

# NIPN AT A GLANCE

1st Quarter, March 2020

## The Second NIPN Advisory Committee Meeting Identified key Priorities For 2020



is linked with the needs of the highest level of nutrition decision making in relation to demand and uptake of evidence. In order to achieve this goal, the NIPN AC provides EPHI with high level advice, validates the NIPN policy questions and supports the uptake of NIPN evidence by decision makers.

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The Advisory Committee of the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN AC) was established in May 2019 to deliver high level advice to the NIPN.

The committee came together for the second time on January 28, 2020, to discuss the 2019 achievements of NIPN, identify the key priorities for 2020, comment and

validate the 2019 NIPN priority policy questions which are expected to be responded by NIPN, and discuss the NIPN regional dashboard.

The chairman of the advisory committee, Dr. Ferew Lemma recalled the important role of the NIPN AC, which is, ensuring each step in the NIPN cycle

Ato Masresha Tessema, Director of the Food Science and Nutrition Research Directorate (FSNRD) and the secretary of the AC recalled the agreed actions that were put in the previous AC meeting were all done.

The deputy Director of the FSNRD and the coordinator of the NIPN, (Cont. to P3)

## The MER SC Workshop Discussed the NNP II Performance Report and

The National Nutrition Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Steering Committee (MER SC) meeting was conducted on January 30, 2020 in Addis Ababa. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss

the progress of NNP-II, to provide highlights on the 2021 National Nutrition survey, to report the findings of the recent operational researches undertaken by EPHI and to give an overview of the activi-

ties of the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN). The workshop officially started with keynote speeches from EPHI-FSNRD, (Continued to P4)

## Message From The Coordinator

### Ethiopian Public Health Institute/NIPN Initiates Mitigation Measures During The Pandemic



Aregash Samuel(PhD) Deputy Director of FSNRD and NIPN coordinator

***"The possible scenarios of NIPN's three major outputs and results that could be affected by the COVID 19 are mentioned and mitigation methods are recommended by EPHI."***

***Get the latest update of COVID19 status in Ethiopia at:***

***[www.ephi.gov.et](http://www.ephi.gov.et)  
FB: ephipage***

The first quarter of the year 2020 was overshadowed by the threat of the deadly COVID19 virus across the globe. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been taken by this virus and countries are working hard to control the virus.

Ethiopia is working hard to prevent the danger of the virus by taking several preventive measures. Among the measures the state of emergency (SOE) has been declared, the preparation of quarantine places has got due attention, capacitating the health facilities and the training of health professionals has been done with great motivation, and the availability of health equipment has been worked out.

In addition, the allocation of budget and fund raising campaigns are the basic tasks done so far. As one significant step to hinder the virus threat, a lot of public awareness campaigns using media are still going on, street campaigns through influential persons and top government officials were done to prevent the virus impact among the public. Even though the virus threat greatly put its impact on the

daily routines of our lives, forced the public to stay at home and posed a challenge to the unique asset of Ethiopian culture. But, life continues beyond the limitations.

As we aspire to see the virus contained, the EPHI/NIPN team implements some measures to continue daily deliverable despite the pandemic hindering significant work activities.

The possible scenarios of NIPN's three major outputs and results that could be affected by the COVID 19 are mentioned and mitigation methods are recommended by EPHI.

To mitigate the possible impact of the virus, the team applies different coping mechanisms and decides to use possible communication methods to continue the routine meetings and discuss updates. The team will continue working from home and meets the deliverables within the allocated related time frame.

Due to the current situation, some activities might encounter delays and forced postponement. Among these, the quarterly Monitoring Evaluation and Research Steering Committee (MER SC) and NIPN Advisory Com-

mittee (AC) members meetings will not be held during this time, and seminar schedules will be postponed due to the SOE. In collaboration with international food policy research institute (IFPRI), efforts will be made to have the seminar using recorded webinars. Online meetings will be arranged for some activities which will need discussion among the team, such as the 7 policy questions given by the Ministry of Health to the NIPN team, bi-weekly update meetings will continue through Skype meetings. Hopefully, most of the activities will be performed according to the plan but might encounter a little delay with regards to different events such as seminars, workshops and trainings. We know the virus posed bottlenecks on daily office works and we see some delayed timelines. But, we will do our best to overcome these setbacks using different options as mentioned above. And we do hope that we will combat and control this deadly virus through the coordinated efforts and a strong hope of humanity. I wish a world free of the virus. Stay safe! Stay at home.

## THE NIPN Advisory Committee.. (Continued from P1)

Dr. Aregash Samuel on her part explained the overview of the key activities that NIPN performed in 2019. She also highlighted the main objectives, the governance and strategic alliance of NIPN with various stakeholders.

Among the 2019 activities, Aregash mentioned the policy question formulation processes, the different capacity development trainings given to different partners, the data mapping exercise undergoing now, the communication strategy development, the website development and testing activities and the five seminars held during 2019.

Dr. Aregash briefly mentioned the 2020 priority areas and the expected support from the AC.

On the NIPN data repository discussion, it was mentioned that the data repository will be both knowledge and data repository which will host nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive data.

The NIPN team members requested support from AC to get access to data to alleviate the challenges of identifying existing data.

Since data mapping for nutrition is an important activity

for NIPN, it was concluded that getting data from all sectors is significant.

Dr. Meron Girma updated the status of the policy relevant question processes and presented the 12 policy relevant questions that were done in 2019.

Since the AC is expected to validate the questions, an immediate response was requested from the AC members. The AC members said the policy questions summarized by the NIPN



team are relevant and the AC members will deliver their validation within a few weeks.

Mr. Zerihun Bekele on his part presented the NIPN dashboard, and explained that the dashboard was developed based on global guidance. It aims to promote discussions about nutrition situation and

interventions that address nutritional problems across regions.

The NIPN AC members suggested that a review need to be done on additional survey data, such as the ONE-WASH national program, the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) or agriculture production surveys.

It is concluded that the dashboard visualizes important key indicators but team should work to prepare re-

gional dashboards, which need to be presented to the relevant regional level technical committees.

During the discussion, members and representatives of the AC expressed their great interest to link nutrition related initiatives with the NIPN objective and showed willingness to cooperate.



(Dr. Ferew Lemma, AC Chairman)

The AC chairman, Dr. Ferew Lemma said large investments are often done to implement nutrition programs and NIPN should be more involved in such interventions.

Considering NIPN as a useful initiative which can help decision makers, NIPN should not be limited to influence only the policy makers, rather broaden its scope and should work to influence decision makers through strategies, programs and guidelines.

He added, the AC will deliver its inputs and will validate the policy questions, and that the regional dashboard needs to be updated with the latest information and provide recent data and the data mapping exercise needs to be finalized.



## THE MER SC Worskhop...(Continued from P1)

and representatives from FAO, UNICEF, Save the children - ECS SUN, and EU delegation. The speakers gave an introductory remark on their organizational support and contribution to the different initiatives that are underway in Ethiopia.



Mr. Pierre- Luc VANHAEVERBEKE from European Union Delegation, giving a speech

The representatives assure the continuation of their organizations support and underlined the significance of working together with different nutrition actors for better expected nutrition outcomes in Ethiopia.

Ato Masresha Tessema, director of food science and nutrition research directorate (FSNRD) welcomed the participants and mentioned the outcomes of the multi-sectoral contributions to better implement the NNP II. He also explained the multi-sectoral partnership activities and the different initiatives that are supported by different partners in the FSNRD of EPHI.

The MER SC workshop discussed the 2019 NNP II progress report which was presented by Ato Abera Dibabe from the ministry of health (MOH). Ato Abera mentioned the monitoring progress for implementation of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions across sectors for NNP II, the major challenges, the lessons learned, and the way forward.

Dr. Aregash Samuel from EPHI, FSNRD on her part also



explained about the Ethiopian national nutrition survey, which is planned for 2021. She said that the survey combines three major surveys, which are; Food consumption survey, Micronutrient survey and NNP-II end-line survey. The presentation addressed background and rationale, planning, objectives of the survey, methodology, and the way forward.

Ato Tesfaye Hailu from EPHI also presented the processes and steps of the Ethiopian Food-Based Dietary Guideline (FBDG) development. He mentioned the objectives, the different steps included in the guideline as well as the progresses so far achieved by the technical team. He underscores the significance of the government's commitment to overdue the guideline. He said, EPHI will develop, validate, release and disseminate the guideline.

Following this, the Validation of Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women was presented by Ato Dilnesaw Zerfu from EPHI. He said, it is a multi-country initiative, previously done also in Cambodia and Zambia, which researches about what and how women are eating. The research deals about diversified diet in Ethiopia and Amhara region was selected in this sampling, 3 zones, 13 kebeles, 24 gotes were part of the research.

Dr. Meron Girma also spoke on the NIPN policy question formulation (PQF) processes. She presented the PQF steps performed so far and updated the audience on the status of the PQF processes. The policy question identification, refining question with the participation of stakeholders and the approval process of the question were explained. Dr. Meron said, 22 relevant questions were identified during a consultative workshop with different stakeholders, in which the questions were assessed individually, discussions held in groups and 12 questions were identified from the list.

The final questions were refined to answer two policy relevant questions in 2020.

The NIPN regional Dashboard was also one focus of discussion during the workshop in which several interactive discussions were conducted.

The participants were also briefed about the NIPN Ethiopia progress by Dr. Aregash.

## Scientific Writing Skills Training To Researchers

As one of the NIPN capacity strengthening initiatives to support researchers with good writing skills, a training on “Scientific writing and strategies for publishing in international journals” was given.

Researchers from EPHI, universities, regional health bureaus, regional public health research institutes and different NIPN partners attended the training.

The training was targeted for early to mid-career researchers and lecturers to acquire writing skills that would be helpful to write scientific articles to international journals. It aimed to highlight the structure of a scientific article to improve their writing for international readers. It was also expected to support effective communication and



dissemination of NIPN-related evidence.

The training was conducted from January 15 - 17, 2020. Dr. Kalab Baye delivered theoretical backgrounds and supported his training with practical and interactive exercises.

During the closing, the trainees expressed their feedbacks and said that it opened their minds and helped them realize the potentials inside them. As one of the trainees put it “it is a wakeup call to start explore and work on our potentials”.

### Useful Links on COVID19

Nutrition advice during COVID-19

<http://www.emro.who.int/nutrition/nutrition-infocus/nutrition-advice-for-adults-during-the-covid-19-outbreak.html>

Fact or Fiction

<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/outbreaks-and-emergencies/novel-coronavirus-2019/fact-or-fiction>

Food and corona virus what you need to know:

<https://www.eufic.org/en/food-safety/article/food-and-coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-need-to-know>

The COVID-19 nutrition crisis: What to expect and how to protect.

<https://www.ifpri.org/blog/covid-19-nutrition-crisis-what-expect-and-how-protect>



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