

COUNTRY PROFILE ON NUTRITION 01/2021

ZIMBABWE



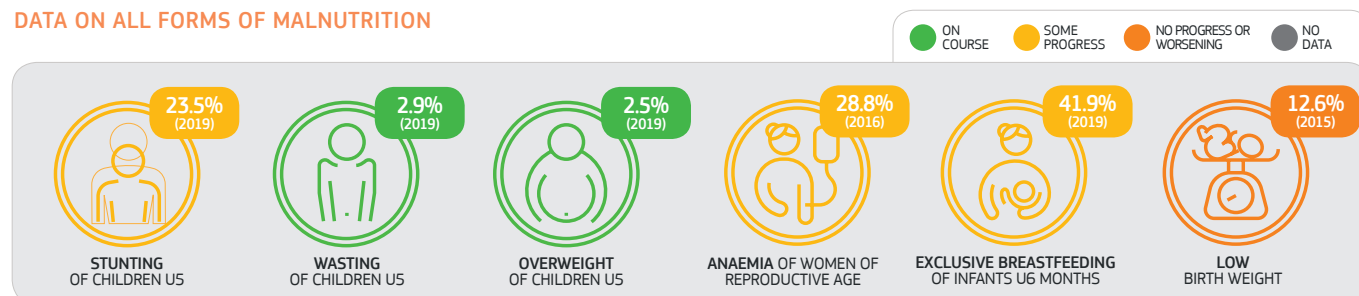
Nutrition situation in Zimbabwe

AT A GLANCE

Zimbabwe has a population of almost 15 million¹, of whom half are under 18 years old. Zimbabwe is undergoing a protracted economic crisis², which has been aggravated by a severe drought over the past three years. Agriculture provides a livelihood for 60-70 % of the population, but now has the lowest productivity in the subregion (Southern Africa). Over 75 % of the population are poor and experience regular food shortages³, which now are increasing with climate change. Stunting levels vary according to maternal education and wealth; it is more evident in households

with poor infant and young child feeding practices and sanitation. 53% of Zimbabweans are estimated to be at risk of inadequate micronutrient intake, which is high on the global scale. Zimbabwe has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.527 and is ranked at 129 of 162 countries in the 2019 index – this is a key issue that perpetuates malnutrition. Increasingly Zimbabwean households consume a poor diet and in urban areas this is leading to adult obesity, especially among women. The impact of COVID-19 threatens to further undermine the nutrition situation.

DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

- Zimbabwe joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in June 2011 – the role of SUN donor convenor rotates among the donor agencies including the EU.
- The country has a long-standing Inter-ministerial Food & Nutrition Security Council, which was re-activated in 2010 and is supported by a Food & Nutrition Security Advisory Group (including development partners).
- The National Food & Nutrition Security Policy and a costed implementation plan were launched in May 2013. The National Nutrition Strategy 2014-2018 is currently being reviewed for the next phase.
- Food & Nutrition Security Committees are multi-sectoral platforms established at both national and district level facilitated by the Food & Nutrition Council which ensures a coordinated response to food and nutrition insecurity across Zimbabwe.
- A Food Fortification Act has been developed and passed through a consultative process with the Ministry of Health heading this agenda.
- The Zimbabwe National Food Fortification Strategy 2014-2018 targets the fortification of cooking oil with vitamins A and D, wheat flour and maize meal with vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B6, B12, folic acid, iron and zinc, and sugar with vitamin A.
- Mandatory legislation exists only for iodised salt, wheat flour and maize meal.
- Food-based dietary guidelines for Zimbabwe are being developed with EU support.

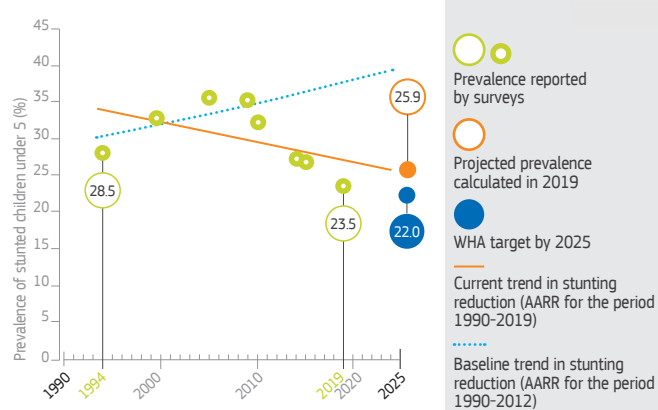
Example of EU support

Between 2016-2020 the EU has funded the Accelerated Community Actions for Reducing Stunting in Zimbabwe with the aim to improve food and nutrition security and increase household resilience to repeated shocks in four target districts: Mutasa and Chipinge (Manicaland Province); Chiredzi and Mwenezi (Masvingo Province). The intervention was co-managed and co-financed by UNICEF and FAO. It provided support at the district level to strengthen multisectoral Food & Nutrition Security Committees to identify and address key drivers of stunting, promoting production of diversified agricultural products for a diversified diet and conducting community level education activities on stunting reduction. The programme has supported the multi-sectoral coordination of the Food & Nutrition Council and built capacity in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement to integrate nutrition at policy and strategic planning levels. A key element has been to develop a nutrition and agriculture module for the training curricula at agricultural colleges. It also provided support to develop food-based dietary guidelines as well as contributing to improved information systems for real-time monitoring of the food and nutrition security situation.

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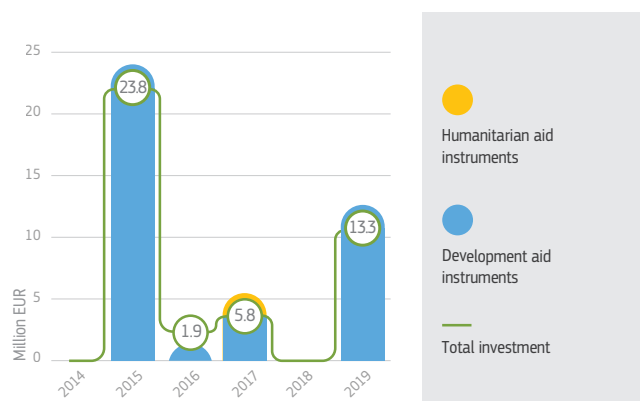
Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition

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



The Government of Zimbabwe has aligned its national commitment to stunting to the World Health Assembly (WHA) target of a 40% reduction by 2025. Since 2007, the prevalence of stunting in Zimbabwe has strongly decreased. However, due to high population growth, the number of children stunted remains similar to that in 1994. The rate of decline in the number of children stunted increased from -0.84% in 2012 to 0.89% in 2019; and in 2025 0.53 million children are expected to be stunted which is drawing close to the WHA target of 0.45 million for Zimbabwe.

EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019 – A TOTAL OF EUR 44.8 MILLION



The EU invested significantly in 2015 in nutrition-focused interventions. These included the agriculture-based Economic Recovery Programme, Improving Health Outcomes and the Health Transition Fund, as well as Resilience Building and Food & Nutrition Security (see example of EU support), which are all categorised as 'nutrition-sensitive'. The value of the programmes was EUR 95 million (of which EUR 23.8 million counted for nutrition). Further commitments were made during the 2014-2019 period to the Health Outcomes intervention as well as contributions to the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund.

¹ UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019 population estimate 2020.
² GDP shrank by 8.3 % in 2019 (World Bank).

³ 55 % of the population will depend on humanitarian assistance by the end of 2020 (WFP)
⁴ CFS/HLPE Report No. 14: Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches (July 2019).