

Health and Nutrition Implications of Ecnutrition:  
Why Sustainable Diets are Important  
Richard J. Deckelbaum, MD, CM, FRCP(C)  
Departments of Pediatrics and Epidemiology  
Institute of Human Nutrition, Columbia University  
The Medical School for international Health  
27 November 2012

Sustainable diets and policy: Why is it important?  
Jennie Macdiarmid, Ph.D.  
Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health  
University of Aberdeen  
27 November 2012

Sustainable Diets: Time to pilot some metrics  
Lawrence Haddad, Ph.D.  
Institute of Development Studies  
Sussex, UK  
27 November 2012