

# TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON NUTRITION AND HIV/AIDS

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Functions

With the HIV/AIDS epidemic continuing to take a devastating toll on health, nutrition and overall socioeconomic development, there is need for a renewed priority focus on HIV/AIDS and nutrition as a fundamental component of any approach to caring for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The World Health Organization's response in this crucial problem includes support to governments, national health authorities, and scientific and professional groups. In the context of alleviating the overall burden of malnutrition, WHO strives to reduce the severity and complexity of the impact that HIV/AIDS and nutrition have on each other. In many resource-limited settings, the two are intimately related through the vicious cycle of undernutrition leading to immune dysfunction and infectious diseases, which in turn exacerbate malnutrition. Nutritional care and support help to ease the burden of the AIDS even as they serve to alleviate the overall impact of malnutrition.

The Technical Advisory Group on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS is established as the principal international technical advisory body with responsibility for making recommendations to the Director-General of WHO for appropriate action in national and international settings.

Specifically, the Technical Advisory Group is responsible for advising the Director-General and, through her, Member States, the international community and other interested parties, on the following key issues:

- up-to-date scientific information on nutrition and HIV/AIDS;
- nutritional, including macro- and micronutrient/food, needs of people infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS, particularly in resource-limited settings;
- food security needs – as distinct from nutritional requirements – specific to HIV/AIDS;
- nutritional requirements for children and pregnant women;
- current nutrition programmes and interventions, and their evidence base and efficacy;
- potential interactions between current and proposed treatment regimens (for example ARV/HAART) and nutritional status;
- translating science into policy, with special attention to social and behavioural factors having an impact on programme implementation;
- strategies needed to make nutrition an integral part of any essential care and services package for people infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS;
- approaches to effective collaboration with all concerned partners to ensure comprehensive cost-effective interventions;
- setting an appropriate research agenda.

## **Composition**

The Technical Advisory Group will be composed of 8 to 12 members, serving in their individual capacity, representing a broad range of technical expertise and related disciplines required for the comprehensive fulfilment of these terms of reference.

Members of the Technical Advisory Group, including the chairperson, shall, on the basis of sound scientific, technical and geographical criteria, be nominated by the Director, Department of Nutrition for Health and Development (NHD) and approved by the Acting Director-General, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health (NMH).

Members of the Technical Advisory Group, including the chairperson, shall be appointed initially to serve for a period of two years and shall be eligible for reappointment for a further period of two years.

## **Operation**

The Technical Advisory Group will meet at least annually, and on an ad hoc basis as may be required. In addition, members will make themselves available to WHO, on request, through electronic and other communication means.

As may be appropriate on an ad hoc basis, additional experts in the field of nutrition and HIV/AIDS will be invited to attend meetings of the Technical Advisory Group and to participate in networking.

The Department of Nutrition for Health and Development shall act as the secretariat for the Technical Advisory Group.

The Technical Advisory Group shall elect, from among its members, a vice-chairperson and a rapporteur for each meeting.

The Technical Advisory Group shall prepare an annual report on the basis of its review of the strategic aspects of WHO activities in the area of nutrition and HIV/AIDS. This report, containing the Group's findings and recommendations, shall be submitted through Director NUT, for approval by the Acting Director-General, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health (NMH).