

## COUNTRY PROFILE ON NUTRITION 01/2021

# ZAMBIA



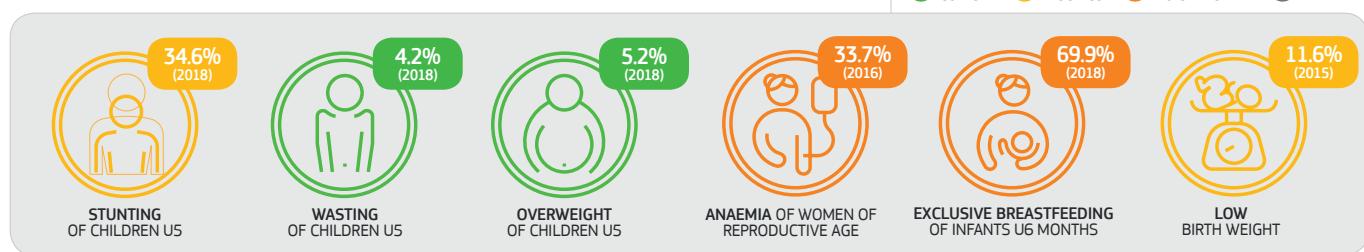
### Nutrition situation in Zambia

#### AT A GLANCE

Zambia has a population of over 18 million<sup>1</sup> and a growing economy driven by mining and construction. Agriculture accounts for 10% of GDP and supports the livelihoods of approximately 70% of Zambians. It is the primary source of income and food for the rural poor<sup>2</sup>. The national prevalence of stunting has fallen considerably in the past 25 years, but there are significant regional disparities. Stunting and anaemia of both women and children remain much higher and persistent in northern areas (compared to the south-west) and in low-income households where dietary diversity and

access to clean water and sanitation is limited. Malnutrition is underscored by inequitable gender roles within households upheld by tradition and culture. Furthermore, the typical household diet in Zambia is over-reliant on maize, the principal staple crop. Only 12% of children aged 6-23 months meet the criteria for a minimum acceptable diet (MAD). Malnutrition, HIV and now the COVID-19 pandemic are affecting Zambia's potential to meet economic and development targets. Zambia has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.539 and is ranked at 137 of 162 countries in the 2019 index.

#### DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



#### NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Zambia was one of the first countries to commit to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in December 2010.
- The national Food and Nutrition Policy launched in 2006 has been reviewed and a new Food and Nutrition Act was adopted on 23 October 2020.
- A multi-sectoral National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan was developed 2011-2015 and a new NFNSP was introduced for 2017-2021 in June 2019.
- Nutrition has been integrated in the 7th National Development Plan (7NDP) 2017-2021 and a Special Committee of Permanent Secretaries on Nutrition are tracking progress on implementation.
- A national multi-stakeholder platform has the Permanent Secretary of Health as its chair and the National Food & Nutrition Commission (NFNC) as its secretariat reporting to a permanent Steering Committee on Food and Nutrition of permanent secretaries from different sectors. District Nutrition Coordinating Committees are being expanded beyond the 14 pilot districts.
- The First 1 000 Most Critical Days Programme (Zambia's five-year flagship stunting reduction programme) supported through a SUN-pooled funding mechanism is now in its second phase (2018-2023) and receives EU financing.

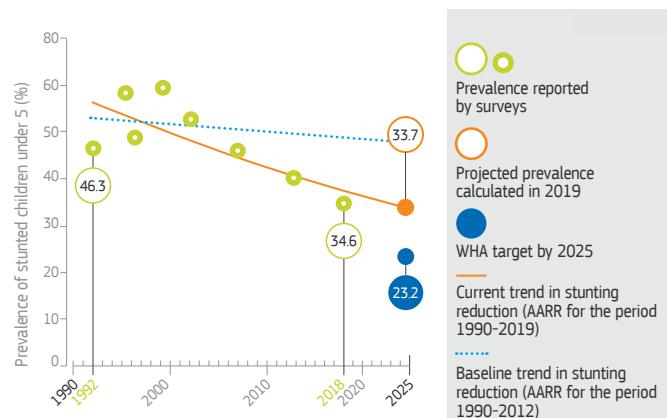
#### Example of EU support

EU supports the Sustainable Commercialisation of Smallholder Farmers in Zambia (EUR 92 million) through inclusive, productive, market-orientated, climate change-adapted and nutrition-sensitive smallholder agriculture. The nutrition element of this intervention is enabled through a contribution to the SUN Phase II programme (a pooled fund including contributions from other EU Member States<sup>3</sup>) administered by UNICEF. The fund supports the strategic objectives of the 1 000 Most Critical Days Programme II, coordinated by the NFNC, which promotes evidence-based, sustainable, nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive services in 17 districts. The intention is to target 90% of households that meet the 1 000 days criteria in areas most affected by stunting. The expected results are: (i) sustained practice of optimal nutrition behaviours among adolescents, pregnant women, and mothers and caregivers of children under two; (ii) sustained demand for and use of agriculture, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene interventions for adolescents, pregnant women, mothers and caregivers of children under two and communities; (iii) quality nutrition information is used by communities, government and partners for evidence-based decisions, action and advocacy; and (iv) sustained commitment by government and partners for accountable nutrition governance.

# ZAMBIA

## Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition

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



The Government of Zambia committed to reduce stunting by 50% by 2023 at the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit in London 2013. Zambia has experienced a decline in the prevalence of stunting in the last 30 years, but the number of children stunted has increased due to high population growth. The rate in the decline of the number of children stunted has significantly accelerated from 0.30% in 2012 to 1.52% in 2019. However, even if this is maintained, over 1.1 million children are expected to be stunted in 2025, higher than was projected in the previous profile (2017), despite the decrease in prevalence of stunting. Recent projections anticipate that Zambia will not meet the government's own target by end 2023.

### EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 – A TOTAL OF EUR 30.6 MILLION



A number of nutrition-sensitive interventions have been committed and are under implementation during this programming cycle including: Accelerating Progress to MDGs; the second phase of the Performance Enhancement Programme in support of the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock; the Agriculture Service Centres project; and Support to the Sustainable Commercialisation of Zambia's Smallholder Farmers (as described above). In addition, there has been support to four NGOs for nutrition activities through the EU thematic programme in addressing malnutrition through the scale-up of a multi-sectoral approach combining sustainable agriculture, health, water, sanitation and hygiene. More than 137 000 women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under five were reached by nutrition-related interventions supported by the EU from 2017 to 2019.

<sup>1</sup>UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019 population estimate 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Rural poverty is around 80% (Central Statistics Office Zambia 2018)

<sup>3</sup>Sweden, Germany and the UK