

# Sustainable Diets

## Task Force Report Form 2018



**IUNS**  
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### Task Force Chair/s

Barbara Burlingame and Stineke Oenema

### Task Force Members

1. Namukolo Covic, IFPRI-Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. Sandro Dernini, Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures, Italy
3. Kunchit Judprasong, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand
4. Mark Lawrence, Deakin University, Australia
5. Jennie Macdiarmid, University of Aberdeen, Scotland
6. Farah Naja, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
7. Cristina Tirado, University of California, USA
8. Penina Vatucawaqa, National Food and Nutrition Centre, Fiji
9. Ex officio: Harriet Kuhnlein, ex-Chair of Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems TF
10. Benjamin Caballero, IUNS Council

### Summary of Activities in 2018

The Sustainable Diets' Task Force (SDTF) was established in July 2018. At the same time it was agreed that the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF), along with its chair, Cristina Tirado, be integrated with Sustainable Diets as many of the activities overlapped. The SFTF activities are consistent with the consensus definition of sustainable diets:

Sustainable diets are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources. FAO, 2010, Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity.

In its few months of operation, the SDTF and its members were instrumental in providing input into international, regional and national processes and forums, conferences, and technical seminars/workshops. Several papers, books and reports were published by TF members on the topic of sustainable diets.

## Report of Activities and Achievements in 2018

In July 2018, the IUNS approved the proposal for a new Task Force on Sustainable Diets. Several activities and achievements can be reported for its first five months, August through December 2018.

The Task Force provided a submission in September 2018 to the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in response to its request to the IUNS for input. The submission framed human nutrition and sustainable diets as ecosystem services and stressed the viewpoint that explicit alignment with ecosystems helps clarify the important role of the environment sector, along with health and agriculture, in addressing the multiple burdens of malnutrition.

As a member of the National Organising Committee for the World Nutrition Congress 2020 (World Public Health Nutrition Association) and an Expert external advisor for the Committee reviewing Canada's Food Guide, Health Canada, TF member Mark Lawrence provided expert advice for the inclusion of a sustainable diet theme and principles into both committees' work programs.

Contributions have been made to the development and standardisation of nutrition indicators for assessing sustainable diets, with the submission in December 2018 of the paper, Review of methodologies for assessing sustainable diets and potential for development of a harmonised model by Paul Eze Eme, Barbara Burlingame, Jeroen Douwes, Nicholas Kim and Sunia Foliaki.

The research programme at Massey University on nutrition, food systems and sustainable diets, under the direction of Professor Burlingame, has contributed to the development, validation and standardisation of methodologies for characterising different agro-ecological zones for sustainable diets. Field research in collaboration with Bioversity International was undertaken by PhD student Chris Vogliano in the Solomon Islands in July, 2018, and in Kiribati by PhD student Paul Eme, in collaboration with Caritas International, in August 2018.

In this same research programme, a survey was undertaken by MSc student Rebekah Jones, to advance the topic of best practices for sustainable diets and sustainable dietary guidelines. The survey looked at differences among professionals in the sectors of health, agriculture and the environment for addressing elements of sustainable diets through food-based dietary guidelines. The results show substantial alignment between health and environment sector professionals, and lack of alignment on several specific elements by the agriculture sector. The full research paper will be published in 2019, along with a review submitted to a monograph, Sustainable Diets – Linking Nutrition and Food Systems.

Food-based dietary guidelines was the subject of a consultation in October 2018 attended by Namukolo Covic. The inclusion of sustainability issues was introduced, and will be elaborated in the context of sustainable food based dietary guidelines for Africa.

Several papers and books addressing the topic of sustainable diets were published by TF members, including the following:

Fara Naja et al. (2018). Environmental footprints of food consumption and dietary patterns among Lebanese adults: a cross-sectional study. *Nutrition Journal* 17:85  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12937-018-0393-3>

Turner, GM, Larsen, KA, Candy, S, Ogilvy, S, Ananthapavan, J, Moodie, M, James, S, Friel, S, Ryan, CJ, Lawrence, M. (2018). Squandering Australia's Food Security - The environmental and economic costs of our unhealthy diet and the policy path we're on. *Journal of Cleaner Production*.195: 1581-1599. Doi: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.07.072.

James, SW, Friel, S., Lawrence, MA. Hoek A, Pearson, D. (2018). Inter-sectoral action to support healthy and environmentally sustainable food behaviours: a study of sectoral knowledge, governance and implementation opportunities. *Sustainability Science*. 13(2): 465-477. Doi:10.1007/s11625-017-0459-8

de Ruiter H, Macdiarmid JI, Matthews RB, Smith P. (2018) Moving beyond calories and protein: micronutrient assessment of sustainable diets and land use. *Global Environmental Change*, 52, 108-116.

Asvatourian V, Craig T, Horgan GW, Kyle J, Macdiarmid JI. (2018) Relationship between pro-environmental attitudes, behaviour and dietary intake patterns. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2018.08.009>

Reynolds CJ, Horgan GW, Whybrow S, Macdiarmid JI (2018) Healthy and sustainable diets that meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and are affordable for different income groups in the UK. *Public Health Nutrition* (in press).

Macdiarmid JI, Clark H, Whybrow S, de Ruiter H, McNeill G. (2018) Assessing national nutrition security: The UK reliance on imports to meet population energy and nutrient recommendations. *PLOS ONE* <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0192649>.

Green R, Joy EJ, Harris F, Agrawal S, Aleksandrowicz L, Hillier J, Macdiarmid JI, et al. (2018) Greenhouse gas emissions and water footprints of typical dietary patterns in India. *Science of the Total Environment*. 643, 1411-1418

Whybrow S, Macdiarmid JI (2018) Attitudes towards, and purchasing of, Scottish beef and beef products in Scotland. *Meat Science* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2018.06.026>.

*Sustainable Diets -- Linking Nutrition and Food Systems*, was released in December 2018. <https://www.cabi.org/bookshop/book/9781786392848>

The book takes a transdisciplinary approach and considers multisectoral actions, integrating health, agriculture and environmental sector issues to comprehensively explore the topic of sustainable diets. The team of international authors, including Burlingame and Dernini as editors, and several other TF members as chapter authors, informs readers with arguments, challenges, perspectives, policies, actions and solutions on global topics that must be properly understood in order to be effectively addressed. They position issues of sustainable diets as central to the Earth's future.

Other miscellaneous highlights:

Co-chair Stineke Oenema presented on the topic "Sustainable Diets for Healthy people and a healthy planet" (based on the UN SCN publication of 2017) at several global events including the Committee on World Food Security (October, 2018), as a complement to the State of Food Insecurity 2018 that links climate change to the growing number of food insecure people.

Jennie Macdiarmid chaired a 'sandpit' bringing together early career scientist to develop interdisciplinary research proposal on transforming systems funded by BBSRC Global Food Security programme (£1.8m funding). UK (July 2018)

Jennie Macdiarmid was invited to be a member of the Science Advisory Group for the BBSRC Global Food Security programme (UK), which has the role of setting interdisciplinary research priorities and provide expert advice and guidance for funding and the programme.

Kunchit Judprasong and Barbara Burlingame presented sustainable diets in several lectures at the ASEANFOODS food composition training course in Myanmar in September 2018 (support from ILSI SE Asia).

Jennie Macdiarmid was an invited speaker at the Food Forum of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, How to Reduce the Carbon Footprint without Sacrificing Affordability, Nutrient-Density and Taste, Washington, USA (August 2018); the Nuffield Bioethics conference, Shifting to healthy and sustainable diets: how can we engage with consumers? London, UK (July 2018); and the Nutrition Society Annual Conference, Nutrition from a climate change perspective, Leeds, UK (July 2018).

Sustainable diets was the focus of Barbara Burlingame's presentation to the New York Academy of Sciences Sackler Institute for Nutritional Sciences webinar on food systems solutions to the problems of malnutrition, in September 2018.

The role of two TFs, Sustainable diets and Traditional and indigenous food systems and nutrition, featured in the High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems, Rome (November 2018). Barbara Burlingame was an invited speaker on sustainable diets, biodiversity and Small Island Developing States.

1. Mark Lawrence presented an invited keynote address, Regulating to protect public health and environmental sustainability, at the Public Health Association of Australia Food Futures conference, 20-21 November 2018, Brisbane.

All TF members are Chief and/or Associate Editors for the journal 'Frontiers in Nutrition and Environmental Sustainability', and are involved in the publishing, reviewing and editing papers on the topic of sustainable diets.