MALNUTRITION is a physical condition, which is a direct consequence of having an inadequate amount of nutrients in one’s body (either nutrient consumption or absorption-related). Malnutrition refers to both overweight/obesity and undernutrition.

UNDERNUTRITION stems from the inadequate quantity and/or quality of food being consumed, and/or repeated infection or disease results in improper absorption of vital nutrients. It manifests itself through wasting, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies.

WASTING (OR ACUTE MALNUTRITION) is a condition where a child’s weight is too low for his/her height, and his/her body wastes away. It is associated with a high risk of mortality in young children.

STUNTING (A SIGN OF CHRONIC MALNUTRITION) is a condition where a child’s height is too low for his/her age as a consequence of long-term nutritional deprivation. It is associated with long-term developmental and health risks.

HIDDEN HUNGER OR MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES is the direct outcome of inadequate intake of vital vitamins and minerals, which results in sub-optimal immune function while undermining growth and development.

NUTRITION-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS look at the immediate causes of undernutrition, such as the promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding practices, elimination of micronutrient deficiencies through fortification and supplementation, therapeutic food to manage acute malnutrition, behavioural change and school nutrition.

NUTRITION-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS span several sectors and address the underlying and structural causes of undernutrition. They encompass interventions in the areas of agriculture, public health, gender equality, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education among others.

WE BELIEVE THE WORLD CAN BE FREED OF MALNUTRITION WITHIN A GENERATION AND THAT THE EU HAS A UNIQUE AND CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS ENDEAVOUR.
In 2015, 159 million children under age 5 were chronically malnourished (stunted); this is costing the global economy an average GDP loss of 10% every year.1

Only around 57% of global development aid is spent on nutrition-specific interventions.

To reach the world health assembly targets to reduce stunting, wasting and anaemia, and to increase exclusive breastfeeding, an additional $70 billion 2 investment in nutrition interventions in the next 10 years is needed.

Investing in nutrition interventions is highly cost-effective and impactful: every $1 invested in nutrition generates a return of at least $6: 3

In 2016, the United Nations proclaimed 2016-2025 the DECADE OF ACTION ON NUTRITION, an unprecedented opportunity for nutrition action, which serves as a framework to increase activities conducted at national, regional and global levels to achieve existing global targets for nutrition. The framework of action of the ICN2 (Second International Conference on Nutrition, organised by FAO and WHO in 2014) also serves as a reference for organizations to tackle responsibility for addressing undernutrition and ensuring access to food that meets people's nutrition needs and promote safe and diversified diets. In addition, the ITALIAN G7 in 2017 will have a strong focus on Food Security and Nutrition. It should be a key occasion for world leaders to take concrete actions to deliver on the commitments of lifting 500 million people out of hunger by 2030, taken at the G7 Emuas Summit in 2015. Moreover, the NUTRITION 4 GROWTH initiative, that started in London in 2013 and will culminate in Japan in 2020, represents opportunities for governments, civil society, donors to come together to invest in solutions to end malnutrition.

The EU should work to ensure these future opportunities at global level can strengthen the political momentum towards ending undernutrition, building on past commitments, evaluating the progress and pledging additional financial resources, in order to fill the funding gap and ensure the ambition of the SDGs to end malnutrition in all its forms can be realised.

WE CALL ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND ALL MEMBER STATES TO:

ADOPT POLICY

1. Develop a specific strategy and target to reduce wasting in under-fives in development contexts, as previously done with stunting, so to prevent and treat acute malnutrition with a long-term sustainable approach.

2. Ensure a nutrition-sensitive programming approach across different EU development sectors (health, gender, agriculture, education, water, sanitation and hygiene).

3. Develop a specific strategy and target to reduce wasting in under-fives in development contexts, so to prevent and treat acute malnutrition with a long-term sustainable approach.

ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Secure wider political commitment to the improvement of current tracking of nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific spending by aligning the DAC common nutrition code to the OECD DAC list of nutrition-specific interventions and developing a DAC marker for both nutrition specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.

2. Ensure full disbursement of the €3.5 billion pledge for nutrition interventions, through keeping track of the progress and ensuring priority countries also provide reliable data, especially for all the global nutrition targets.

3. Continue to effectively and adequately track the progress on the EU Action Plan on Nutrition, tracking the Nutrition 4 Growth disbursement and the commitment of reducing stunting by at least 7 million by 2025.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SCALE UP EFFORTS TO END UNDERNUTRITION

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