



In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Address by

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to the

**TECHNICAL CONSULTATION FOR DEVELOPING THE
NUTRITION SURVEILLANCE TRAINING MODULES**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Technical Consultation for Developing the Nutrition Surveillance Training Modules, which will contribute to test and finalize the training modules of the nutrition surveillance. The World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is organizing this technical consultation in collaboration with WHO headquarters, the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF and World Food Programme. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all involved for their collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know that Nutrition surveillance is increasingly being recognized as a necessary tool for monitoring the food and nutrition situation in a country, especially among the disadvantaged population groups and in nutritionally backward areas, so that early action may be taken if the situation deteriorates. Through such a system, food and health planners are able to gain insight into nutritional trends over a period of time, information that is vital to forward planning and policy formulation. Similarly a tool such as this is invaluable to health administrators in the planning, management and evaluation of health and nutrition activities.

There is a great deal of evidence to indicate that, in times of disaster, emergency relief operations and supplies, however abundant, generally do not serve the purpose for which they are intended and usually fail to prevent large-scale death and destruction. This is largely

because of a lack emergency preparedness. From the standpoint of nutrition, the use of food and nutrition surveillance methodologies as the basis of an early warning system for predicting emergency situations, such as drought and famine, is an area of considerable importance to several disaster-prone countries of this Region. Moreover, it is vital for those countries where chronic malnutrition already prevails and is periodically exacerbated to an acute degree by such emergencies.

I would like to emphasize the importance of actually using the output of a nutrition surveillance system. Without a clear indication of the uses of such a system and a commitment to take action on a regular basis, its development is a waste of time and resources, similar to conducting time-consuming expensive nutrition surveys with no attempt at utilizing the results. However, if properly planned and executed, a nutrition surveillance system is an essential tool for the effective functioning of a national food and nutrition policy. As I have mentioned, it is of invaluable assistance to health and nutrition planners; it can also be of great use to the managers of any development programme with health and nutritional objectives, to policy and decision-makers in both the food and agriculture sectors and to national development planners. Obviously, the precise nature of a surveillance system will depend upon the needs of the target population.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This technical consultation is aiming to built capacity building in the Region in the area of nutrition surveillance system and to help to develop training modules which will be used by the Trainers who will be conducting series of trainings at regional, sub-regional and national levels.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your active participation and thank the other UN agencies for joining us in this important forum.

I wish you much success in your endeavors.

Thank you.