

## COUNTRY PROFILE ON NUTRITION 01/2021

# HONDURAS

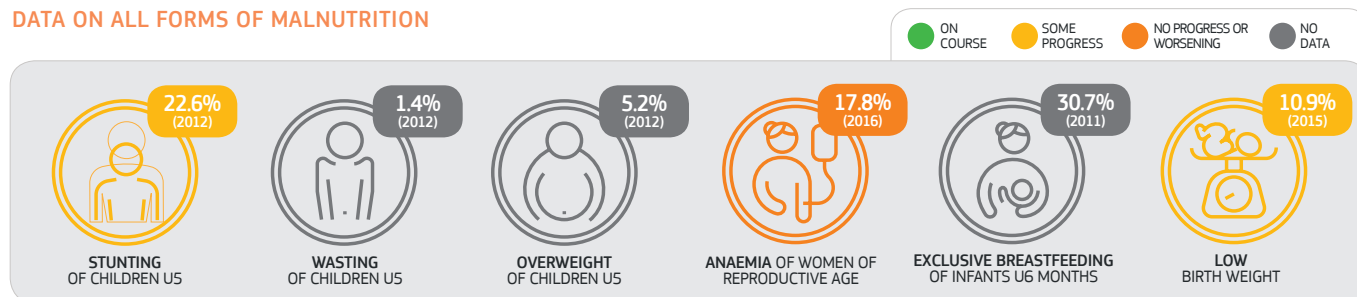
### Nutrition situation in Honduras

#### AT A GLANCE

Honduras, with its population of 9.7 million people (estimated to reach 11.4 million by 2030), has experienced economic growth in recent years<sup>1</sup> and made progress in reducing chronic undernutrition. Nevertheless, a quarter of children under five remain stunted, while overweight and obesity are rising rapidly in all age groups. Malnutrition is particularly linked to poverty in rural households with limited access to services (health, education, water and sanitation). Drivers include poor quality diets and early childbearing along with other gender inequalities<sup>2</sup>. Drought-prone

regions in the south and west also face food security problems (stunting rates are double the national average in Intibucá and Lempira), and there are concerns that the COVID-19 crisis will worsen the situation of the most vulnerable groups<sup>3</sup>. The costs of malnutrition are high, yet preventable: Honduras loses over 11.4% of its GDP annually to child stunting (countries in the region lose up to 4.2% of GDP to the double burden)<sup>4</sup>. Honduras has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.423 and is ranked at 100 of 162 countries in the 2019 index.

#### DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



#### NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

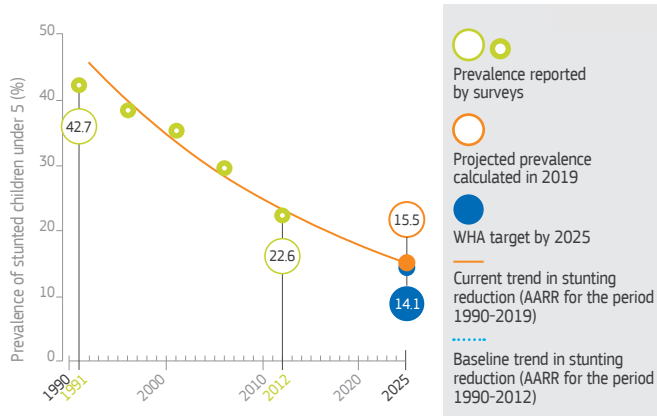
- Honduras joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in May 2019.
- Since 2011, the country has had a well-developed multisectoral policy and legal framework for food and nutrition security (SINASAN).
- The updated national food and nutritional security strategy and policy (PyENSAN) 2018-2030 provides a comprehensive national approach to reducing malnutrition. It is accompanied by action plans for both food security and nutrition (2019-2023) that include goals and indicative budgets to inform sector planning. PyENSAN is coordinated by SINASAN's technical body (UTSAN) and a nutrition partners forum coordinates support to the government.
- Food and nutrition security is also included in most relevant policies e.g. health, environment and social protection. However, convergence among these policies for planning at municipal level and their links with PyENSAN remain limited. The lack of inter-sectoral coordination in the definition and implementation of actions and of financial resources for its implementation are key challenges.

#### Example of EU support

Food and nutrition security has been at the centre of EU efforts in Honduras for many years. The EUROSAN Occidente programme (EUR 34.5 million, 2016-2020) targets municipalities in the Dry Corridor that have some of the highest rates of malnutrition and poverty in the country. The programme is implemented by FAO and aims to improve the food security, nutrition and resilience of rural households by (i) building sustainable farming systems for diversified food production and access, (ii) supporting education and nutrition, and (iii) strengthening national and local institutions. The nutrition education component contributes to the implementation of the community comprehensive care for children strategy (AIN-C). It focuses on monitoring and encouraging children's growth and teaching parents the nutritional value of locally available foods. By strengthening municipal-level planning and monitoring capacities, there is a real opportunity to enhance governance of multisectoral action in nutrition across key complementary sectors and lay the foundation for sustainability and progressive implementation of the PyENSAN.

## Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition

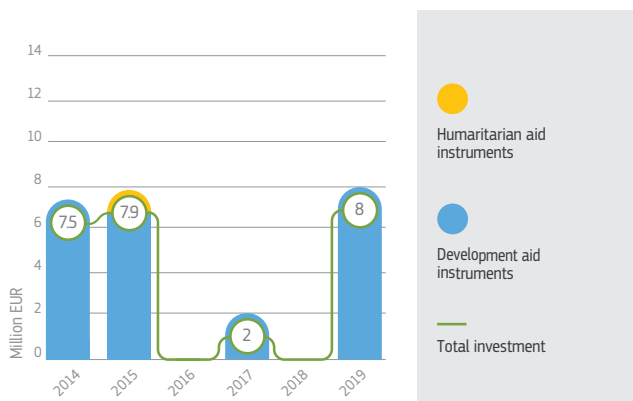
### TREND, PROJECTION AND TARGETS IN THE PREVALENCE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN (U5) STUNTED



Honduras has experienced a strong decline both in the prevalence of stunting and the number of children stunted since the mid-1990s. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted is 3.22%; if this is maintained, then nearly 160 000 children are expected to be stunted in 2025.

\* There is insufficient data to calculate projections post 2012 so the trendline here represents a continuation of the baseline trend.

### EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 – TOTAL OF EUR 25 MILLION



EU food and nutrition security investments in Honduras total EUR 68 million (with EUR 15 million specifically for nutrition). The EUROSAN Occidente project (see example above) received up to EUR 34.5 million (of which EUR 8.5 million for nutrition) while a contract for sector reform, focusing on capacity building and governance for food security and nutrition policy at national and local levels, received up to EUR 33.5 million (including EUR 8.5 million for nutrition). Other funding was provided for a demographic and health survey which includes indicators on nutrition and dietary diversity (results expected end 2020), and an action to strengthen local government capacity in decentralised planning and delivery of food security and health/nutrition services for vulnerable populations in 39 municipalities (3 of them in the Dry Corridor area), which was signed at the end of 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Inter-American Development Bank (2018) *Inclusive growth: challenges and opportunities for Central America and the Dominican Republic*.

<sup>2</sup> Less than half the children aged 6-23 months receive a minimum acceptable diet; 20% early childbearing by age 18 (rising to 1 in 3 among women with little or no education and in the poorest quintiles) (DHS 2011-12).

<sup>3</sup> Food security under the COVID-19 pandemic (FAO/ECLAC 2020).

<sup>4</sup> ECLAC (2008) *The cost of hunger: Social and economic impact of child undernutrition in Central America and the Dominican Republic*. ECLAC and WFP (2017) *The double burden: The combined economic impact of undernutrition and obesity in Latin America and the Caribbean*.