

**Nutrition for Growth Year of Action Launch Event**  
**Virtual Event**  
December 14, 2020

***Key Messages***

- The Governments of Canada and Bangladesh, in partnership with the Government of Japan, will host a virtual launch of the **Nutrition for Growth Year of Action** on December 14, 2020, setting in motion a year-long effort to continue the momentum to tackle malnutrition in the lead up to the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Japan in late 2021.
- The Nutrition for Growth Year of Action provides a historic opportunity to transform the way the world tackles the global challenge of malnutrition. The launch event will celebrate significant new financing and policy commitments from a range of stakeholders who will also inspire other donor institutions, partner governments, multilateral organizations, and the private sector to step up and recommit to nutrition as we head into the final decade of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

*Impacts of COVID-19 on nutrition*

- Good nutrition is a basic need for everyone, everywhere. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a nutritional crisis in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with both immediate and long-term consequences. For the world's poorest, the impacts of COVID-19 on nutrition and health could lead to lifelong and intergenerational consequences if immediate action is not taken.
  - A United Nations (UN) Call to Action by four UN agency directors-general published in July predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic would result in dramatic increases in child wasting.
  - Data from the Standing Together for Nutrition consortium estimates that without timely action, an additional 6.7 million children will be wasted (underweight for their height) in 2020—a 14.3 percent increase—due to COVID-19 related economic disruptions and nearly 130,000 (128,605) children under five will die due to increased wasting and reduced nutrition services.
  - The impacts of malnutrition are particularly serious for women and girls, who are already vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. Putting vulnerable populations at the center of the immediate and long-term COVID-19 response is critical.
- Prior to the pandemic, hunger was already on the rise and healthy diets are still out of reach for far too many. Poor diet is now the leading risk factor of death worldwide, responsible for one in every five deaths globally—more than tobacco, high blood pressure, or any other health risk. Malnutrition costs the global economy \$3.5 trillion annually in lost productivity and health care costs.

*Nutrition for Growth Year of Action*

- The Nutrition for Growth Year of Action signals the beginning of a new race toward a healthier, better-nourished future. The commitments made at the kick-off event are just the start.
- This Year of Action includes a roadmap of multiple engagement opportunities on nutrition and will culminate in the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021 and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit in Japan in late 2021. These key pledging moments will deliver a complementary set of nutrition commitments, and in doing so, deliver a mutually reinforcing narrative on what is needed to achieve a world without malnutrition.

- A capstone to the year, the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit in Japan in late 2021, hosted by the Government of Japan, provides the opportunity to celebrate and mobilize commitments garnered throughout 2020 and 2021 and re-energize political momentum for nutrition.
- Governments, business, multilateral organizations, donors, and other development partners are encouraged to make financial, policy, programmatic, or impact commitments covering one or more of the three core areas identified by the Government of Japan as critical to achieving the global targets and ending malnutrition in all its forms:
  - Integrating nutrition into Universal Health Coverage (UHC);
  - Transforming the food system to promote safe, sustainable, and healthy foods to support people and planet; and
  - Effectively addressing malnutrition in fragile and conflict affected contexts, supporting resiliency.
- Cutting across each of these core areas, actions are encouraged to promote strong data and monitoring of nutrition indicators and drive innovation in nutrition financing.
- Global mobilization efforts surrounding Nutrition for Growth have generated unprecedented, coordinated, and impactful commitments to improve global nutrition, totaling more than \$26 billion in pledges since 2013.
  - In 2013, at the first Nutrition for Growth Summit in London, donors came together and secured new major commitments of over \$4 billion to tackle undernutrition, and \$19 billion in complementary nutrition-sensitive investments between 2013 and 2020.
    - This culminated in the signing of the Global Nutrition for Growth Compact by 94 stakeholders.
    - Donors have delivered significant financial commitments, some two years early. The United Kingdom (UK) reached its target by delivering nutrition interventions to 50 million people, and the European Union (EU) is projected to meet its target to reduce stunting by 7 million.
  - In 2017, governments, civil society organizations, private philanthropies, and the private sector made financial and policy commitments at the 2017 Global Nutrition Summit in Milan totaling \$3.4 billion.
- As the financial commitments made in London in 2013 are set to expire this year, a new influx of resources and bold actions are urgently needed to continue this momentum and meet global goals and targets.
- The outcomes of the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action will be enshrined in a global compact that will serve as a global agreement on international and multi-stakeholder commitments to nutrition and summarize the combined ambition of all stakeholders to reach specific, time-bound nutrition targets.

### *Nutrition is a smart investment*

- Good nutrition helps ensure that children reach their full physical and cognitive potential. They are less prone to illness and death, better equipped to succeed in school, and are more productive when they join the workforce.
- Winning the race toward ending malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 requires immediate action and additional investments.

- Nutrition is one of the smartest, most impactful, and cost-effective investments governments and donors can make to drive the health and economic prosperity of people and nations. Not only are new commitments essential to help prevent a backwards slide, they also are smart bets. For every \$1 invested in nutrition, \$16 is returned to the local economy.
  - Improved nutrition could add \$3.5 trillion per year to the global economy; African countries could increase gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 16 percent.
- We have seen tremendous accomplishments in financing for nutrition over the past decade, but the disastrous effects of COVID-19 threaten to rollback decades worth of progress.
- Poor nutrition is the underlying cause of nearly half of all child deaths, yet only 1 percent of donor aid is dedicated to addressing it.
- Investing in nutrition now will have an immediate payoff in terms of lives saved, reducing gender inequality and stunting and wasting averted—as well as significant long-term impacts on health and economic development. Together, we can ensure individuals and families have the nutrition they need to live healthy and productive lives.