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# EUROPE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

**Ensure nutrition and  
food security for children**



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A family in Zambia prepares a meal together.

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## Executive summary

There is now a unique historical opportunity to engage in a refocused and determined effort that could all but eliminate undernutrition. Sadly, the food crises of East and West Africa have drawn attention again to the widespread plight of undernourished children. At the same time, there has been a growing awareness among world leaders that more action is urgently required to address this previously invisible crisis.

Everyone, including donor and partner governments, agrees that undernutrition should be consigned to the history books. The solutions are known and the road map to implement them exists. Whether the opportunity that the current attention to food security and nutrition provides will be fully grasped depends in no small part upon strong leadership from the European Union (EU). The world's leaders must not only exercise will, but must also accept their political and moral responsibility to provide the sustained focus, action and resources needed to turn the tide against undernutrition.


The EU already has the analysis, framework and promises to make a significant contribution to the collaborative effort urgently needed to save lives and secure the future prospects of millions of children. The EU has recently developed a number of critical policy documents and produced a substantive technical Reference Document which outlines the areas for action in detail. No new analysis is needed. However, as the EU plans for its development investments of 2014 to 2020, there are critical choices to be made about how the EU will scale up its current momentum and shape a new global compact on food security and nutrition.

The EU must choose to act ambitiously to ensure that all children, regardless of where they live, get enough of the right food and care to thrive, and that vulnerable families can produce and access the needed inputs. Nutrition and food security are key areas in which the EU can successfully implement its promises, provide leadership, coordinate efforts and make a substantial contribution to scaling up global efforts to end the injustice and devastating impacts of undernutrition on children, their families and their countries.

**World Vision calls on the EU to show leadership and take advantage of the current window of opportunity to scale up impact on nutrition and food security. The EU should**

- 1. Develop a specific Joint EU Nutrition Action Plan.**
- 2. Measure the impact of EU funding for agriculture and food security against improved nutrition outcomes for children and women.**
- 3. Provide increased funding and support for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in high-burden countries, including the implementation of proven, cost-effective solutions to undernutrition.**
- 4. Prioritise smallholder farmers, particularly women, in EU funding and global coordination for agriculture and food security.**
- 5. Enable effective resilience building through all EU actions, funding and multi-sector and stakeholder coordination.**

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**Undernutrition**  
is the **biggest**  
development  
**challenge**  
facing the world.!

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<sup>1</sup> This was one of the conclusions of an expert panel of economists at the Copenhagen Consensus of 2008 (<http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com>).

## The scale of the problem

Undernutrition is the underlying cause of death for more than 2.5 million children under age 5 each year. This often ‘invisible’ crisis is a bigger challenge than the worst current emergencies of the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Beyond the preventable tragedy of child deaths due to the underlying cause of undernutrition, it is estimated that 170 million children in this age group are stunted (underdeveloped physically and chronically short for their age) and another 19 million are severely wasted (chronically thin for their height and at much greater risk of death). One in seven people do not get enough food to be healthy; many also do not get the right kinds of food, resulting in ‘hidden hunger’ from micronutrient deficiencies.

While these numbers are slowly improving, progress in reducing the number of deaths and stunted children is slower in the world’s worst-affected regions and among the poorest populations in every country. This limited progress is exacerbated by poverty; inequality; and interactions of political, economic, social and environmental factors, such as the recent economic crisis. Undernutrition disproportionately affects poorer countries: 80 per cent of the world’s undernourished children are concentrated in just 20 countries.<sup>2</sup> Children in the poorest households and those in rural areas face the worst impacts of undernutrition.

Good nutrition provides one of the first and best chances for child survival and development throughout life. Proper nutrition during a child’s first 1,000 days, from pregnancy to 2 years of age, supports healthy brain development, normal motor and cognitive development, physical growth and the ability to fight immediate threats to life during and after birth as well as deadly childhood illness. These positive outcomes are critical not only to children and their families but also to the countries where they live. Proper nutrition reduces the burden on health care systems, increases school performance and allows citizens to reach their full potential. It is a critical link in the chain of human well-being and national economic prosperity and security. Investing in good infant and child nutrition is so critical that it can lead to an estimated 2 to 3 per cent growth in the economic wealth of developing countries. The numbers tell the tale, or the tragedy. As it stands today, we are failing miserably to provide hundreds of millions of children with the nutrition necessary for healthy life, growth and development.



This mother walked seven kilometres from her village to the health centre in Tera, Niger, when her 8-month-old daughter fell sick with fever and weakness. The baby was severely acutely malnourished but responded well to Plumpy’nut, a ready-to-use therapeutic food.

2 S. Horton et al., *Scaling up Nutrition: What will it cost?* (2010) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

## CURRENT CRISIS IN THE SAHEL PUTS CHILDREN'S LIVES AT RISK

In late 2011, EU Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva (Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, ECHO) predicted an imminent crisis requiring an urgent 'well-designed intervention to prevent further deaths'.<sup>3</sup> The then Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Josette Sheeran, said, 'The window of opportunity to save millions from undernutrition in the Sahel is rapidly closing'.<sup>4</sup> Despite these warnings, the Sahel region of West Africa has been hit by an escalating food and nutrition crisis, especially in Niger, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. A deadly combination of cyclical factors including low rainfall, rising food prices and declining food supplies is affecting the most vulnerable. In Mali, conflict, poor governance, and internal and external displacement add to the situation. The region is experiencing up to 52 per cent food production deficits in comparison to last year. An estimated 15 million people are in need of food assistance, and over a million children under the age of 5 are at risk of severe acute undernutrition.

The crisis started before the traditional 'hungry' season, and there are indications that it will persist until the next harvest season. The Sahel scenario illustrates the chronic and ongoing nature of nutrition and food insecurity. Even in a year without a humanitarian emergency, 300,000 children under age 5 die from undernutrition-related causes in the region and acute child undernutrition rates are, in many places, over the internationally accepted emergency threshold of 15 per cent. Droughts and food shortages are common. One major difference is that they used to be separated by longer periods, which allowed communities time to recover their means of livelihood and build their resilience.

In March 2012, the European Commission (EC) announced further humanitarian assistance for the Sahel response to 'tackle the root causes of recurring food crises in the region and build resilience of Sahel people and countries [to] save a lot of lives, especially women and children who are usually the first victims of food insecurity'<sup>5</sup> (Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs). 'Humanitarian assistance is like a dressing on a deep wound – it can offer relief, but it cannot cure the disease. To prevent future famines we need to combine the short-term humanitarian response with long-term support for resilience to future droughts,'<sup>6</sup> said Commissioner Georgieva. The international community, together with national governments, must indeed implement long-term and child-sensitive resilience strategies that keep this predictable crisis from deepening and recurring.

Together we can  
**learn**  
 the lesson of the  
 lingering and  
**devastating**  
 food security crisis.

3 European Commission, DG DEVCO, 'Race against time to avert hunger in the Sahel' (2012). [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/2012/20120208-2\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/2012/20120208-2_en.htm).

4 World Food Programme, 'The European Commission makes a €30 million contribution to WFP's response in the Sahel region' (15 February 2012).

5 EC press release, IP/12/304 after announcing the new aid package for the Sahel which is intended to support the existing national food security systems managed by the government, cash/food for work initiatives, vouchers for seed and fertiliser, and early warning systems (23 March 2012). <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/304&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

6 Commissioner Georgieva presenting the 'SHARE' initiative, 'New initiative seals Commission's determination to stand by most vulnerable in Horn of Africa' (March 2012). [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/georgieva/whats\\_new/headlines/archives/2012/03/20120316\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/whats_new/headlines/archives/2012/03/20120316_en.htm).

## ONGOING FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

‘Together we can learn the lesson of the lingering and devastating food security crisis in the Horn of Africa – where there was early warning but little action. We know from the varying impact of drought in the Horn that we can’t prevent drought, but we can prevent famine.’<sup>7</sup>

In 2011 East Africa was hit by a severe humanitarian crisis with the worst drought in 60 years, famine in parts of Somalia and food emergencies in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. It was the ‘perfect storm’, a confluence of micro and macro factors, climate, global markets and prices, cases of poor local governance and resource management, and, in Somalia, conflict and mass migration. Early warnings were not heeded, and the response to the disaster was too late, leading to thousands of deaths that could have been prevented, children being among those hardest hit.

As of March 2012, 20 per cent of the US\$2.4 billion requested for the response to the Horn of Africa remained unmet.<sup>8</sup> And yet, after-effects remain and continue to threaten the lives of more than 10 million people. Recent official forecasts predict insufficient rains in the 2012 season in Somalia (20 to 40 per cent below average).<sup>9</sup> Undernutrition and death rates are still unacceptably high, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). This threatens to reverse gains made since the famine, and it prolongs the dire food crisis that continues to cripple the area. In the East Africa region, millions have lost their local support mechanisms and as a result have a diminished capacity to absorb and survive the continuing stress and adversity. The best way to save lives this year is to be prepared to respond early when needed. More essentially, we must build the local capacity for response, recovery and longer-term resilience.<sup>10</sup>

**1 million**  
babies’ lives  
could be **saved**  
if all mothers exclusively  
**breastfed**  
for their babies’ first  
**6 months.**

## Causes of undernutrition

The various causes of undernutrition can be found at the individual, household, local, national and global levels. The immediate causes of undernutrition revolve around access to food but also relate to its utilisation (knowledge of nutritious food, preparation and hygiene) as well as the living conditions and access to health care of children and mothers. Underlying causes can be classified within a number of sectors, including health, agriculture, water, food security, social protection, women’s empowerment, and education, particularly for girls. One reason the increase in global food production has failed to provide better nutrition for the world’s poorest children is that growing more food as a global aggregate is not enough. Other factors combine to determine whether or not children get the food they need to be healthy. At the household level, child nutrition is influenced by women’s education and the status of women, because women are often the primary producers and purchasers of food.

<sup>7</sup> Helen Clark, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, ‘Debriefing on the Joint UNDP/OCHA Mission to Niger’, (29 February 2012).

<sup>8</sup> An additional US\$2.7 billion has been requested for 2012. UNOCHA & FEWSNET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network) Situation Report No. 32, ‘Horn of Africa Crisis’ (February 2012).

<sup>9</sup> UNOCHA & FEWSNET Situation Report No. 32, ‘Horn of Africa Crisis’ (February 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Poor rain forecast in Somalia threatens recovery: *Situation still dire as undernutrition and death rates remain high*, Press Release of a coalition of 219 NGOs, including World Vision (Nairobi, 13 April 2012).

Child nutrition is also influenced by cultural norms and priorities about diet and the allocation of resources. At the local level, nutritional status depends on whether nutritious food is locally produced or available and whether it can be purchased by the poor. Other important factors include access to land, assets and capital; poor farmers' ability to trade; and access to locally appropriate low-cost technology to increase local production and resilience while decreasing risk, vulnerability and environmental damage.

There is a strong correlation between undernutrition and poverty, with undernutrition being both a cause and a consequence of poverty.<sup>12</sup> Underlying and basic causes result from interactions of political, economic, social and environmental factors. At the national level, these include the lack of effective institutions and systems, absence of good governance and rights, discrimination and inequality in services and resource allocation, and the lack of prevention or mitigation of conflict and disasters. There are also international factors, such as disadvantageous trade provisions and distortions, volatile food prices, speculation, and systems and markets that are ineffective for the poor. These factors can be influenced in the EU. The EU can also be a leader in generating the sufficient political will to ensure that solutions deal effectively with the full range of causes.

## Proven solutions

Undernutrition is not an inevitable fact of life. We know what to do to improve nutrition for children in families, communities and countries. The evidence is in; it has been tested and it is known to work to save children's lives. When scaled up, these specific, proven, cost-effective interventions to tackle undernutrition will have a dramatic impact.

In 2008, *The Lancet* outlined a compendium of 13 proven direct nutrition interventions, including micronutrient supplementation, promotion of breastfeeding, and nutrition education. World Vision is implementing a health and nutrition strategy based on global expert consensus about proven solutions with 7 core interventions for pregnant women and 11 for children under 2 years old.<sup>13</sup> A group of international economists tasked with finding the highest-return solutions to global challenges ranked responses to undernutrition and hunger as a top priority due to the 'exceptionally high' cost-benefit ratio when compared with an array of other issues, such as conflict, air pollution and terrorism.<sup>14</sup> They named five nutrition interventions among the top ten most cost-effective actions for tackling humanity's biggest problems.


11 World Vision International, *The Best Start: Saving Children's lives in their first thousand days* (2011). [http://www.wvi.org/wvi/wviweb.nsf/8ACB216444EC63D3882579680069B44D/\\$file/The%20Best%20Start%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf](http://www.wvi.org/wvi/wviweb.nsf/8ACB216444EC63D3882579680069B44D/$file/The%20Best%20Start%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf).

World Vision International, *Child Health Now: Together we can end preventable deaths* (2009). [http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/press-child-health-now/\\$file/childhealthnowreport.pdf](http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/press-child-health-now/$file/childhealthnowreport.pdf).

12 UNICEF, *Tracking Progress on Child and Maternal Health Nutrition: A Survival and Development Priority* (2009).

13 **7 core interventions for pregnant women:** (1) Adequate diet; (2) Iron-folate supplements; (3) Tetanus toxoid immunisation; (4) Malaria prevention and intermittent preventive treatment; (5) Healthy timing and spacing of delivery; (6) De-worming; (7) Facilitate access to maternal health service. **11 core interventions for children under 2:** (1) Appropriate breastfeeding; (2) Essential Newborn Care; (3) Hand washing; (4) Appropriate complementary feeding (6–24 months); (5) Adequate iron; (6) Vitamin A supplementation; (7) Oral Re-Hydration Therapy/Zinc; (8) Care-seeking for fever; (9) Full immunisation for age; (10) Malaria prevention; (11) De-worming. In World Vision International. **2011 Health Review** (pp. 18–19). <http://childhealthnow.com/resources/childhealthnowreview2011/index.html>. For a variety of successful case studies, see *The Best Start: Saving Children's lives in their first thousand days*, World Vision International (2011).

14 Copenhagen Consensus (2008). <http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com>



**Vitamin A**  
supplements could  
save 500,000  
children  
each year.<sup>11</sup>

The World Bank estimated that it would cost US\$11.8 billion annually to implement the key interventions for children under the age of 2 in the 36 countries that account for 90 per cent of undernourished children (2009).<sup>15</sup> The past two years have seen the evolution of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement,<sup>16</sup> which focuses on increasing coverage of these direct nutrition solutions. Greater attention and increased and specifically targeted funding and monitoring are still needed to ensure that evidence-based and cost-effective interventions to prevent and treat undernutrition are available to the most vulnerable children, families and communities. The EU has a key role to play to ensure rapid, significant and sustainable results.

## Addressing the full range of causes to improve nutrition<sup>17</sup>

Evidence suggests that to reach our goals, a coordinated, integrated and decentralised approach is needed to reduce poverty and undernutrition over the long-term. Many factors that affect nutrition fall outside the realm of the health or agriculture policy and need to be addressed in planning and implementing relevant nutrition policies. A wide range of participatory gender-sensitive and community-based initiatives must be funded and promoted, such as nutrition education programmes; improvement of female literacy rates; access to microcredit, especially for women farmers; recognition of land titles and female ownership; and strengthening of community-level organisational structures as well as water, sanitation and health systems.

There must be a recognition that undernutrition does not concern only technical experts or a single social sector. It is everyone's problem, with everyone having a role to play in solving it. Alongside efforts to scale up the coverage of health interventions for improved nutrition, the SUN movement also promotes a greater focus on 'nutrition-sensitive' solutions in agriculture, education and other sectors. The EC Reference Document calls for the mainstreaming of nutrition-specific objectives in all sectors and aid modalities, emphasising that solving undernutrition must become the responsibility of all actors. With its broad membership and the significant size of its development investment, the EU can play a critical role in raising the political will and ambition of politicians and other key actors in EU institutions, Member States, partnerships and global forums, whilst significantly increasing its own investment and impact.

### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

To date, areas such as agriculture, social protection and education, which have the potential to improve nutrition, have not mobilised their resources effectively and in some cases are not directly working to improve nutrition at all. Coherent and coordinated agricultural policies, among others, must be part of any successful national nutrition plan. The agriculture sector has traditionally focused on short-term national

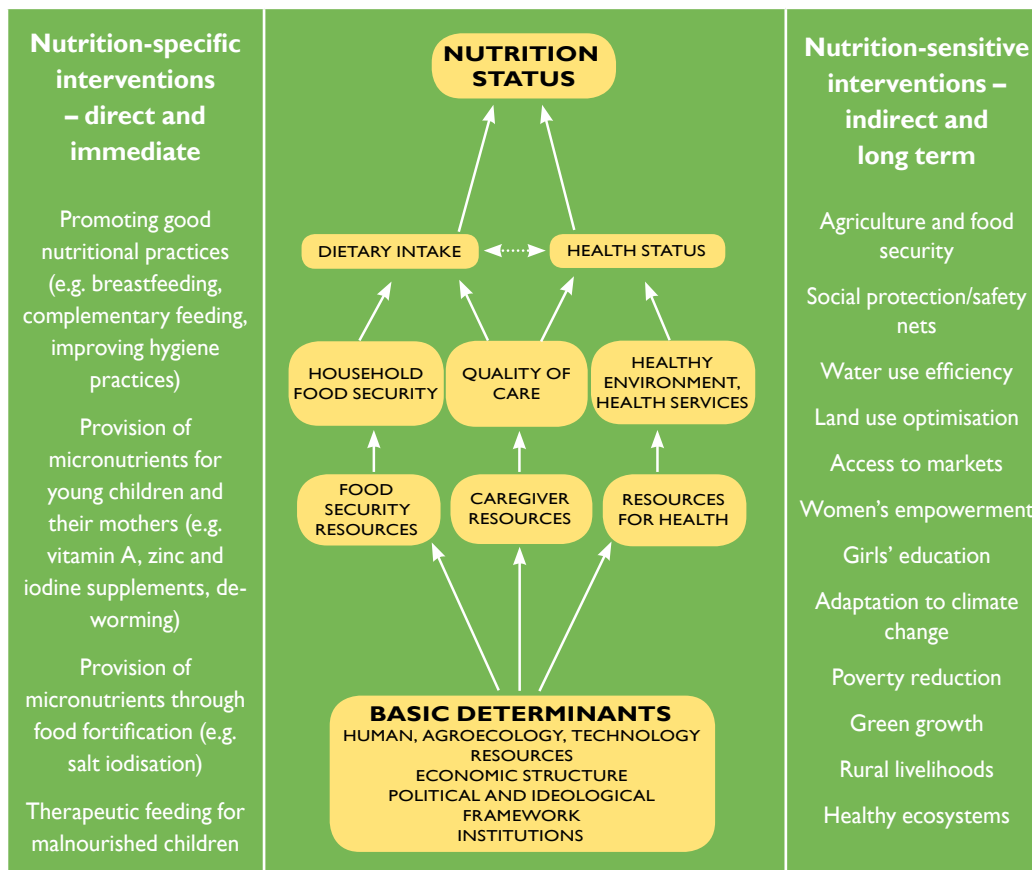
<sup>15</sup> S. Horton et al. (2010).

<sup>16</sup> The SUN movement involves more than 100 bodies and organisations dedicated to keeping nutrition high on national and international agendas; it is also dedicated to supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions to improve maternal and child nutrition. As a collective effort, SUN is unprecedented in terms of global commitment and concerted focus on enabling concrete action. It clearly places ownership of nutrition in national hands, but aims to galvanise all the supporting action from development partners required for countries to achieve success (<http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/>).

<sup>17</sup> The Reference Document produced by the EC and a number of Member States, 'Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance', provides detailed information on the causes and solutions of undernutrition in much greater detail than this briefing and should be used by those seeking guidance or further information.



improvements to productivity rather than longer-term sustainability, nutrition and health impacts. There is an emerging recognition that without attention to sustainable integrated programming and resilience, food productivity improvements will be short-lived. Concurrently, there is a growing acceptance that deliberate attention must be given to the relationship between household agricultural opportunities and decisions on the one hand, and nutritional outcomes on the other, especially for children and other vulnerable groups.



Adapted by World Vision from UNICEF's Nutrition Framework, in UNICEF, *Strategy for Improved Nutrition of Children and Women in Developing Countries: A UNICEF policy review* (New York: UNICEF, 1990), 22; and from Ruel, M. and J. Hoddinott, 'Investing in Early Childhood Nutrition' IFPRI Policy Brief 8. (Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2008).

Agricultural production must be improved, not only in terms of technology and forecasting, but also by ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable can produce and access sufficient, diverse and nutritious food. However, improved production alone will not be enough. Agriculture, considered as including but going beyond food production, can help reach long-term impact in the nutrition and food security of the poor if it is well coordinated and focused on nutrition outcomes. Although agriculture is sometimes part of the problem (contributing to environmental degradation, fertility decline and biodiversity loss due to unsustainable use of irrigation and pesticides, for example), agriculture-based interventions, combined with land- and water-management practices and appropriate national policies and systems, can enhance food security and help ensure a sustainable future.<sup>18</sup> The EU's stated focus on agriculture and growth must be intentionally directed towards effectively and reliably ensuring that the poorest children on the planet will have enough nutritious food.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication* (2011). [www.unep.org/pdf/water/WAT-Water\\_KB\\_17.08\\_PRINT\\_EDITION.2011.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/water/WAT-Water_KB_17.08_PRINT_EDITION.2011.pdf).

# Investing in smallholder farmers can ensure access to low-cost, locally appropriate food and adequate nutrition.

## SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

'Half the undernourished in the world, three-quarters of Africa's malnourished children, and most of those in absolute poverty live on small farms',<sup>19</sup> relying on agriculture as their primary source of nutrition and income. The number of small farms is not decreasing. Investing in smallholder farmers is the easiest way to ensure access to low-cost, locally appropriate food and adequate nutrition. Increasing small-farm productivity can also potentially generate surplus, promote further investment in land and conservation, and affect the rest of the economy. Approaches that focus on large-scale food production, although increasing global production, most often have not sufficiently reached those who need it most, and often not even those who grow it. The social consequences of a rapid concentration of land to large farms would be disastrous, including mass migration and the deeper poverty of the landless. Despite the fragile economy of small farms, the benefits of favouring large farms would not equitably balance the problems (nutrition, food and income insecurity, insufficient livelihood options and dependency). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to invest substantially in direct support of smallholder farmers, especially women.

Simple, cost-effective strategies can enable smallholders to boost production, make a decent living and meet their nutrition needs. Subsistence farmers need training and technologies that require little capital and entail low risk. Widening the diversification of production (such as adding vegetables, orchards and livestock) improves the nutrition and also the livelihood security. Appropriate low-cost technology, such as the use of locally-adapted seed and livestock varieties, traditional plant breeding, improved farm management and conservation techniques, all increase incomes and resilience. Women need specific support to ensure access to assets, inputs and rights. Farmer networks are effective for watershed care, low-cost irrigation systems and credit.

The G20 Development Work Group recommended that smallholder producers be placed at the core of food security policies.<sup>20</sup> The EC food security Communication calls for 'enhancing incomes of smallholder farmers and the resilience of vulnerable communities'.<sup>21</sup> The Council of the EU was clear in its endorsement: 'We would encourage EU development assistance to prioritise food security in the areas of small-scale farming, sustainable and ecologically-efficient farming, pro-poor and demand-led agricultural research.'<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this has not been clearly evidenced so far. Smallholder farmers will increasingly compete with the EU focus on profitable private investment and rapid economic growth. The EU Court of Auditors reported that 'Large government agricultural and social transfer programmes are not financially sustainable.'<sup>23</sup> The EU actions must now more substantially demonstrate its promises to prioritise smallholder farmers, especially women. The EU should now scale up its support and funding for a range of agricultural interventions that allow smallholder farmers, including women, to keep and to sustainably strengthen their livelihoods and resilience, while also improving their families' food and nutrition security.

19 International Food Policy Research Institute, *The future of small farms: Proceedings of a research workshop* (2005). In World Vision Australia & Overseas Development Institute, 'Policy report: Island nation or global citizen? Stopping the food crisis by helping small-scale farmers' (2011). [http://www.worldvision.com.au/Libraries/Reports\\_policy\\_Island\\_nation\\_2011/Island\\_Nation\\_2011.pdf](http://www.worldvision.com.au/Libraries/Reports_policy_Island_nation_2011/Island_Nation_2011.pdf).

20 2011 Report of the Development Working Group – Version Post Paris Meeting, September 2011.

21 EC COM127 final: 'An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security Challenges', Brussels (March 2010). [http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM\\_PDF\\_COM\\_2010\\_0127\\_EN.PDF](http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2010_0127_EN.PDF).

22 EU Council Conclusions on *An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges* adopted at the Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels, 10–11 May 2010.

23 European Court of Auditors, Special Report No. 1. 'Effectiveness of European Union Development Aid for Food Security in sub-Saharan Africa' (January 2012). <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/I/13300745.PDF>.



After class, these sisters in Vietnam help their family take care of the vegetable garden, which helps to improve their health, increase the family income and keep the children in school.

## **SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS FOR RESULTS IN NUTRITION: THE WORLD VISION NEPAL EXPERIENCE**

A successful food security project was implemented in the mountainous Jumbla district of Nepal from 2006 to 2010. The project promoted farming system improvements, including community greenhouses, local seed banks and post-harvest storage facilities. Marketing cooperatives and local outlets were also established. Agricultural production increased in both yield and variety, enabling greater spending on food, health care and children's education and introducing greater diet diversity. To supplement their one or two meals of only white rice, local citizens were able to add bread made from locally grown indigenous grains. Nutrition and health education contributed to further improvements in dietary practices, such as pregnant women eating vegetables. There has been a significant reduction in numbers of underweight children in the community.

Nutritious local foods, previously grown only for animal feed, are now promoted and valued as a result of storing and growing indigenous seed varieties and consuming local grains. The hardy seeds are well adapted to the local environment and, unlike rice and wheat, do not require irrigation under normal circumstances. World Vision Nepal helped the community use marginal land more productively to improve food security and directly affect the nutritional status of the target households. The project has been a catalyst for getting women together to discuss common problems related to agricultural production and household and community issues. It provided skills and a common platform to collaborate to solve the issues important to their community.

## Tracking nutrition impacts in agriculture and food security interventions

Tracking the impacts of agriculture and food security interventions on child nutrition is not simple, because the impacts are diffuse and they consist of multiple functions. Nevertheless, it is possible to begin to incorporate integrated objectives and to seek positive correlations among the areas of agriculture, food security, health and nutrition. For example, improvements in farm productivity can be assessed in part through the quality, quantity and diversity of foods made available. Productivity-boosting enhancements should optimise on-farm allocation of resources as well as reduction of post-harvest losses, increased efficiency of water and land use, and protection of natural environments adjoining farmland. The success of nutrition education could be related to the household use of nutritious and locally available foods, including the revival, cultivation and promotion of indigenous varieties, as well as child growth outcomes.

### THE EU NUTRITION ADVISORY SERVICE: NUTRITION-SENSITIVE INDICATORS

Throughout 'Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance', an EC Reference Document, the authors provide a detailed analysis of nutrition-sensitive ways to plan and monitor the impact of interventions, with indicators for all sectors, national policies and governance. A list of indicators is analysed, with insights on potential sources, strengths and weaknesses of indicators, and the national dialogue and review needed for the choice of indicators. They list a comprehensive set of nutrition-sensitive indicators for agriculture and food security. Other examples of relevant indicators of nutrition impact from agriculture and food security actions are the meal frequency, households' purchasing power, access to food, fortification of foods and the proportion of expenditure on foods.<sup>24</sup>

## Building household resilience

Resilience is 'the ability of countries, communities, and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses – such as earthquakes, drought or violent conflict – without compromising their long-term prospects; the ability of individuals, households, communities or systems to bounce back or recover following a shock or stress, and build positively on this experience.'<sup>25</sup> In times of crisis, all families resort to coping strategies, using their economic and intellectual resources to survive. Many use negative and unsustainable coping strategies that push them further into vulnerability and poverty, such as selling productive assets or taking their children out of school; and many are unable to invest in adequate health and nutrition. In certain circumstances, an increase in child marriage has been observed

<sup>24</sup> EU Reference Document No. 13, 'Addressing undernutrition in external assistance: An integrated approach through sectors and aid modalities', Tools and Methods Series (2011).

<sup>25</sup> UK Department for International Development, *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper* (2011).

in response to severe hardship, suggesting that in some areas girls are still considered as 'assets'. Poor farmers, especially women, develop risk aversion, often choosing to maintain low-yield farming strategies that offer the least risk to things of greatest importance to them, such as food security. Families are also unable to adequately invest their remaining resources (assets, intellect and time) to improve their livelihood and resilience and decrease their vulnerability to shocks and crises, leading to chronic repercussions of crises, and worse effects in the next crisis.

Commissioner Georgieva emphasised that 'Spending one euro now on resilience saves us spending seven in relief when disaster strikes.' Although we cannot prevent climate change or drought, we can anticipate it and plan for its effects and avoid 'some of the terrible consequences we are seeing today [...] – if we begin today to build resilience into all our efforts and actions. That is the challenge and also a duty for us all.'<sup>26</sup> However, substantial changes are needed from the EU to reach this goal.

Resilience building involves comprehensive risk management and coordinated, coherent solutions for the underlying causes of undernutrition. It will take a long-term multi-sector holistic approach to help vulnerable citizens, civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities and governments to prevent negative coping mechanisms and other barriers to nutritional, economic and environmental stability; to be constantly prepared and adapted to possible shocks; and to build the ability, strength and sustainability that is optimum for the context. Social protection is one important tool, if managed well within a broader comprehensive framework. Lasting resilience is impossible without effective CSO engagement. The EU can also provide leadership by ensuring effective support for disaster risk reduction and management by linking emergency responses with long-term coordinated solutions, and by ensuring Policy Coherence for Development.

## **SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS**

During humanitarian crises, social safety nets prevent the poorest from resorting to the most extreme coping mechanisms. Locally procured food commodities and alternate support, such as cash or market vouchers, enhance the availability of contextually appropriate food and help shore the local markets. In the longer-term, social protection through, for example, cash transfers or insurance schemes, can enable the most vulnerable to supplement their income and contribute to improved family nutrition. The predictability of cash transfers enables households to continue using social services, such as health and education, and to retain their assets and capital, such as livestock, land and production tools.

The EU is now promoting social protection in international forums, and the EC is elaborating its policy proposal with an upcoming Communication, a welcome initiative. Nevertheless, social protection cannot be seen as a panacea; neither can it replace sustainable income generation, particularly from small farming. For this model to be sustainable, social transfers must be designed as a supplement to other long-term sources of income. Social protection will be effective and sustainable only if it is part of a stable and fair system which benefits from local ownership and sufficient domestic resource mobilisation. The EU must support the implementation of scaled-up, appropriate, coherent and context-specific national systems as opposed to isolated initiatives.

<sup>26</sup> Statement by European Commissioner K. Georgieva on the famine in the Horn of Africa at the UN ministerial Mini-Summit on the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa in New York, 24 September 2011.



A woman sells fruit and vegetables in the market at Kasangombe, Uganda. In many countries microfinance loans assist women to set up their own businesses and earn enough to feed their families.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

Current systems of prevention and mitigation of risks before and during times of food crises, including those of the EU, remain undersized and ineffective.<sup>27</sup> DRR must start long before disasters. Donors should dramatically increase their cooperation, and outdated paradigms should be updated to reflect new realities. Food security in prevention and during relief must be linked to programmes that promote resilient means of livelihood, sustainable agricultural practices and climate change mitigation and adaptation.<sup>28</sup> To translate into early action, early warning and recovery processes must include long-term contingency planning and must focus on livelihood and assets, on overcoming risks and barriers, on relations between markets and on the link between health, nutrition and economic abilities. Effective DRR will require improved targeting, monitoring and assessment, including that of markets and alternatives to food aid. The EC has recently launched resilience efforts (see box on the Sahel crisis, page 5), yet must now model significant improvements, starting with changing its own practice to implement good intentions, ensuring effective coordination and enabling proactive multi-stakeholder solutions, flexibility and innovation.

## LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LRRD)

In vulnerable areas, long-term recovery mechanisms are necessary to build resilience, to overcome shocks and dependency and to ensure that more positive resources are built over time. Very early in the humanitarian response, significant resources should be dedicated to build long-term capacity and reduce the drivers of risk. The EC has made progress with alternatives that help shore up the local markets. Nevertheless, much more is needed, and for a longer time frame. Effective LRRD will require multi-annual planning and funding. Transition funding is necessary to ensure livelihoods, basic services and social protection. The funding must be flexible to adapt to fluid conditions

<sup>27</sup> Sahel Working Group, *Escaping the Hunger Cycle: Pathways to Resilience in the Sahel* (September 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Caritas Europa, 'Hunger is a scandal: Food Security for all! A responsibility of Europe', Policy Paper (2010).

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: EXAMPLES FROM ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia, one of the most food-insecure countries in the world, has long tackled the issue with a humanitarian approach only. In more recent years, the government's policies have evolved away from a disaster-response focus (food supply) towards one of disaster risk management (DRM) based on a broader recognition of underlying causes and a complete analysis of livelihoods. Since 2005, the government-led Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is meant as a long-term sustainable means to address chronic food insecurity.

In the rain-dependent small community of Abrha Atsebha in the Tigray state, intensive farming systems were one of the causes of the massive degradation of natural resources, leading to negative economic and environmental impacts (drying groundwater, poor productivity, rising commodity prices and food shortages). World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) helped the community collaborate with the PSNP, other NGOs and local authorities to work efficiently towards improved livelihoods and resilience. All smallholder households (910, including 100 female headed) actively participated in the conservation of their natural resources. They recharged underground water levels through watershed management, protected the area from cattle grazing and prevented deforestation. The programme enabled them to plant a variety of fruit and vegetables, coffee and sugar cane. Enhanced agricultural production, together with attitude changes, resulted in improved diets and better physical conditions.

WVE has facilitated various successful long-term programmes that combine community-based nutrition and health actions with food security and resilience initiatives. The Community-Based Reforestation Project in the Humbo valley is an innovative partnership between a local community-based organisation, WVE, the government and the World Bank. While regenerating over 2,700 hectares of degraded forest land, the project has enhanced livelihoods, improved soil protection, decreased flooding and increased water supplies and biodiversity. The legal recognition of land rights and the registration of local cooperatives increased ownership, rights and empowerment. The project provided agricultural, environmental, risk-management and governance training as well as employment and financial inflows from the carbon reduction certification market. The strong impact was attributed to the empowerment of CSOs, the community-based nature of the programme, strong NGO collaboration and government support.

Since 2010, the government of Ethiopia has been committed to a national disaster management policy promoting resilience. It focuses on mainstreaming DRM practices across government and partners and on moving quickly to recovery and rehabilitation in the aftermath of crises. Instead of declaring disasters and appealing for response funding after conducting ex-post needs assessments, the response mechanism is already addressed and disaster risk financing is triggered by indicators that track potential major hazards. This new policy prioritises national resources to fund prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and rehabilitation. The enabling system and legislation for the DRM policy, as well as processes to strengthen accountability mechanisms, are being put in place.



Before (1984) and after (present-day) reforestation project in Ethiopia.

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Democratic ownership and accountability, and full participation of stakeholders, including CSOs, are critical to successfully combat undernutrition.

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and rapidly changing needs. It must also be sufficient and predictable to begin effective system building, addressing a wider range of causal factors. Such action requires a deeper understanding of the role that CSOs can play and calls for sufficient trust and resources to enable them to play those roles. All donors, including the EU, will need to overcome the humanitarian–development divide. Coherence between food assistance granted in times of emergency and long-term food security policies must be effectively achieved. Although the EU often reaffirms the need for effective LRRD, as stressed again by the Council of the EU during the food crisis in the Horn of Africa,<sup>29</sup> the funding and coordination are largely inadequate for success.

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

As emphasised by the Council of the EU, ‘Enhancing transparency and accountability of donors and partner countries is essential for maximising the impact of development policies. Strong domestic accountability in the partner countries is key to ensuring effective governance and, ultimately, is the best guarantee for an effective use of resources for development.’<sup>30</sup> CSOs’ participation in governance processes and accountability mechanisms between the government, local authorities and its citizens are especially key for the current needs for impact in resilience and nutrition. For programme design and coordination, understanding the perspective of community groups can provide valuable insights into the daily constraints faced by families that may have an impact on nutrition. Social accountability processes and systems must evolve to enable parliaments, auditing organisations and citizens to track the budgets and expenditures, limit corruption and ensure that funds are well targeted and used in the most cost-efficient way. CSOs and key social actors must also be supported to participate in the monitoring and evaluations. Effective mutual accountability and the engagement of CSOs are contingent on donor and government support for transparency, democratic ownership and the enabling environment for CSOs.

The EU, along with other donors, should support partners to ensure the effective participation of all country stakeholders (families, CSOs, local and national authorities and donors) in the design, monitoring and accountability of programmes and budgets.

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<sup>29</sup> EU Council, ‘Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa’, 3124th Foreign Affairs Council meeting (2011).

<sup>30</sup> EU Council, ‘Mutual Accountability and Transparency: A Fourth Chapter for the EU Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness’ Council Conclusions (2010). <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st17/st17769.en10.pdf>.



## CITIZEN VOICE AND ACTION: WORLD VISION'S EXPERIENCE IN UGANDA

World Vision's social accountability approach, called Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), enables citizens to become more aware of their rights and entitlements, to gather data, and to evaluate and demand increased accountability for improved public services at the local level. In Uganda, this approach was used to inform national-level advocacy and engagement with the government around undernutrition, a major cause of child mortality in Uganda. The lack of a clear policy framework and inadequate budgetary allocation for nutrition, understaffing and the lack of education on nutrition for existing health professionals have all been identified as contributing factors.

Through a series of local meetings, which included community-based organisations, village health teams and other leaders, citizens identified critical barriers to accessing quality nutrition and health services. The identified issues were then used to inform a series of roundtable dialogues with various stakeholders, including parliamentarians and local authorities, at the district and national level.

At the same time, World Vision's Uganda office was instrumental in the formation of a national coalition on nutrition with other CSOs and academia under the auspices of the SUN movement. This coalition, later to be called the Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Scaling up Nutrition (UCCOSUN), played a great role in enhancing the profile of nutrition in Uganda, including through its joint public statement 'The Moment is Now', which called for urgent action to improve child nutrition. They leveraged the global backing of the SUN movement and combined this with evidence generated at the community level through the CVA approach to enhance national engagement.

This process greatly influenced the drafting of the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan, particularly in relation to rectifying the plan's initial lack of focus on the community level. The combination of approaches has galvanised action at all levels in Uganda. Citizens are holding their local leaders to account. At the national level, the formation and strengthening of the UCCOSUN coalition, as well as the establishment of a civil society coalition for maternal and child health, will provide a focus for further coordinated action. Further engagement of key parliamentarians took place around the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly that was held in Kampala in March 2012. WVU and the UCCOSUN coalition were instrumental in ensuring that nutrition was included in a draft resolution, 'Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children', which was passed unanimously by parliamentarians from 120 countries at the Assembly. Due to its success, the participatory approach of the programme is currently being replicated in several other countries.



A Community-based organisation in Uganda lobbies local authorities with the support of World Vision's CVA.

## What has the international community done?

The global food price crisis of 2007–2008 was the catalyst for renewed and coordinated action on food security. In 2008, the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis was established under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General to better coordinate efforts to tackle food insecurity. This task force produced the 'Comprehensive Framework for Action', which sets out a twin-track approach focusing on immediate, increased support for urgent needs related to food security along with steps towards a coordinated, longer-term response to the underlying and structural issues. These efforts are starting to coalesce, as seen by the reformed UN Committee on Food Security and the Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.

Food security and, to a lesser extent, nutrition, have also featured on the agenda of global leaders' summits such as the G8 and more recently the G20. In 2009 at the summit in L'Aquila, Italy, G8 and other donors committed US\$22 billion over three years for food security, particularly for agricultural development. The deadline for these commitments is the end of 2012, so it is too soon to know exactly how much of this total has been disbursed. However, the 2011 G8 'Deauville Accountability Report' stated that more than halfway through the three-year timeline, only 22 per cent of total L'Aquila food security commitments had been disbursed. The 'Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth', which provided the framework for the development agenda of the G20, chose food security as one of its main development pillars for priority actions. The G20 and related ministerial meetings have started to seek innovative ways to solve the challenges faced by poor countries in relation to food security, but there is still a long way to go. With the G20 countries themselves accounting for over 40 per cent of the world's stunted children, the problems related to food security and nutrition are not always beyond their own borders. The EU should use its influence to encourage G20 countries such as India to scale up much-needed food security and nutrition interventions to tackle the crisis in their own countries. It should also continue to promote the political will of other global donors and partners to ensure pro-poor and nutrition-centred joint action.

## What has the EU done?

The EU has started to scale up its response to the challenges of nutrition and food security in recent years, with a moderate degree of increased funding and a number of relevant policy and strategy documents being developed. It is now time for the EU to move to the next step, to ensure the effective implementation of promises, with strategic and coordinated action.

Recognising a need to deepen the focus on nutrition and food security, the EC issued the March 2010 Communication on agriculture, food security and nutrition.<sup>31</sup> Aiming to set a comprehensive approach for the EU and its Member States, the policy emphasises increased agricultural production, improved access to food through employment and income generation, formulation of nutrition policies and strategies, coordination between sectors (agriculture, health, social protection and education) and improved crisis prevention, early warning, management and coordination. This policy, together

<sup>31</sup> EC COM127 final: 'An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security Challenges', Brussels (March 2010).

with the Communication on ‘The EU Role in Global Health’, which has a whole section on nutrition, and the Communication on ‘Humanitarian Food Assistance’, provides a policy framework for successful strategic common action for the EU and its Member States in combating undernutrition.<sup>32</sup>

In 2011 the Nutrition Advisory Service, with experts of the EC and a number of leading EU Member States (Germany, Ireland, France, Poland and the United Kingdom), developed a Reference Document, ‘Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance’. The document was designed to ‘transform aid programmes so that they can achieve real progress in preventing undernutrition’ and to provide practical information for officials in the EU delegations on how to implement nutrition.

In terms of global leadership on nutrition and food security, the EU has taken initiatives but much more remains to be done. The EU has been a key partner in the G8 and G20 processes, which have been increasing their collective commitment to tackling these urgent issues. In addition to this, the EC has endorsed the SUN movement, taking on the role of official donor convenor in Niger and playing this role jointly in Peru.<sup>33</sup> More recently, EC Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs was appointed by the UN Secretary General to be one of the 27 global leaders on the SUN leaders group convened to carry forward the mission of the SUN movement.<sup>34</sup>

A recent report from the European Court of Auditors commended the EU for its previous work on food security in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in those countries where the issue has been identified as a priority sector in the Country Strategy Paper and the Indicative Programming. However the report identifies a gap in relation to countries that are suffering from chronic food insecurity but that did not identify food security as a key priority sector for partnership with the EU (such as the Democratic Republic of Congo). Within the scope of its audit, the Court concluded that EU development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa is mostly effective and makes an important contribution to achieving food security. However, there is scope for significant improvement in a number of areas, particularly with regards to a greater focus on nutrition. The report states that the ‘EC and European External Action Service should give adequate priority to nutrition when defining the cooperation strategy, identifying and designing interventions, and using policy dialogue with partner governments’.<sup>35</sup> Actions are lacking for resilience. The report criticises that only half of the EC interventions in sub-Saharan Africa ‘have reasonable prospects of being sustainable.’ This provides further evidence that key steps and a stronger implementation of nutrition are needed.

The EU now has a strategic policy framework, a number of political promises and a level of commitment to nutrition and food security, and is poised to position Europe as a key actor in the global response to undernutrition. However, much more must still be done. The authors of the EC Reference Document rightly call for ‘concrete steps to translate the political commitments into action and measurable impact’ with further ‘ongoing efforts to join up the approaches and priorities of the EU’s aid institutions across its

32 EC COM128 final: ‘The EU Role in Global Health’, Brussels (March 2010). [http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM\\_PDF\\_COM\\_2010\\_0128\\_EN.PDF](http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2010_0128_EN.PDF); EC COM 126 final: ‘Humanitarian Food Assistance’, Brussels (March 2010). [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/Food\\_Assistance\\_Comm.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/Food_Assistance_Comm.pdf).

33 UN High Level Meeting on Nutrition, ‘Progress Report from countries and their partners in the Movement to Scale Up Nutrition’ (2011).

34 Global Health Hub, ‘U.N. Appoints 27 International Leaders To “Scaling Up Nutrition” Group to...’ (2012). <http://www.globalhealthhub.org/2012/04/11/u-n-appoints-27-international-leaders-to-scaling-up-nutrition-group-to/>.

35 European Court of Auditors, Special Report No. 1 (2012).

Investing  
in nutrition can  
**increase**  
the GDP by  
**2 to 3 per cent.**

Member States, thereby creating international momentum to combat undernutrition once and for all.<sup>36</sup> Such steps will require a precise guideline, such as a specific Joint EU Nutrition Action Plan and dedicated funding. This will enable the EU to use all possible tools to encourage partner governments and to provide more ambitious leadership to the global initiatives.

## FUNDING

There is widespread recognition that the EU has played an important role in providing funding for food security at critical moments in recent years. However, the picture of EU funding for nutrition and food security is complex, with funding through several sectors and different funding modalities. It is difficult to accurately calculate the total spend on these areas and how it is specifically allocated, particularly in regards to nutrition, making an analysis of impact even more difficult.

In terms of emergency funding, ECHO allocated 38 per cent of its budget to nutrition and food security in 2010 (€475 million).<sup>37</sup> The EU Food Facility that was established in response to the food price crisis in 2008 amounted to €1 billion for two years, of which only around €700 million was additional new funding. According to the EC, in 2010, the total disbursements for development food security and food assistance amounted to about 3.4 per cent of ODA (€343 million of nearly €10 billion),<sup>38</sup> or 7 per cent if agriculture and rural development elements are included. Over one-third of ODA went to sub-Saharan Africa in 2010. Of this amount, nearly half was for food security, one-third of which was allocated through direct or sector budget support.<sup>39</sup> This funding modality should enable country systems building and thus it complements other tools well. Nevertheless, the Court of Auditors found that of the six countries reviewed in 2011, none had used the funding for nutrition interventions. In addition, the EC directs an extremely small percentage of all of its funds directly through CSOs. The Court of Auditors has also outlined this weakness, considering nutrition and food security funding to CSOs to be too small, with timeframes too short to achieve results. And yet, many effective nutrition interventions and support for smallholder farmers must be decentralised, community-based or implemented where governments are not able or willing (for example in fragile states).

At the 2009 G8 Summit in L'Aquila, the EU pledged the single biggest amount (€2.7 billion) for agriculture and food security. The deadline for meeting L'Aquila commitments is the end of 2012, but the EU has already met its pledge, which we warmly welcome. However, less than one-fifth (€533 million) was fresh funds (some overlapping with the Food Facility and emergency funding).<sup>40</sup> In addition, a very small proportion of this funding was dedicated to non-emergency nutrition-specific interventions (less than 2 per cent).<sup>41</sup>

36 EU Reference Document No. 13 (2011).

37 European Commission (DG ECHO), *2010 Annual Report on the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection policies and their implementation*. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual\\_report/annual\\_report\\_2010.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/annual_report_2010.pdf).

38 European Commission (DG EuropeAid), *Annual Report on the European Union's development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2010*. [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/files/publications/europeaid\\_annual\\_report\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/files/publications/europeaid_annual_report_2011_en.pdf), and analysis of EC DEVCO official.

39 European Commission (DG ECHO), *2010 Annual Report on the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection policies and their implementation*; European Court of Auditors Special Report No. 1 (2012).

40 Actionaid, *The 20 Billion Dollar Question: Have the G8 delivered on their hunger pledge?* (June 2010). [http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc\\_lib/actionaid\\_g82010\\_mediabrief.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/actionaid_g82010_mediabrief.pdf). Deauville Accountability Report (2011). <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/2011deauville/deauville/2011-accountability-food-eu.pdf>.

41 US Department of State, *Camp David Accountability Report: G8 Commitments on Health and Food Security: Actions, Approach and Results* (May 2012). <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/189889.pdf>.



A child in Honduras eats a carrot harvested by his parents.

Understandably, strong questions have been raised about the actual level of priority afforded to nutrition within EU development spending. In the EU budget currently under negotiation, food security – including nutrition – is considered a pillar of the new development strategy. However, it is doubtful that the proportions for nutrition or for food security will be sufficient, given the need and the promises, as concluded by the EU Court of Auditors. The EU must clearly and substantially increase the allocation for nutrition.

## What must the EU do now?

### PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

The Rome Principles provide a framework for engagement for all stakeholders working to improve food security and nutrition. They call on donors to design development programmes in conjunction with developing countries and in line with needs, within a process of mutual accountability. The Principles also call for all actors to work together cooperatively to achieve sustainable outcomes.

In countries without food security and nutrition plans, donors must support partner country efforts to develop such plans through multi-stakeholder processes with full civil society participation. Once plans are established, it is critical that roles and responsibilities be coordinated in accordance to such plans, under the leadership of recipient countries to avoid duplication, fragmentation and waste and to ensure appropriate solutions for the context. The EU and Member States have made specific commitments in relation to these principles, but they must now be fully implemented.

The return on investments for nutrition can be as high as **39:1**.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> World Vision, *The Best Start: Saving children's lives in their first thousand days* (2011).

## Undernutrition

is wholly preventable,  
and there is sound  
**evidence**

about the measures likely to have  
the greatest impact.<sup>43</sup>

### ROME PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

#### 1. Country ownership

Invest in country-owned plans aimed at channelling resources to well-designed and results-based programmes and partnerships.

#### 2. Strategic coordination

Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global levels to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify resource gaps.

#### 3. Comprehensive approach

Strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of 1) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and 2) medium- and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food.

#### 4. Multilateral support and improvement

Ensure a strong role for the multilateral system by sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of multilateral institutions.

#### 5. Sustained financial commitment

Ensure sustained and substantial commitment by all partners to invest in agriculture and food security and nutrition, with provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion, aimed at multi-year plans and programmes.

More recently, the EU has reiterated commitments to the Paris and Accra Principles for Aid Effectiveness, and the Busan Partnership for Development Effectiveness. The EU has also made its own related promises, such as commitments regarding management for results, transparency, the use of country systems and joint programming (to increase effective targeting and coordination and reduce fragmentation). The principles of democratic ownership and mutual accountability, ensuring the full participation of all important stakeholders, including CSOs, are critical for success in overcoming undernutrition. More significant, effective and timely support is needed for the participation of all country stakeholders.

The EU should play a more prominent role to ensure that the EC, the Member States and global action will fully meet these commitments. All stakeholders, including the private sector, must be held to the same Rome and Busan principles. Strong efforts should now be deployed so that the nutrition and food security sector become a model of implementation of these principles.

### POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Within the Rome Principles, world leaders are committed to 'pursue policies and strategies that improve the functioning of domestic, regional and international markets and ensure equitable access for all, especially smallholders and women farmers

<sup>43</sup> EU Reference Document No. 13 (2011).

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from developing countries'.<sup>44</sup> The G20 and the EU initiated coordination to tackle global problems, such as the excessive volatility in food commodity prices, that have repercussions on the livelihood of poor farmers and the most vulnerable. But to address the global and systemic causes of undernutrition, further action is needed, such as enhancing systems that increase market transparency, balancing out the limitations of regulatory systems, continuing to stabilise food prices so that they are fair for producers and consumers, removing trade distortions, reducing the harmful impact of biofuels on food prices by relaxing mandates for their production, and ensuring land access and rights.

Given the EU's legal and political mandate to ensure Policy Coherence for Development, and its related choice to focus on agriculture and trade, the EU has a special responsibility for leadership. All EU institutions and Member States should monitor and continuously improve the coherence of all EU policies, to ensure that they do not harm development, particularly nutrition and food security objectives.

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<sup>44</sup> FAO, Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, § 22. Rome (16–18 November 2009). [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final\\_Declaration/WSFS09\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final_Declaration/WSFS09_Declaration.pdf).

# World Vision's policy calls to the EU

## 1. Develop a specific Joint EU Nutrition Action Plan

For the EU, nutrition policy is woven into the comprehensive strategies for food security and agriculture, humanitarian food assistance and global health, rather than being in a stand-alone Communication. This is helpful for integrated nutrition programming but fails to secure adequate political priority, institutional credibility, coordinated action and associated funding for nutrition.

Nutrition must now become a greater political priority and should therefore be the focus of a specific Joint EU Nutrition Action Plan. Drawing on the evidence and best practice of the Reference Document 'Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance', the Action Plan should specify clear practical steps, implementation targets and guidelines for EU-wide coordinated action with all relevant stakeholders, including CSOs. It would thus clarify the position of nutrition within the existing EU development policies, in the context of the *Agenda for Change*<sup>45</sup> and the Multi-annual Financial Framework for 2014–2020, in line with the recent report of the European Court of Auditors. This policy would include the EU agreement on key nutrition objectives and indicators and specify a mechanism to track nutrition-specific outcomes by the EU. The Nutrition Action Plan would require nutrition, food security and resilience funding to be clearly and separately targeted, and therefore traceable. The EU must explicitly measure and report on investments that are being spent on scaling up maternal and child nutrition in each of the different funding modalities and instruments. The Nutrition Action Plan would clarify and solidify the commitment to ensure sufficient resources for nutrition and food security, and would be directly applicable in the upcoming EU funding regulations.

## 2. Measure the impact of EU funding for agriculture and food security against improved nutrition outcomes for children and women

There is compelling evidence that unless improved nutritional status is an explicit objective of agriculture interventions, limited improvement in nutrition will occur. Attention to increasing food security, agricultural production and economic growth must be complemented with improved nutrition impact targeted towards the most vulnerable populations, particularly children. This requires explicit nutrition objectives and indicators. Agriculture interventions that have successfully addressed child undernutrition have included nutritional objectives, implicitly recognising that there is not a direct line between investments in agricultural production and growth and improved nutrition. For success, nutrition outcomes must also be integrated in performance measurement systems with specific nutrition indicators in all sectors, particularly in agriculture and food security. The EU must urgently implement a practical and robust set of nutrition indicators and guidelines for agriculture and other sectors, based on the detailed content of the Reference Document 'Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance'.

## 3. Provide increased funding and support for the Scaling Up Nutrition movement in high-burden countries including for the implementation of proven, cost-effective solutions to undernutrition

The EU's leadership role within the SUN movement has been formalised with the inclusion of the EC Commissioner for Development as a member of the SUN leaders group. The EU must ensure that this leadership is translated into results, with endorsement of SUN by more Member States and the EC taking on the convenor leadership in more countries. The EU must use all the diplomatic tools and instruments at its disposal to encourage more high-burden countries to join the movement and identify nutrition as a priority in national plans. The EU now must commit significantly increased funding for scaling up 'nutrition-specific' and 'nutrition-sensitive' development across different sectors (especially agriculture, health, food security, poverty reduction, social protection and education) within the context of the SUN movement in high-burden countries. The EU should further recognise the role of CSOs as partners in the multi-stakeholder SUN movement and provide direct support for this to be enhanced for greater impact.

<sup>45</sup> EC COM 637 final 'Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change'. Brussels (March 2011). <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0637:FIN:EN:PDF>.



#### 4. Prioritise smallholder farmers, particularly women, in EU funding and global coordination for agriculture and food security

In many of the poorest countries, small-scale farming is the dominant occupation, and these farmers make up half of the world's hungry people. They represent the single biggest target group for assistance and also the group that is likely to make the most difference in reducing hunger. Global food security and global economic development cannot be achieved without assisting smallholder farmers to increase their incomes. Women are key actors in the agriculture sector, as well as being critical in health and nutrition outcomes for children. Nevertheless, smallholder farmers, especially women, have not received enough support and resources so far. The priority of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, in agriculture and food security investment must be clearly and proportionately reflected in the resources, including sufficient flexible and long-term programme funding for various actors. Innovation, together with research and knowledge exchange, are needed to document and scale-up solutions that achieve productivity and impact with smallholders.

#### 5. Enable effective resilience building through all EU actions, funding, and multi-sector and stakeholder coordination

Resilience building is key to the long-term impact and sustainability of nutrition and food security, particularly in fragile states and in areas vulnerable to disasters and crises. The EU has recently committed to implement resilience programmes. Research and information exchange will be needed to ensure long-term success. The promotion and support of resilience will also require a holistic coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach. The EU must change its way of implementing DRR and LRRD, increase early initiation and flexibility and significantly increase those funding allocations. Such initiatives must be coordinated with appropriate social protection, without compromising the families' and countries' long-term abilities for livelihood and stability. Particular attention must be paid to women and children. Other systems must be facilitated, such as ensuring that women smallholders and the most vulnerable families have access to land, credit and other inputs in a more equitable way than is currently seen in many developing countries.

The EU must continue to diligently monitor the Policy Coherence for Development in regards to the direct effects of all its policies, especially for agriculture, market regulations and trade, to ensure that no harm is done to nutrition and food security objectives and outcomes. The EU should continue to show bold leadership in the G8, G20, Rio+20 and other global forums to promote Policy Coherence for Development, despite prevailing resistance and competing interests.



In arid Turkana, Kenya, currently experiencing its worst drought in more than 60 years, livestock means everything to the people. Here a woman holds a goat of the hardy Galla breed, given as part of a World Vision programme.

If the **EU steps up**  
as an ambitious leader  
for children and  
prioritises  
their current **nutrition**  
and future well-being,  
others will **follow.**

## Conclusion

The EU has more to offer to the coordinated global efforts to improve nutrition and improve the lives and prospects of millions of children around the world, in the poorest families, communities and countries. There are clear indications that the EU wants to take a leadership role in reducing undernutrition, as well as in improving food security. A number of important steps have been taken to help the EU achieve greater impact. In his response to the Special Report from the European Court of Auditors, Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs said, 'Food security, including nutrition, will be a priority when we start programming our EU development assistance for the years 2014 to 2020.'<sup>46</sup> The political commitment and policy statements must now urgently be translated into strong action at all levels. It will be crucial for progress on undernutrition that the promises materialise in the concrete form of a specific Joint EU Nutrition Action Plan, with associated increases in traceable funding and monitoring. When the EU steps up as an ambitious leader for children and prioritises their current nutrition and future well-being, others will follow.



This drawing was done by an Indian girl of 17 years. She said: 'Mother's breast milk is a right of every child, and so every child of an age till six months must get it'.

<sup>46</sup> European Commission, 'Statement by EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs in reaction to the Court of Auditor's report' (March 2012). [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/piebalgs/headlines/news/2012/03/20120328\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/headlines/news/2012/03/20120328_en.htm).

WORLD VISION IS A CHRISTIAN RELIEF, DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES WORLD-WIDE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL BY TACKLING THE CAUSES OF POVERTY AND INJUSTICE. WORLD VISION IS DEDICATED TO WORKING WITH THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE. WORLD VISION SERVES ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RELIGION, RACE, ETHNICITY OR GENDER.

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