

Sustainable Dietary Guidelines: a test case for ecological public health

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What is meant by Sustainable Diets?

- ❖ Entered public health lexicon in 1987
- ❖ Most pared down formulation: Good nutrition with low carbon emissions
- ❖ In more complex form: eating within environmental limits while eating for health and in a manner appropriate to economic, social and cultural circumstances

A Definition of **Sustainable Diet**:

FAO & Bioversity International,

International Scientific Symposium, Final Doc, 3-5 Nov 2010

<http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/23781-0e8d8dc364ee46865d5841c48976e9980.pdf>

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'.

UK Sustainable Development Commission 2011 report proposed sustainability as a complex set of ‘poly-values’

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1187>

<p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taste • Seasonality • Cosmetic • Fresh (where appropriate) • Authenticity 	<p>Social values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasure • Identity • Animal welfare • Equality & justice • Trust • Choice • Skills (citizenship)
<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Energy use • Water • Land use • Soil • Biodiversity • Waste reduction 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Nutrition • Equal access • Availability • Social status/ affordability • Information & education
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security & resilience • Affordability (price) • Efficiency • True competition & fair returns • Jobs & decent working conditions • Fully internalised costs 	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science & technology evidence base • Transparency • Democratic accountability • Ethical values (fairness) • International aid & development

Crises in the food system: Evidence is strong

- ❖ Health: hunger, obesity, NCDs, nutrition transition
- ❖ Environment: climate, H₂O, land, biodiversity, resource use (N&P in fertilisers)
- ❖ Economics: prices, labour, healthcare costs
- ❖ Social inequality: life chances, demography,

Difficulties in developing Sustainable Dietary Guidelines (1)

Reasons for evidence-policy gap

- ❖ Commercial
 - ❖ Commercial lock-in to a 70 year infrastructure (in rich countries)
 - ❖ Profit from staple grains vs. diversified agricultural system
- ❖ Professional
 - ❖ intellectual fragmentation, when interdisciplinary perspective is needed
- ❖ Political
 - ❖ No one has taken a lead
 - ❖ Political lock-in to consumer choice
 - ❖ Multiple instruments and interventions are required
 - ❖ Growth vs. sustainable development tensions
 - ❖ Divided responsibilities (governments and companies) prevent policy coherence

Difficulties in developing Sustainable Dietary Guidelines (2)

- ❖ Practical and process matters – it is complex!
 - ❖ Changing diets is hard
 - ❖ Only an authoritarian state – Qatar – has delivered Sustainable Dietary Guidelines so far
- ❖ Intellectual framework: big issues are raised
 - ❖ Single vs. multi-criteria ways of thinking
 - ❖ Approaches vary:
 - ❖ Attempts to create formal (Sweden, USA, Australia) vs. informal guidelines (Germany, Netherlands)

The case for Sustainable Dietary Guidelines (SDGs x 2 = SDG²)

- ❖ Provide a rational policy framework
- ❖ Link to UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
- ❖ Reconnect nutrition, health and agri-food
- ❖ Bridges the NCD / CO₂e discourse gap
- ❖ Re-set moral and political drivers
- ❖ Refocus institutions around consumer needs
- ❖ New basis for public advice and supply chain goals:
 - ❖ what to eat + how to consume + how produced

Sustainable Dietary Guidelines: initiatives to date

❖ International

- ❖ FAO defined Sustainable Diets 2010: <http://www.fao.org/food/sustainable-diets-and-biodiversity/en/>
- ❖ Big UN framework thinking
 - ICN2 2014
 - Sustainable Development Goals 2015
 - World Cities → Milan Urban Food Policy Pact 2015http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm
 - Paris Climate Change Accord 2015
 - Habitat III 2016

❖ National

- Sweden 2009
- New Nordic Diet 2010
- NL Health Council 2011
- UK Green Food Project 2012
- German Council of Sustainable Development 2014
- Brazil Dietary Guidelines 2014
- ❖ Qatar National Dietary Guidelines

❖ Local

What needs to happen?

- Specific Sustainable Dietary Guidelines (SDG²)
- Aim to hook Sustainable Diets to the already accepted UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Requires a broad alliance of civil society, academia, the public and progressive elements of industry