

HUNGER, NUTRITION AND MALNUTRITION
BACKGROUND TO THE JUNE 8TH, 2013 CONFERENCE

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Ban Ki-moon launches Zero Hunger Challenge at Rio+20 summit

UN secretary general unveils five-point food security campaign aimed at a future where all enjoy 'a fundamental right to food'

[Liz Ford](#) in Rio de Janeiro - guardian.co.uk, Friday 22 June 2012 16.29 BST



UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon at Rio+20, where he praised Brazil's government for its record on poverty and hunger.
Photograph: Evaristo Sa/AFP/Getty Images

The UN secretary general [Ban Ki-moon](#) has called on leaders, business and civil society to step up efforts to end [hunger](#). Launching a Zero Hunger Challenge at Rio+20 on Thursday, Ban emphasised that an estimated 1 billion people still go to bed hungry each day, saying [food security](#) was a top priority.

Endorsing the challenge, the UK's deputy prime minister, Nick Clegg, said [Britain would be allocating £150m from the international climate change fund](#) to support about 6 million [farmers](#), particularly in Niger and Ethiopia. The money will be channelled through the adaptation for smallholder agriculture programme to help farmers adapt to the impact of climate change.

"We can't rest while so many people are hungry in the world while there's enough food for all," said Ban. "Somehow this food is not distributed equally or fairly. Some people are living in prosperity while marginalised people are hungry. We know this has to change."

Ban praised the previous efforts of the Brazilian government to reduce poverty and hunger through its [Fome Zero programme](#), launched in 2004. The initiative has lifted millions of people out of poverty by supporting local farmers and community kitchens and introducing social welfare policies such as the [Bolsa Familia](#) scheme.

The man who designed the Brazilian programme, [Graziano da Silva](#), is now director general of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is supporting the UN campaign, along with the International Fund for Agriculture (Ifad), the World Food Programme (WFP), Unicef, the World Bank and Bioversity International.

The campaign has five objectives: 100% access to food for all, all year round; an end to stunting among children under two because of a lack of nutrients during pregnancy and in the early days of life; ensuring food systems are sustainable (although there is no reference to how this could be achieved); doubling smallholder productivity and income; and a reduction in food waste, at the farmer level, through lack of suitable storage and among consumers. A third of food is lost or wasted. It makes no mention of changing the food systems.

No deadline has been set for achieving these aims.

"I'm not proposing a new world, I'm sharing a vision for the future where all people enjoy a fundamental right to food," said Ban.

At the launch, Mahamadou Issoufou, the president of Niger, [which is experiencing severe drought and facing food shortages](#), said the problem his country faces is lack of resources to support agriculture. "We need agricultural materials, and we need pesticides, we need lots of things," he said. "We would like to help our farmers produce more and help protect them when there is a catastrophe. When that happens, we have help through the emergency response from international organisations, but we should not give them a fish, but teach them how to fish."

The Rio+20 [draft outcome document](#) mentions the need to "address the root causes of excessive food price volatility" and manage the risks associated with high and volatile commodity prices for global food security and nutrition and smallholder farmers.

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Beating hunger will need more nutrition aid, says report

Nutrition spending falling short as new report highlights role that empowering female farmers can play in tackling hunger

[Mark Tran](#) - [guardian.co.uk](#), Wednesday 1 May 2013 07.00 BST



The Shouhardo programme in Bangladesh reduced stunting among children aged between six and 24 months. Photograph: Care Bangladesh

Ambitions to eradicate world [hunger](#) will not be realised if [aid](#) for basic nutrition remains at only 0.4% of total official development assistance (ODA), according to the research group Development Initiatives (DI).

Even though nutrition aid is rising, it remains far below what is needed, [the DI report](#)¹ says. The World Bank estimated in 2010 that an increase of \$10.3bn in annual resources would end undernutrition. But since these estimates, basic ODA for nutrition has increased by only \$139m (£90m), according to DI.

The research group acknowledges, however, the difficulty in identifying aid for nutrition. Programmes in health, agriculture or education can have an important impact on nutrition, but the nutrition components are hard to identify and measure. For example, more than 3,300 aid projects reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2011, valued at \$1.4bn in total, had nutrition components, but were not recorded as nutrition ODA.

DI notes that at aggregate level, funding for nutrition is targeted at the 36 countries where 90% of stunted (low weight to height) children live. However, the distribution of aid among those countries does not reflect regional or national need. South Asia received 28% of all ODA for basic nutrition, although it represents 56% of the global gap in funds. India, which has most of the region's stunted children, receives comparably low levels of nutrition ODA.

Projections suggest that the number of undernourished people will fall by only 82 million by 2050 if current commitments are met, leaving 766 million people undernourished.

Combating hunger and [malnutrition](#) is the [centrepiece of the If campaign](#), launched by a coalition of 100 UK NGOs and faith groups in January. Campaigners are lobbying David Cameron, the UK prime minister, to use Britain's presidency of the G8 this year to push hard on ending hunger.

The British government and the [Children's Investment Fund Foundation](#) will co-host a high-level meeting, Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science, in London on 8 June, coinciding with an [event in Hyde Park organised by the If coalition](#). The meeting will bring together business leaders, scientists, government representatives and civil society groups to make commitments to tackle undernutrition in some of the poorest countries.

A [separate report from the Overseas Development Institute](#)² (ODI) think-tank stressed the importance of smallholder agriculture in improving food security and reducing undernutrition. The report said empowering female farmers through legislation on rights and education, promoting home gardens and small-scale livestock rearing, and complementary programmes in health, water and sanitation would improve the lives of smallholder farmers.

Steve Wiggins, co-author of the report, emphasised the importance of the public sector. "We need a reasonably effective state pointing in the right direction," he said. "We are not going to remedy this with nicer businesses. Nestlé can do things with dairy supplies – that is part of the picture – but

¹ Under-nutrition is a major challenge for both low and middle income countries and significantly affects the lives of individuals and communities. It is the underlying cause of 35% of all deaths among children under five. Under-nourished children are also more likely to be vulnerable to illnesses and earn about 10% less as adults if they survive. In 2006, the World Bank found that under-nutrition could result in a loss of about 2–3% of national GDP, thus reducing the domestic revenue available for investing in infrastructure and public services. Investments in nutrition are essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ultimately the eradication of poverty.

This [report](#) focuses on funding flows on nutrition from existing donors. It shows that current volumes, while increasing, remain at odds with the scale of need. In 2011, aid to basic nutrition was only 0.4% of total official development assistance. At an aggregate level, basic nutrition spending is targeted at 36 countries where 90% of stunted children live. However, the distribution of aid within those 36 countries does not reflect need.

<http://www.devinit.org/reports/the-nutrition-aid-financing-landscape>

² <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7317-smallholder-agriculture-nutrition-food-security>

businesses are not going to put in the water [infrastructure] and educate girls. Businesses can help at the margins, but it needs public sector responsibilities."

Wiggins pointed to the success of the [Shouhardo programme](#)³ in Bangladesh, run by the NGO Care between 2006 and 2010, funded by the US government's [Food for Peace programme](#). Shouhardo covered 400,000 households in the most marginal areas of the country, the seasonally flooded Haor lands, the Charlands (sand and silt islands) of the big rivers and the coast – all highly vulnerable to river flooding, cyclones or both.

In four years, the programme reduced stunting among children aged between six and 24 months by 16 percentage points despite hardly any improvement nationally. Female empowerment was the strongest single determinant of success, according to ODI, but it was the programme's combination with mother and child healthcare, sanitation, agriculture and fisheries that made it so effective.

Shouhardo's success suggests that significant progress can be made on underlying factors such as female empowerment, ODI said. By contrast, the influential [Scaling Up Nutrition](#) framework⁴ focuses on highly targeted interventions such as micro-nutrient supplements and therapeutic feeding, on the grounds that tackling the fundamental problems of poverty, access to food, health and sanitation would take too long.

³ **Project Name: SHOUHARDO**

Project Description : Project List of Activities: A number of levels of activities are envisioned in SHOUHARDO. Most activities will be implemented at the Union, Pourashava, village and slum levels. The program will facilitate linkages between these and the district and Upazilla level service providers and advocates for development. The activities related to achieving results on the entitlement issues that have been identified will be implemented at multiple levels from villages and slums through the national level. The major types of activities associated with each Specific and sub-Specific Objective are discussed below. Each set of activities will lead to goods and services (Intermediate Results) needed to make planned behavioral and systemic changes at the Sub-specific and Specific Objective levels.

Final Goal: Program Goal is to sustainably reduce chronic and transitory food insecurity of 400,000 vulnerable households in 18 districts of Bangladesh, by 2009. Targeted participants and # of beneficiaries Targeted participants is 400,000 vulnerable household and to be achieved in 2000 villages and 130 urban slums, by the year 2009. Also the target participants will be the poorest and most vulnerable households, and within them women and girls, living in the remote and difficult areas. The total # of beneficiaries will be 2 million.

Targeted Community: The target Community of the program will be the poorest and most vulnerable households, and within them women and girls, living in the most vulnerable and remote areas. It is expected that, the program would collaborate with 30 partner organizations /agencies including NGO, CBOs, Research Institutions, University, Private Sector, CSGs, etc.

The program will be implemented in the following geographical areas: North Chars Region. The northern chars includes the 5 Districts of Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram and Gaibandha in the Brahmaputra River drainage. Middle Chars Region. The middle chars includes the 5 Districts of Bogra, Jamalpur, Tangail, Sirajganj, Sherpur and Pabna in the Jamuna River drainage and the north bank of the Padma River. Haor Region. The haor region includes the 4 Districts of Sunamganj, Habiganj, Kishoreganj, and Netrokona in the northeast part of the country. Eastern Coastal Zone. The eastern coastal zone includes the 5 Districts of Noakhali, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazar. Islands: Moheskhali, Kutubdia, Sandwip, Hatiya.

⁴ <http://scalingupnutrition.org/fr>

Nutrition 'must be a global priority', say researchers

By Helen Briggs BBC News

Malnutrition is responsible for 45% of the global deaths of children under the age of five, research published in the Lancet medical journal suggests.⁵

⁵ **Maternal and Child Nutrition, The Lancet**, Published June 6, 2013.

Executive summary

Maternal and child undernutrition was the subject of a Series of papers in The Lancet in 2008. Five years after the initial series, we re-evaluate the problems of maternal and child undernutrition and also examine the growing problems of overweight and obesity for women and children, and their consequences in low-income and middle-income countries. Many of these countries are said to have the double burden of malnutrition: continued stunting of growth and deficiencies of essential nutrients along with the emerging issue of obesity. We also assess national progress in nutrition programmes and international efforts toward previous recommendations.

Comments

Nutrition: a quintessential sustainable development goal - Richard Horton, Selina Lo

Maternal and child nutrition: building momentum for impact - Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group

Delivery platforms for sustained nutrition in Ethiopia - Ferew Lemma, Joan Matji

Only collective action will end undernutrition - Anna Taylor, Alan D Dangour, K Srinath Reddy

Nutrition-sensitive food systems: from rhetoric to action - Per Pinstrup-Andersen

Global child and maternal nutrition—the SUN rises - David Nabarro

Early nutrition and adult outcomes: pieces of the puzzle - Z A Bhutta

Series Papers

Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries - Robert E Black, Cesar G Victora, Susan P Walker, Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Parul Christian, Mercedes de Onis, Majid Ezzati, Sally Grantham-McGregor, Joanne Katz, Reynaldo Martorell, Ricardo Uauy, and the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group

Evidence-based interventions for improvement of maternal and child nutrition: what can be done and at what cost? - Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Jai K Das, Arjumand Rizvi, Michelle F Gaffey, Neff Walker, Susan Horton, Patrick Webb, Anna Lartey, Robert E Black, The Lancet Nutrition Interventions Review Group, and the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group

Nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes: how can they help to accelerate progress in improving maternal and child nutrition? - Marie T Ruel, Harold Alderman, and the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group

The politics of reducing malnutrition: building commitment and accelerating progress - Stuart Gillespie, Lawrence Haddad, Venkatesh Mannar, Purnima Menon, Nicholas Nisbett, and the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group

Articles

Mortality risk in preterm and small-for-gestational-age infants in low-income and middle-income countries: a pooled country analysis - Joanne Katz, Anne CC Lee, Naoko Kozuki, Joy E Lawn, Simon Cousens, Hannah Blencowe, Majid Ezzati, Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Tanya Marchant, Barbara A Willey, Linda Adair, Fernando Barros, Abdullah H Baqui, Parul Christian, Wafaie Fawzi, Rogelio Gonzalez, Jean Humphrey, Lieven Huybregts, Patrick

Poor nutrition leads to the deaths of about 3.1 million under-fives annually, it says.

An international team reviewed different causes of malnutrition in pregnancy and childhood.

They say the first 1,000 days of life - from conception to two years - have lasting consequences for health.

Malnutrition - which includes being overweight or obese as well as under-nourished - also has an economic impact.

According to a recent United Nations report, malnutrition is estimated to cost the world \$3.5tn (£2.3tn) - or \$500 for every person - in healthcare and lost productivity.

A team led by Prof Robert Black, of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, US, reviewed evidence on maternal and child under-nutrition and obesity in low-income and middle-income countries since 2008.

The team also assessed national and international progress on nutrition programmes.

Prof Black and colleagues say while some progress has been made in recent years, they estimate that more than 165 million children were affected by stunting (low height for age) and 50 million by wasting (low weight for height) in 2011.

An estimated 900,000 lives could be saved in 34 countries if 10 proven nutritional interventions were scaled-up to 90% of the world, they say.

"The nutritional consequences of the months during pregnancy and the conditions during the first two years of life have very important consequences for mortality and for adult chronic disease," Prof Black told BBC News.

"The early nutritional deficit results in developmental consequences for the individual and that has implications for their ability to succeed in school and ultimately in society to have the most productive jobs."

The researchers warn that countries will not break out of poverty unless nutrition becomes a global priority.

Dr Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of the Lancet, said: "If maternal and child nutrition can be optimised, the benefits will accrue and extend over generations, which is why we must work together now to seize this opportunity."

Experts working in development are gathering in London this weekend for a summit on nutrition hosted by the UK and Brazilian governments.

This will be followed by the annual summit of leaders from the G8 countries.

The Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign is calling for \$1bn per year in additional aid money to be spent on malnutrition by 2015.

Enough Food for Everyone IF spokesperson Anita Tiessen said:

Kolsteren, Aroonsri Mongkolchat, Luke C Mullany, Richard Ndyomugenyi, Jyh Kae Nien, David Osrin, Dominique Roberfroid, Ayesha Sania, Christentze Schmiegelow, Mariangela F Silveira, James Tielsch, Anjana Vaidya, Sithembiso C Velaphi, Cesar G Victora, Deborah Watson-Jones, Robert E Black, and the CHERG Small-for-Gestational-Age-Preterm Birth Working Group

Associations of linear growth and relative weight gain during early life with adult health and human capital in countries of low and middle income: findings from five birth cohort studies - Linda S Adair, Caroline HD Fall, Clive Osmond, Aryeh D Stein, Reynaldo Martorell, Manuel Ramirez-Zea, Harshpal Singh Sachdev, Darren L Dahly, Isabelita Bas, Shane A Norris, Lisa Micklesfield, Pedro Hallal, Cesar G Victora .

"These new figures confirm our worst fears - that hundreds of thousands more children are dying from malnutrition than we previously thought.

"We have made incredible progress in tackling child deaths around the world, but malnutrition remains the Achilles' heel in our efforts to prevent millions of needless deaths each year. We must urgently prioritise tackling hunger if we are to continue the progress we have made."



Tackle Malnutrition Now

By [Jomo Kwame Sundaram](#)

In this column, Jomo Kwame Sundaram, assistant director-general for economic and social development at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), writes that while the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger by 2015 is within reach, much more needs to be done to eradicate malnutrition, which is the underlying cause of 2.6 million child deaths each year and the reason why a quarter of the world's children, including a third of children in developing countries, are stunted.



Camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) in northern Pakistan are breeding grounds for malnutrition. Credit: Ashfaq Yusufzai/IPS

ROME, Jun 6 2013 (IPS) - Between 2010 and 2012, 868 million people worldwide were deemed hungry by a conservative definition. This figure represents only a small fraction of the world's population whose health and lives are blighted by malnutrition.



Jomo Kwame Sundaram, assistant director-general for economic and social development at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Credit: @FAO/Giulio Napolitano

Currently, malnutrition is believed to be the underlying cause of death for 2.6 million children annually. Meanwhile, two billion people lack adequate micronutrients – vitamins and minerals – that are essential for their mental and physical development.

A quarter of the children in the world, and a third in developing countries, are stunted because they do not get the right nutrients. Four in five of these malnourished children are in just 20 countries, including almost half of Indian children under five.

In Nigeria, over half of the poorest children are stunted, while in China, children in poor rural counties are six times more likely to be stunted than urban children. In Indonesia, a sharp rise in wasting – or acute malnutrition – in the wake of recent food crises has hit children from the poorest households hardest.

Receiving the right nutrients in the first years of life is not only a matter of life and death, but also a major determinant of future life chances – potentially raising future earnings by a fifth. Today, about 170 million children under five are stunted because they do not get the right nutrients, while their cognitive and physical development is impaired.

Some progress has been made in reducing hunger over the past two decades. With a strong final push, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) objective of [halving the prevalence of hunger by 2015](#) is within reach. Already, [51 countries have achieved the target](#), or are on track to do so.

With modest progress over the past two decades, the share of stunted children declined from 40 percent in 1990 to 27 percent in 2010. And if present trends continue, half a billion more children will be stunted in the next 15 years.

Meanwhile, around one and a half billion people are overweight, with half a billion deemed obese, and hence, more vulnerable to serious non-communicable diseases. Malnutrition could [cost](#)⁶ as much as five percent of global income – 3.5 trillion dollars, or 500 dollars per person – in terms of lost productivity and health care expenses.

What should we do to eradicate malnutrition? The [2013 report](#) by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 'The State of Food and Agriculture: Food systems for better nutrition',⁷ shows the way forward. Good nutrition must start with food production. Improved food systems must make nutritious foods affordable.

Overcoming malnutrition – caloric undernourishment, micronutrient deficiencies, obesity – requires appropriate interventions in food systems, public health, education and social protection. Tackling malnutrition is a complex task requiring strong political commitment, leadership at the highest levels, and unprecedented cooperation and coordination among various ministries and partners.

Better organised food systems are key to more diversified and healthier diets. Policy must ensure that all people have informed access to a wide range of nutritious foods to make healthy choices. Consumers need help making better dietary choices for improved nutrition with regulation, education, information and other interventions.

Food systems must become more sensitive to the special needs of mothers and young children. Malnutrition during the critical first 1,000 days from conception can cause permanent physical and cognitive impairment in children and lasting damage to the mothers' health.

Food security and nutrition are now at the apex of the international development agenda. In June 2012, the United Nations Secretary General made the call to set the ambitious but feasible goal of [zero hunger](#).⁸ The Zero Hunger Challenge calls for a world without hunger, no more stunting, minimal food waste and losses, sustainable agriculture and doubling poor farmers' incomes.

On Jun. 8, the governments of Brazil and the United Kingdom will co-host a high-level pre-G8 meeting entitled '[Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science](#)'⁹ in London. UK

⁶ See Annex no 1

⁷ See Annex no 2

⁸ See "Ban Ki-moon launches Zero Hunger Challenge at Rio+20 summit". **The Guardian**, Friday 22 June 2012.

⁹ **UK to co-host high-level meeting on global nutrition and growth**

Britain will co-host 'Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science' on 8 June

The UK government, the [Children's Investment Fund Foundation \(CIFF\)](#), and the Government of Brazil will co-host [Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science](#) on 8 June to bring together business leaders, scientists, governments and civil society to make the political and financial commitments needed to prevent undernutrition, enabling people and nations to prosper.

The event follows on from the [UK-Brazil Hunger Summit](#) held in London last summer, which highlighted the devastating consequences of undernutrition on children.

We will also work with a range of companies to both assess the progress and expand the reach of the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.

Why nutrition, why now?

Undernutrition is the largest single contributor to child mortality worldwide, underlying one third of deaths amongst children under five. It is also responsible for the loss of billions of dollars in productivity, in effect stunting not only citizens, but also the competitiveness and economic growth of high-burden countries.

Globally, nearly one in four children under age 5 (165 million or 26% as of 2011) are stunted. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are home to three quarters of the world's stunted children. Fourteen countries are home

Prime Minister David Cameron intends to follow up by sponsoring a high-level global panel on agriculture and food systems for nutrition.

On Nov. 19-21, 2014, the FAO, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and others in the U.N. system will co-organise the inter-governmental [International Conference on Nutrition \(ICN2\)](#),¹⁰ 22 years after

to 80% of the global burden of stunting – India, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, DRC, Philippines, Tanzania, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan

Under nutrition affects mothers at conception, the health of the baby in utero, and the development of children through their early years. Failure to obtain the right nutrition at the right time seriously reduces the life chance of the next generation and prevents them, their communities, and their countries from achieving their full potential.

Investing in nutrition now will not only save more lives in the short-term but will set developing countries on a strong, independent economic growth trajectory.

¹⁰ **Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)**

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), an inclusive inter-governmental meeting on nutrition jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), will be held at FAO Headquarters, in Rome, 19-21 November 2014. It will be a high-level ministerial conference which will propose a flexible policy framework to address today's major nutrition challenges and identify priorities for enhanced international cooperation on nutrition.

ICN2 will bring together senior national policymakers from agriculture, health and other relevant ministries and agencies, with leaders of United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, researchers, the private sector and consumers.

The conference will review progress made towards improving nutrition since 1992, reflect on nutrition problems that remain, as well as on the new challenges and opportunities for improving nutrition presented by changes in the global economy, in food systems, by advances in science and technology, and identify policy options for improving nutrition. The key objectives of the ICN2 will be to:

1. review progress made since the 1992 ICN including country level achievements in scaling up nutrition through direct nutrition interventions and nutrition-enhancing policies and programmes;
2. review relevant policies and institutions on agriculture, fisheries, health, trade, consumption and social protection to improve nutrition;
3. strengthen institutional policy coherence and coordination to improve nutrition, and mobilize resources needed to improve nutrition;
4. strengthen international, including inter-governmental cooperation, to enhance nutrition everywhere, especially in developing countries.

The scope of the conference will:

- be global in perspective, but focus particularly on nutrition challenges in developing countries;
- address all forms of malnutrition, recognizing the nutrition transition and its consequences;
- seek to improve nutrition throughout the lifecycle, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable households, and on women, infants and young children in deprived, vulnerable and emergency contexts.

ICN2 will build on ongoing global political processes and initiatives to contribute to the post-2015 UN development agenda including identifying priority areas, nutrition development goals as well as the policies that are required to achieve, measure and account for them. The outcome of the ICN2 will contribute to the UN Secretary General's call for a high degree of policy coherence at global, regional, national and sub-national levels and a global partnership for development at all levels. The ICN2 will also amplify the Secretary General's call to leaders gathered at the Rio+20 Summit to take up the "Zero Hunger Challenge".

The programme of the high level ICN2 conference in 2014 is to be organized around themes identified by a preparatory technical meeting which is to be held 13-15 November 2013. More information on this meeting will be posted on this site in due time.

For more information on the conference, please contact FAO's ICN2 Secretariat: Brian Thompson e-mail: Brian.Thompson@fao.org and Leslie Amoroso e-mail: Leslie.Amoroso@fao.org.

the first one in 1992, to establish the bases for sustained international cooperation and policy coordination to overcome malnutrition. The preparatory technical meeting on Nov. 13-15 this year will establish the evidence base for this purpose.

Malnutrition's time has come. By cooperating effectively, we have a real chance of ending this blight on humanity within a generation.



Hunger: A solvable problem

By [Ertharin Cousin](#) on 05 June 2013

Ertharin Cousin, executive director of World Food Program. Cousin says developing country farmers face a multitude of issues that translate to post-harvest loss, like lack of proper produce storage and decrepit machinery. Photo by: [FAO](#)

First published in UNEP's [Our Planet](#) magazine.

Whenever I have the privilege of spending time among the people that the [World Food Program](#) serves, I come away enriched with precious extra knowledge and inspired by the new ways in which governments are tackling the world's greatest solvable problem — hunger. That happened again recently when I was in Burkina Faso, heartened to see the results of efforts to help communities become more resilient to shocks, especially climate-related ones.

Yet one theme dominated my discussions with President Blaise Compaoré and government ministers — that too much of the food grown in their country is lost, often before it even leaves the farm. In Burkina, small-scale, family farming accounts for 70 percent of total agricultural production, so post-harvest losses badly dent the capacity of vulnerable farmers to make a decent living and that of the country to feed its people. The same is true for most developing countries, where food loss occurs mostly at the production stages — harvesting, processing and distribution.

Our sister agency FAO estimates that close to one-third of all food produced worldwide is lost or wasted in food production and consumption systems. At the same time, around 870 million people suffer hunger, often not knowing where their next meal is coming from.

We expect to have to feed 9 billion people on this planet by 2050 and are going to have to do it with less land and less water, due to slow onset climatic changes, while coping with more frequent extreme weather events. So there is no space for loss or waste.

Encouragingly, though, tackling post-harvest loss is not rocket science. It does not require technological breakthroughs or years of high level scientific research as do some of the other challenges we face.

We at WFP have seen farmers' capacity to prevent food loss transformed thanks to the [Purchase for Progress](#) (P4P) pilot project, which we launched with partners five years ago to test new ways to buy food that could enable smallholder farmers to achieve better yields, improve the quality of their crops and sell to reliable buyers for a fair price. Addressing post-harvest loss has been a pillar of the programme in the 20 countries it covers.

Developing country farmers, especially smallholders, face many problems after the harvest. Proper storage is rare or in need of repair, meaning fresh crops are often exposed to the elements and such vermin as weevils or rats. When farmers dry grain in the sun, something as simple as a sudden

shower can spoil it. This leads to rotten grains or the development of aflatoxin, which can cause liver cancer.

But the outcome can be radically different when farmers receive proper training, such as awareness-raising on the existence and effects of aflatoxin and advice on storage, including providing simple tarpaulins to dry the grains, and household or communal silos to store them.

So far, more than 193,000 farmers, agricultural technicians, warehouse operators and small and medium-sized traders have received training from WFP and partners in improved agricultural production, post-harvest handling and quality assurance through P4P. I am particularly proud that, on average, one third of the trainees were women — and we're constantly striving to reach parity.

The results are outstanding. Training has greatly helped farmers to increase the quality of produce. At the start of P4P, most farmers' organisations paid little attention to quality. Now even those with low capacity have been able to meet WFP's rigorous quality standards relatively quickly. As a result, rejection of consignments because they failed to meet quality standard is increasingly rare.

The training process has also inspired innovation. In Guatemala, the P4P team created the Blue Box — a portable lab about the size of a large trolley bag — containing a nickel pike grain tester, digital scales, sieves, a voltage converter, a humidity sensor, a mill, a digital clock and the aflatoxin test kit.

P4P staff and partners clock up thousands of kilometers on highways and mountain tracks to reach remote farming communities. Training with the Blue Box means they can test in the field and identify any problems early on. Farmers become much more aware of quality and post-harvest management and their confidence grows. They now know the quality of their staple grains and the just price for it, whether they're selling to WFP or to other buyers.

Tackling post-harvest loss also strengthens agriculture and local economies. We work closely with FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to ensure a continuum from the emergency work where WFP is often the first responder, through recovery to development.

But preventing food that could nourish the hungry from being lost early in the food chain requires the coordinated efforts of many actors.

National governments should take the lead in their own countries and embrace solutions at a policy framework level. Addressing waste across the food chain must be a critical pillar of future national food strategies. International agencies and NGOs also need to coordinate their efforts fully to support farmers in growing more, growing better and accessing markets. And community leaders must help their people understand and work together to prevent their maize, rice, beans or other staple crops from being damaged or destroyed.

The experience of P4P is showing us clearly that, with the right support and knowledge, it is possible to prevent losses of precious food in poor countries struggling to achieve food security. In the years ahead we will need to share those lessons far and wide to meet the challenge of feeding our growing population.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY

Ending Malnutrition

Jose Graziano da Silva

Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Posted: 06/04/2013 10:58 am

The 2015 deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching. It is time to take stock of progress and see what still needs to be done.

Advance towards MDG 1, halving prevalence of hunger has been varied, but with one final push we still can reach the MDG hunger target.

Thirty eight countries have already been successful in halving the proportion of chronically undernourished people. Eighteen of them have also reached the more ambitious goal of halving the absolute number of hungry people set by the World Food Summit organized by FAO in 1996.

These countries prove that ending hunger is possible. They should inspire us to set an even bolder goal than hunger reduction -- the complete eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

Despite the progress we have made the fact remains that today 870 million people are hungry worldwide, and this figure represents only a fraction of the world's population whose health and lives are blighted by malnutrition.

It is estimated that 26 percent of the world's children are stunted, two billion people suffer from a lack of the essential vitamins and minerals needed for mental and physical development, and nearly 500 million people are obese.

The true toll of malnutrition, in terms of human suffering and poor health, is enormous. It is estimated that the cost of malnutrition to the global economy in lost productivity and direct health care could account for as much as 5 percent of the global gross domestic product -- \$3.5 trillion dollars, the equivalent to \$500 per person, and close to the GDP of Germany.

But what can we do to eradicate malnutrition? This year's edition of FAO's publication, [The State of Food and Agriculture](#): Food systems for better nutrition, gives us some answers to this question.

Healthy diets and good nutrition must start with food and agriculture. The way we grow, raise, process, transport and distribute food influences what we eat.

Improved food systems can make food more affordable, diverse and nutritious.

We need agricultural policies and investment in research to increase productivity not only of staple grains like maize, rice and wheat, but also of legumes, meat, milk, vegetables and fruit, which are all rich in nutrients.

Cutting [food losses and waste](#) can also help make food more available and affordable as well as reduce pressure on land and other resources.

Properly organized food systems are key to more diversified and healthy diets. Finally, we need to help consumers make good dietary choices for better nutrition through education, information and other interventions.

Importantly, food systems must be made more responsive to the needs of mothers and young children. Malnutrition during the critical first 1000 days can cause life-long physical and cognitive impairment in children.

Giving women greater control over resources and incomes will benefit their and their children's health. Policies, interventions and investment in labour-saving farming technologies and rural infrastructure, targeted social safety nets and services can make important contributions to the health and nutrition of women, infants and young children.

Making food systems better able to enhance nutrition is a complex task requiring strong political commitment and leadership at the highest levels along with broad-based partnerships. The policy decisions we make must ensure that all people have access to a wide range of nutritious foods and to the knowledge and information they need to make healthy choices.

Food security and nutrition are now at the very top of the international sustainable development agenda. We must be bold and take the step of committing to the total eradication of hunger and malnutrition. Within our lifetimes, as originally proposed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his [Zero Hunger Challenge](#),¹¹ or, even more ambitiously, by 2025.

ANNEXES

ANNEX NO 1



Child Malnutrition Costs Global Economy Billions Yearly – Report

By [Jim Lobe](#)

¹¹ UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: 19:00 Rio de Janeiro time, 21 June 2012

UN Secretary-General Challenges All Nations to Achieve Zero Hunger

RIO DE JANEIRO, 21 JUNE 2012 – United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon today launched a “[Zero Hunger Challenge](#),” inviting all nations to be boldly ambitious as they work for a future where everyone enjoys their right to food and all food systems are resilient.

He called on governments, business, farmers, scientists, civil society and consumers to join the challenge by honoring past promises and working together to put an end to hunger.

“In a world of plenty no one, not a single person, should go hungry. I invite all of you to join me in working for a future without hunger,” said the Secretary-General, applauding the combined efforts of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, the World Bank and Bioversity International during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development: Rio+20.

“Zero Hunger would boost economic growth, reduce poverty and safeguard the environment. It would foster peace and stability,” added the UN chief.

The Zero Hunger Challenge has five objectives:

1. 100% access to adequate food all year round.
2. Zero stunted children under 2 years, no more malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood.
3. All food systems are sustainable.
4. 100% growth in smallholder productivity and income, particularly for women.
5. Zero loss or waste of food, including responsible consumption.

Inspiration for the Challenge came from the bold work done by many countries and organizations to end hunger, including Brazil, whose ‘Fome Zero’ programme is beating back hunger using local food from family farmers and community kitchens. It works thanks to a powerful combination of civil society action and strong political leadership.



UNICEF estimates that 3.5 million children in Pakistan suffer from acute malnutrition. The EU is helping the government to cut down the malnourishment rate by 25 percent by the year 2015. Credit: Ashfaq Yusufzai/IPS

WASHINGTON, May 29 2013 (IPS) - In addition to the serious health problems it causes, child malnutrition is costing the global economy tens of billions of dollars a year by depriving its victims of the ability to learn basic skills, according to a [new report](#) released Tuesday by Save the Children (STC).

Based on a multi-year study in four countries, the 23-page report found that chronically malnourished children – about one of every four children born today – are significantly less able to read, write a simple sentence, or perform basic arithmetic.

Those disabilities, as well as other cognitive problems related to malnutrition, translate into a 20-percent reduction in their average adult earnings, which in turn acts as an important brake on economic growth in the countries where they live, according to the report.

The report, “Food for Thought: Tackling Child Malnutrition to Unlock Potential and Boost Prosperity”, estimated the global impact of child malnutrition at 125 billion dollars a year by the time today’s children reach working age in 2030.

It is urging leaders at this year’s G8 Summit, which takes place in Northern Ireland in 10 days, to take strong action, including substantially increasing donor funding, to tackle the problem.

“Poor nutrition in the early years is driving a literacy and numeracy crisis in developing countries and is also a huge barrier to further progress in tackling child deaths,” said Carolyn Miles, STC’s president.

“Improving the nutritional status of children and women in the crucial 1,000-day window – from the start of a woman’s pregnancy until her child’s second birthday – could greatly increase children’s ability to learn and to earn,” she noted. “World leaders must commit to concrete actions to tackle malnutrition in those critical 1,000 days, and invest in the future of our children.”

According to 2012 figures compiled by the U.N., nearly half of children under five in southern Asia and 39 percent of the same age group in sub-Saharan Africa are stunted – that is, too short for their age due to poor nutrition. With more than 60 million stunted children, India is among the most hard-hit countries, as is Nigeria, with nearly 11 million stunted children.

Malnutrition, according to the report, threatens to undermine the impressive gains in reducing child mortality and increasing primary-school enrolment that have been made in the past two decades as the world has moved closer to fulfilling the U.N.’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Between 1990 and 2011, the numbers of children dying under the age of five fell from 12 million to 6.9 million. But malnutrition remains an underlying cause of 2.3 million children's deaths each year, according to STC.

And, while the number of children in primary school rose by more than 40 million between 1999 and 2011 – an increase of some 32 percent – the cognitive disabilities caused by chronic malnutrition have left millions of children unable to learn some of the most rudimentary tasks of a basic education.

The study, the first to try to identify the impact of malnutrition on educational outcomes across a range of countries, included some 3,000 children in four countries – Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam – over nearly two decades. The subjects were interviewed and tested to determine their educational abilities, confidence, and aspirations at various points in their lives.

It found that children who are malnourished in the first 1,000 days of their lives – from the start of a woman's pregnancy until their second birthday – suffer substantial learning disabilities compared to those with healthy diets.

Specifically, the children who suffered malnutrition scored an average of seven percent lower on math tests than non-stunted children; they were 19 percent less likely to be able to read a simple sentence by the age of eight, and 12 percent less likely to be able to write a simple sentence. Stunted children were also 13 percent less likely to be in the appropriate grade for their age at school.

In addition, malnourished children tend to be less confident about learning and about their ability to change their situation for the better, according to the studies on which the report was based.

The report found that children who were malnourished go on to earn 20 percent less as adults than children who were well nourished, although it found evidence that the gap could be larger.

It also noted that some of the earnings differential could be explained by the relatively smaller size of many adults who were malnourished as children, particularly if their work requires physical strength, including agriculture and other manual labour.

"This report adds to the mounting evidence that malnutrition takes a toll not only on children's bodies, but also on their ability to earn an education, make a living and rise out of poverty," said Lucy Sullivan, director of 1,000 Days, a partnership co-founded by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, then-Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin, among others, in September 2010 that promotes investments to improve nutrition for mothers and children from pregnancy to age two.

"Malnutrition's price tag is steep: it costs the global economy 125 billion dollars per year. What the report drives home, however, is that malnutrition is preventable and solvable," she added.

Despite the fact that the World Bank concluded in a major 2006 study that improving nutrition of mothers and small children was among the most cost-effective interventions in promoting development, the donor community has spent an average of only 0.37 percent of total aid on nutrition over the past three years, in part because the issue often falls through the cracks between the ministries of health and agriculture.

On Jun. 8, however, the British and Brazilian governments will co-host the first-ever nutrition pledging conference at the G8 summit, called "Nutrition for Growth".

The report is calling on donors to more than double their commitments to spending on nutrition programmes to one billion dollars a year and for national governments to establish plans and targets for reducing malnutrition over the next decade.

ANNEX NO 2



FAO urges end of malnutrition as priority

Social and economic costs of global malnutrition unacceptable



Twenty six percent of all children under five are stunted

4 June 2013, Rome - Denouncing the huge social and economic costs of malnutrition, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva today called for resolute efforts to eradicate malnutrition as well as hunger from around the world.

In a recorded statement marking the launch of FAO's flagship annual publication [The State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA\)](#),¹² Graziano da Silva said that although the world has registered some progress on hunger, one form of malnutrition, there was still "a long way ahead".

"FAO's message is that we must strive for nothing less than the eradication of hunger *and* malnutrition", he declared.

The report *Food systems for better nutrition* notes that although some 870 million people were still hungry in the world in 2010-2012, this is just a fraction of the billions of people whose health, wellbeing and lives are blighted by malnutrition.

Two billion people suffer from one or more micronutrient deficiencies, while 1.4 billion are overweight, of whom 500 million are obese, according to SOFA. Twenty six percent of all children under five are stunted and 31 percent suffer from Vitamin A deficiency.

Unacceptable

The cost of malnutrition to the global economy in lost productivity and health care costs are "unacceptably high" and could account for as much as 5 percent of the global gross domestic product -- \$3.5 trillion dollars, or \$500 per person. That is almost the entire annual GDP of Germany, Europe's largest economy.

In social terms, child and maternal malnutrition continue to reduce the quality of life and life expectancy of millions of people, while obesity-related health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes, affect millions more.

To combat malnutrition, SOFA makes the case that healthy diets and good nutrition must start with food and agriculture. The way we grow, raise, process, transport and distribute food influences what we eat, the report says, noting that improved food systems can make food more affordable, diverse and nutritious.

¹² <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3300e/i3300e00.htm>

Specific recommendations for action include:

- Use appropriate agricultural policies, investment and research to increase productivity, not only of staple grains like maize, rice and wheat, but also of legumes, meat, milk, vegetables and fruit, which are all rich in nutrients.
- Cut food losses and waste, which currently amount to one third of the food produced for human consumption every year. That could help make food more available and affordable as well as reduce pressure on land and other resources.
- Improve the nutritional performance of supply chains, enhancing the availability and accessibility of a wide diversity of foods. Properly organized food systems are key to more diversified and healthy diets.
- Help consumers make good dietary choices for better nutrition through education, information and other actions.
- Improve the nutritional quality of foods through fortification and reformulation.
- Make food systems more responsive to the needs of mothers and young children. Malnutrition during the critical 'first 1000 days' from conception can cause lasting damage to women's health and life-long physical and cognitive impairment in children.

Women's role

Giving women greater control over resources and incomes benefits their and their children's health, the report says. Policies, interventions and investment in labour-saving farming technologies and rural infrastructure, as well as social protection and services can also make important contributions to the health and nutrition of women, infants and young children.

Projects that have proved successful in raising nutrition levels include enhanced production, marketing and consumption of local vegetables and pulses in East Africa; promotion of home gardens in West Africa; encouragement of mixed vegetable and animal farming systems together with income-generating activities in some Asian countries; breeding staple crops such as sweet potatoes to raise their micronutrient content; and public-private partnerships to enrich products like yoghurt or cooking oil with nutrients.

Making food systems enhance nutrition is a complex task requiring strong political commitment and leadership at the highest levels, broad-based partnerships and coordinated approaches with other important sectors such as health and education, according to SOFA.

"A great many actors and institutions must work together across sectors to more effectively reduce undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity," the report says.

"Food systems governance that is providing leadership, coordinating effectively and fostering collaboration among the many stakeholders, is a first priority," the report adds.