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PRESS RELEASE

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New EU policy to improve nutrition across the world and save millions of lives

The European Union steps up its efforts to fight against world hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This is the goal of a new policy, just adopted by the European Commission, which aims to improve the nutrition of mothers and children in order to reduce mortality and diseases, as well as the impediments to growth and development caused by under-nutrition.

The new policy, set out in the Communication "Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in external assistance: an EU policy framework" will be presented on 14 and 15 of March at the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement meeting in Brussels.

Commissioner for development, Andris Piebalgs stated: *"Undernutrition is the biggest threat to people's health in the developing world, causing at least one third of all child deaths, and a fifth of mothers. This shocking and shameful reality calls for an improved, global and decisive response. The EU is firmly committed to reduce by 7 million the number of stunted children by 2025. Increased international mobilisation is vital. That's why, today, I am also calling on other major donors and development actors to join us in this global movement and make their own commitments".*

"Extreme poverty, the devastating impact of climate change and the growing frequency and intensity of disasters are pushing up the number of hungry people. Malnutrition's toll on children is especially large – and especially tragic. As the world's largest humanitarian donor, the European Union is already saving millions of lives. Yet, sustainable solutions require the commitment and cooperation of both humanitarian and development actors. And we intend to work together to make sure that in this century of plenty and advancement, the future of millions is no longer blighted by malnutrition," said Kristalina Georgieva, the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

Priorities of the new policy

The new policy aims to reduce the number of children under five years of age who are stunted (with a low height for their age and impaired mental development). This will be achieved by delivering on the EU's commitment to help partner countries reduce stunting in this age group by at least 10% (7 million) by 2025. Wasting of children (meaning that they are too thin for their height due to malnutrition) will also be addressed by the new policy.

The Communication envisages to allocate more funds for nutrition and food aid from the EU humanitarian and development budgets, as well as to target this aid more effectively and accountably. Both the consequences and the root causes of under-nutrition will be addressed.

For example, the EU intends to promote breastfeeding and other behaviour changes, provide essential micronutrients such as iron, and support activities such as deworming and supplementary and therapeutic feeding (like treatment of severely malnourished children). Under-nutrition will also be contained through investment in rural development, sustainable agriculture, public health, water and sanitation, social protection and education.

The new policy also provides for more vigorous collaboration with the private sector which can contribute to activities such as product safety control, the fortification of food with minerals and vitamins and awareness raising through social marketing.

Scaling up Nutrition high-level meeting

The Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement is a global platform to address the challenge of under- and malnutrition, created in 2010 with the active participation of the European Commission. On the 14 and 15 March, the Commission is co-hosting the second SUN meeting, together with Anthony Lake, the Executive Director of UNICEF. Participants will come from governments, donors and international organisations.

Background

The Communication on nutrition will complement the EU's existing food security policy, in particular the 2010 policy on food security, the 2011 policy on food assistance and last year's Communication on the EU Approach to Resilience. Nutrition and resilience are highly interlinked in areas such as the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions where resilience is the guiding principle of the AGIR (Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Resilience and SHARE (Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience) multi-partner initiatives to address food and nutrition crises.

For more information

Communication "Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in external assistance: an EU policy framework":

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/enhancing_maternal-child_nutrition_in_external_assistance_en.pdf

[MEMO/13/205](#): EU action on nutrition in development cooperation

Commissioner Andris Piebalgs' website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

Website of DG Development and Cooperation:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

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