

# Re-orienting food policy to improve nutrition: *Integration and policy coherence*

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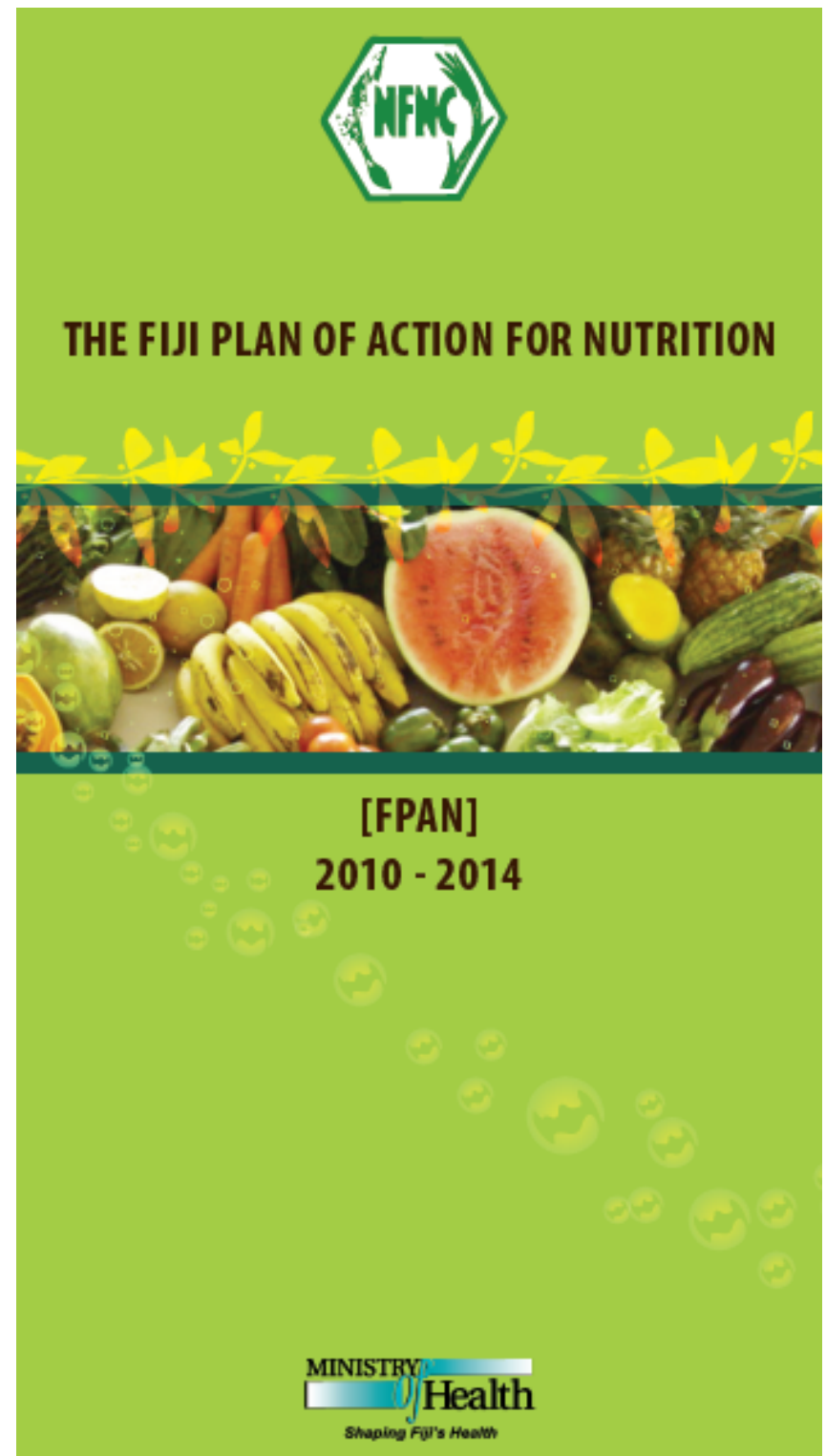


THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



# Improving diets and health

- Country-level adoption of policies to improve the **nutritional quality of diets**
  - Accessible, affordable, attractive healthy food
  - Sustainable production
  - Informed consumers to enable healthy choices
  - Supportive environments/settings



# Improving diets and health | Sectors that govern the food supply

- Country-level adoption of policies to improve the nutritional quality of diets
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Is healthy food available/accessible?

- Agriculture (production)
- Trade (availability)
- Commerce (retail)

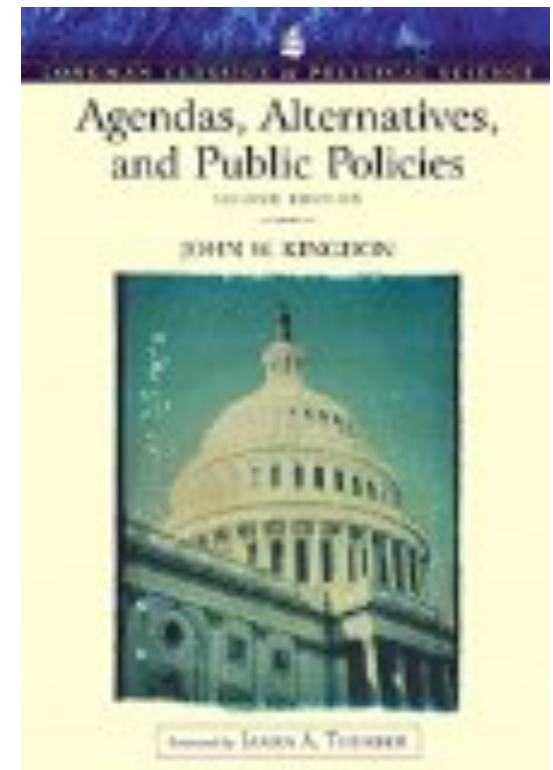
Is healthy food affordable?

- Finance (tax & tax breaks)
- Trade (import taxes)
- Agriculture (subsidies)

*\*\*\*Note the role of the health sector\*\*\**

## Behind the implementation challenge: The political economy of food security and nutrition

- Very slow adoption of global nutrition policy recommendations for supply of accessible, affordable healthy food *in the sectors that govern the food supply*
- Instead, we see policy incoherence – food supply policies that do not support nutrition policy objectives
- Understanding policy agendas:  
Problems, policy (solutions), politics  
(Kingdon 1984)



# Incoherence #1: The problem has changed

## *Forty years of policy investment to address hunger*

- Food policy focusses on calories – good for the old problem
  - To combat severe/acute undernutrition, the urgent need was for food: quality was a secondary issue
  - Now we see persistent chronic undernutrition (child stunting 30-40% in most developing countries) and high rates of micronutrient deficiencies, at the same time that overweight and diet-related chronic disease prevalence escalating:  
**nutritional quality is critical**

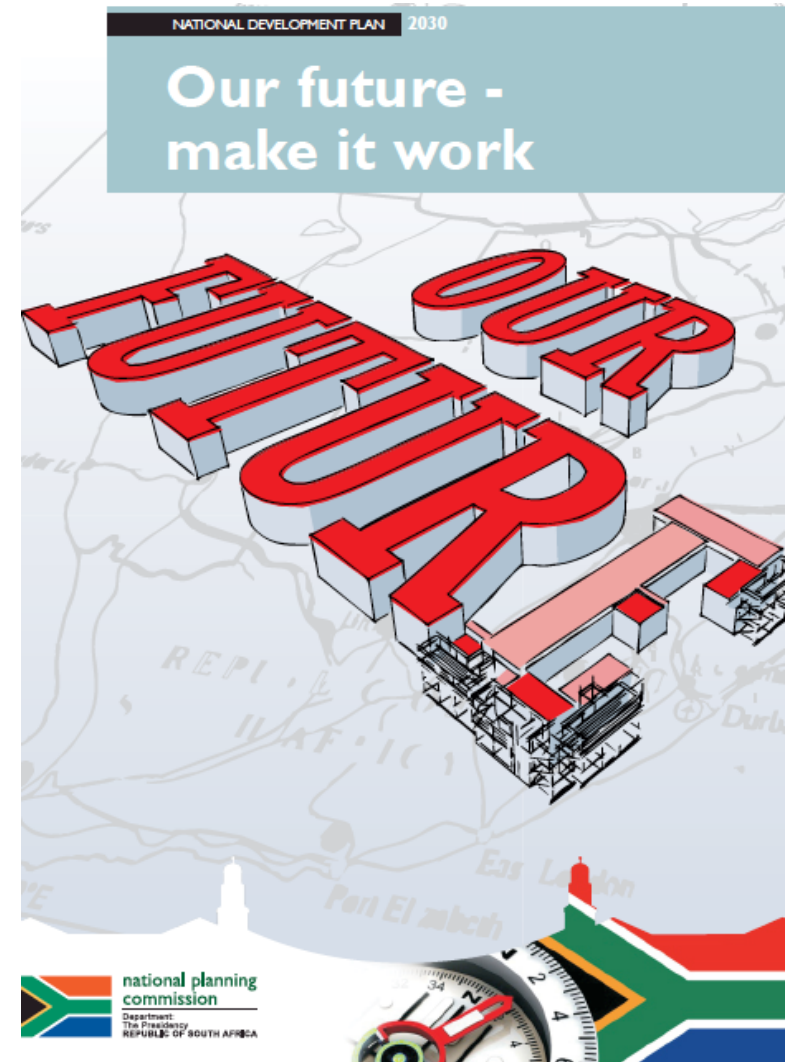
*Where economists do consider nutrition it is often defined by what they can measure—household calorie availability... This has resulted in a certain **calorie fundamentalism**... which in turn carries over into policy debates.*

*Headey et al (2012). Food Security.*



## Incoherence #2: The policy solution speaks another language

- The policy solutions lie outside the health sector, in the economic sectors that govern the supply chain: trade, finance, agriculture and commerce
- Decisions in these sectors are focussed on economic priorities:
  - Employment
  - Cash crops and rural development
  - Gross domestic product improvements
  - Balance of payments concerns
- Nutritional quality is usually not considered in these economic policy decisions



## Incoherence #3: Nutrition policy space is constrained by international economic agreements

- The politics of food policy space is also the domain of international economic agencies
- Very real constraints on nutrition policy making stem from these entrenched economic policy commitments



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
WASHINGTON, DC

RI, G33 Calls for the Importance  
of Food Security in WTO

Thow & Kumar  
Sharma (forthcoming)



Health Promotion International



**Nutrition labelling is a trade policy issue:  
lessons from an analysis of specific trade  
concerns at the World Trade Organization**

Anne Marie Thow ✉; Alexandra Jones; Corinna Hawkes; Iqra Ali; Ronald Labonté

# Reorienting food systems to address the double burden of malnutrition

## 1. Reframing the **problem**

- Moving from calories to nutritional quality: a new policy frame for nutrition

## 2. Identifying specific and strategic **policy solutions**

- What incentives are shaping the current outcome?
- Moving from generic recommendations to specific, contextually appropriate policy options

## 3. Engaging with the **politics**

- Taking up opportunities in the economic agendas of sectors that govern the food supply
- Creating institutional structures that enable cross-sectoral dialogue



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## Mexican soda tax cuts sales of sugary soft drinks by 6% in first year

Anti-obesity campaigners now want levy on drinks such as Coca-Cola doubled, in line with experts' recommendations



theguardian

## Chile Seeks to Fight Obesity With New Food Labeling Law

AMERICAS

June 28, 2016 3:30 PM

Associated Press



## भारत का राजपत्र The Gazette of India MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (Legislative Department)

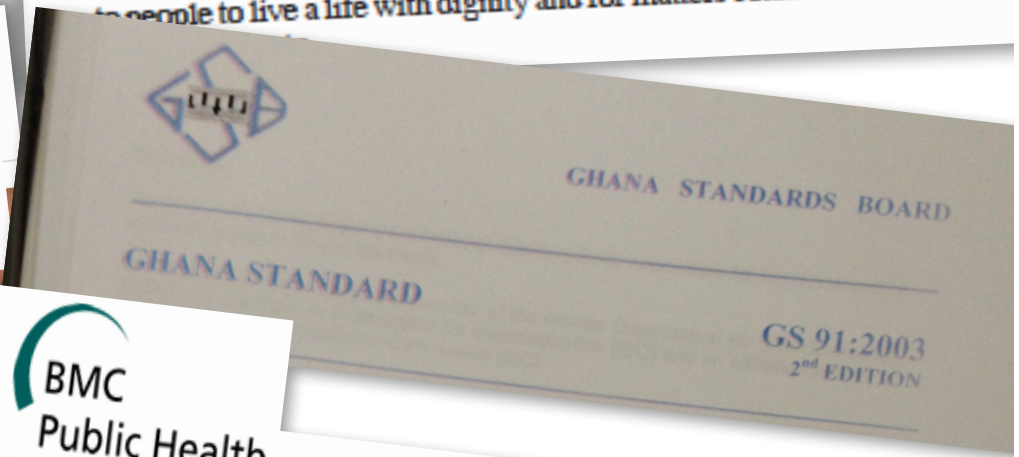
New Delhi, the 10th September, 2013/Bhadra 19, 1935 (Saka)

The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 10th September, 2013, and is hereby published for general information:—

### THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT, 2013 No. 20 of 2013

[10th September, 2013.]

An Act to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable price to people to live a life with dignity and for matters connected therewith or



BMC  
Public Health

Development, implementation and outcome of standards to restrict fatty meat in the food supply and prevent NCDs: learning from an innovative trade/food policy in Ghana

Highly accessed

Open Access

Anne Marie Thow<sup>1\*</sup>, Reginald Annan<sup>2</sup>, Laudina Mensah<sup>2</sup> and Syeda Nafisa Chowdhury<sup>1</sup>



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