



PRESS RELEASE
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Report: Malnutrition Becoming the “New Normal” Across the Globe
Malnutrition is on the rise in every country in the world and is a leading global driver of disease

*The 2016 Global Nutrition Report shows that 44 percent of countries with data available (57 out of 129 countries) now experience very serious levels of **both** undernutrition and adult overweight & obesity, and that, despite good progress in some countries, the world is off track to reduce and reverse this trend*

BEIJING, JOHANNESBURG, NAIROBI, NEW DELHI, NEW YORK, STOCKHOLM, WASHINGTON D.C., 14 June 2016 - Rates of obesity and overweight are rising in every region of the world and in nearly every country according to the *2016 Global Nutrition Report* released today. The independent report reveals insufficient progress in the fight against all forms of malnutrition; for example, almost all countries are off course on efforts to reduce anemia in women and to prevent further increase in diabetes.

Malnutrition manifests itself in many different ways: as poor child growth and development; as individuals who are skin and bone or prone to infection; as those who carry too much weight or whose blood contains too much sugar, salt, fat or cholesterol; or those who are deficient in important vitamins or minerals.

Malnutrition is responsible for nearly half of all deaths of children under age 5, and, together with poor diets, is the number one driver of the global burden of disease. At least 57 countries experience serious levels of both undernutrition - including stunting and anemia - and adult overweight and obesity, putting a massive strain on many already fragile health systems.

“One in three people suffer from some form of malnutrition,” said Lawrence Haddad, Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report’s Independent Expert Group and Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute. “We now live in a world where being malnourished is the new normal. It is a world that we must all claim as totally unacceptable.”

The 2016 Report launches this week in seven cities around the globe - Beijing, Johannesburg, Nairobi, New Delhi, New York, Stockholm and Washington D.C. - and comes on the heels of renewed international attention on nutrition. The Report highlights the staggering economic costs of malnutrition, as well as the critical gaps in investments and commitments to date, including:

- **Societal costs:** 11 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) is lost every year in Africa and Asia due to malnutrition. Every year, global GDP losses from malnutrition are greater than what was lost each year during the 2008-2010 financial crisis.
- **Family costs:** In the United States, when one person in a household is obese, the household spends on average an additional 8 percent of its annual income in healthcare costs. In China, a diagnosis of diabetes results in an annual 16.3 percent loss of income for those with the disease.

- Financing gaps: Brand new analysis in the Report shows that nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases received only USD 50 million of donor funding in 2014, despite the fact that all noncommunicable diseases now cause nearly 50 percent of death and disability in low- and middle-income countries. Of 24 low- and middle-income government budgets analyzed in the Report, just an average 2 percent of spending is allocated toward reducing undernutrition, while donor allocations to nutrition programs are stagnating at USD 1 billion.

“We’re far from done addressing undernutrition,” said Professor Corinna Hawkes, Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report’s Independent Expert Group and Director of the Centre for Food Policy, City University London “But governments and donors now also have to cope with the threat that nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases and obesity pose to improving global health and development. One in 12 people globally have diabetes now, and nearly 2 billion people are obese or overweight. We must stem the tide.”

Despite these challenges, the Report shows that progress has been made, and is possible. The number of stunted children under 5 is declining in every region except Africa and Oceania. Individually, many countries have shown remarkable progress: in Ghana for example, stunting rates have almost halved - from 36 to 19 percent- in just 11 years. Many countries are also close to being on track to meet global targets; Peru and Malawi, for example, are close to being on track to meeting global targets on breastfeeding and anemia reduction.

“The key ingredient to all of these success stories is political commitment,” said Lawrence Haddad. “Where leaders in government, civil society, academia and business are committed - and willing to be held accountable - anything is possible. Despite the challenges, malnutrition is not inevitable—ultimately it is a political choice: one which we need leaders across the world to make.”

While some countries are beginning to increase their budget allocations to nutrition, the gap remains significant. Analysis included in the Report shows a USD 70 billion gap globally to meet 2025 milestones for stunting, severe acute malnutrition, breastfeeding and anemia. While closing the gap remains a key priority, analysis in the Report on the relationship between nutrition and related sectors also presents opportunities to improve nutrition by examining existing programs. For example, the Report shows that improvements in areas like agriculture, health, education, social protection and sanitation could help address a large percentage of the stunting burden.

“More than 30 percent of government spending in Africa and Asia is already allocated to agriculture, education, social protection, health and water, sanitation and hygiene. If we can make adjustments in those sectors, we could have an outsize impact on the malnutrition burden in these regions,” said Emorn Udomkesmalee, Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report’s Independent Expert Group and Senior Advisor, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand.

The Report also highlights critical implementation gaps on policies and interventions which have been proven to reduce malnutrition:

- Of 13 essential undernutrition interventions measured, only 6 have average coverage rates above 50 percent: over half the families who need these programs are not getting them.
- Only 36 percent of countries have sufficiently implemented the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, which aims to encourage exclusive breastfeeding - a decline since the last assessment.

- Two-thirds of countries have not made any progress on implementing the World Health Organization’s core recommendations for healthy diets.

The Global Nutrition Report is an annual assessment of countries’ progress in meeting global nutrition targets established by the World Health Assembly and commitments made at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2013. Some of the agreed upon targets aim to:

- Achieve a 40 percent reduction in the number of children under 5 who are stunted.
- Reduce and maintain wasting in children under 5 at less than 5 percent.
- See no increase in overweight children under 5 years of age.
- Achieve a 50 percent reduction of anemia in women of reproductive age.
- Achieve a 30 percent reduction in low birth weight.
- Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months to at least 50 percent.
- Halt the rise in prevalence of adult overweight, adult obesity and adult type 2 diabetes.
- Achieve a 30 percent reduction in salt intake (in adults).

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ABOUT THE GLOBAL NUTRITION REPORT: The Global Nutrition Report is an annual independent stocktake of the state of the world’s nutrition. The Report aims to make it easier for governments and other stakeholders to actually make high impact commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms. Equally importantly, it aims to make it harder for stakeholders to not make such commitments.

An Independent Expert Group produces the Report and the International Food Policy Research Institute oversees its production and dissemination. The Report is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UK Department for International Development, the Government of Canada, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, the European Commission, the Government of Germany, Irish Aid, U.S. Agency for International Development, the Government of the Netherlands, 1,000 Days and the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition & Health.

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