



European
Commission

INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION

STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
AND COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

AND
DEVELOPMENT



Action Plan on Nutrition

Reducing the number of stunted children under five
by 7 million by 2025

Food and Nutrition
Security / Sustainable
Agriculture



International
Cooperation and
Development

Cover page (up):

Market in the Gambia (Africa).

Photo by: ©FAO/Simon Maina.

Cover page (bottom):

Mother Feeding Child in Barisal (Bangladesh, Asia).

Photo by: the Agriculture and Nutrition Extension Project ANEP.

European Commission

Directorate-General Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid

Rue de la Loi 41 - B-1049 Brussels

E-mail : europaaid-info@ec.europa.eu

Internet

<http://ec.europa.eu/europaaid>

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Foreword

Tremendous progress has been made towards the Millennium Development Goals, by reducing poverty and improving food security. However, chronic under nutrition, which leads to stunting, continues to affect one quarter of the world's children (161 million). The effect of stunting translates into reduced mental and physical development for affected children and, over the medium term, causes an irreparable loss to society and the economy. In other words, there will be no sustainable inclusive growth without tackling under-nutrition.

Against this challenging backdrop, the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Union has decided to act to substantially reduce under-nutrition and over the last few years has emerged as a world leader in the fight against under-nutrition.

First, the EU has committed to an ambitious objective: to support partner countries in reducing stunting by at least 7 million by 2025, corresponding to 10% of the World Health Assembly target. Around this objective the EU has built its Nutrition policy framework *“Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in external assistance: an EU policy framework”*.

Second, at the Nutrition for Growth event in London in June 2013 the EU pledged to allocate 3.5 billion Euros for nutrition in 2014-2020 to achieve its stunting reduction objective.

Third, the Commission has developed its Nutrition Action Plan which describes how the EU will use these funds to reach its 7 million stunting reduction target. This Action Plan has benefited from a comprehensive consultation process, involving EU Member States, UN organisations and civil society as well as nutrition focal points in partner countries.

In less than a year, EU Member States and European Parliament have united around this Action Plan by respectively adopting Council Conclusions and a resolution on child malnutrition. Both recognise the leading role of the EU in the area of nutrition and confirm the appropriateness of its strategic priorities, centred on political mobilisation, the scaling-up of actions and knowledge for nutrition.

I am delighted that the International Conference on Nutrition in November 2014, backed by representatives from 170 states, agreed the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action, which are all coherent and aligned with the Action Plan priorities. I am confident that the Nutrition Action Plan will help the European Union pave the way for prosperity and dignity for all, and a world where under-nutrition will become a thing of the past.



*Fernando Frutuoso de Melo,
Director-General*

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PART I

CHAPTER 1

Rationale

Recognising that under nutrition poses a major global challenge the EU adopted in March 2013 the Communication: *“Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in External Assistance: An EU Policy Framework”*¹. The related Council Conclusions of May 2013², welcomed this Communication and invited the Commission to develop an Action Plan setting out how the Commission will deliver on its stunting target. Therefore, this Action Plan focuses particularly on one commitment - to reduce the number of stunted children under the age of five years by at least 7 million by the year 2025.

The Action Plan identifies how the Commission can work to improve nutrition at the national, regional and international levels, identifying the elements necessary for a more effective and accountable response to the fight against under nutrition. More specific actions are defined country by country in the National Indicative Programmes for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Commission efforts in tackling under nutrition will contribute to broader international efforts on nutrition, most notably those of:

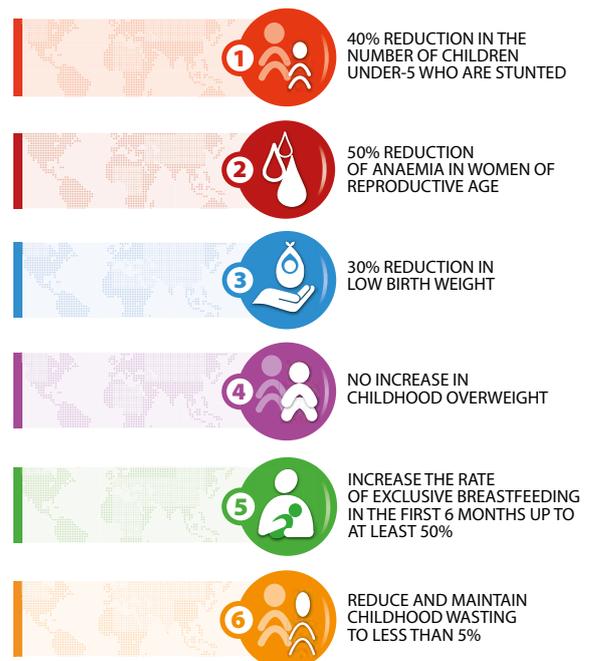
- The World Health Assembly (WHA), and the resolutions passed in 2012 which endorsed 6 global targets focusing on maternal and child nutrition; and
- The Scaling-Up Nutrition movement (SUN movement), that seeks to harness the capability and willingness of international stakeholders in support of national government-led initiatives and priorities to tackle under nutrition.

The first of the WHA targets is a ‘40% reduction of the global number of children under five who are stunted’. It implies a global reduction of about 70 million stunted children (from 171 million in 2010 to approximately 103 million in 2025)³. If the current trajectory⁴ of global stunting reduction (2.1%) continues, the expected number of stunted children worldwide would be approximately 126 million in 2025 (approximately 23 million short of the 103 million target). Thus, in order to achieve the WHA target, the pace of stunting reduction needs to be speeded up – simply maintaining current efforts in nutrition will not be enough. The EU’s Action Plan seeks to support enhanced progress towards reducing the global burden of under nutrition. By reducing the vulnerability generated by under nutrition the Nutrition Action Plan will complement and strengthen the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries⁵.

“ One commitment - to reduce the number of stunted children under the age of five years by at least 7 million by the year 2025. ”

GLOBAL TARGETS 2025

To improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition



¹ *“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); SWD (2013) 72, 12.03.2013, SWD (2013) 104, 27.03.2013

² *« Council conclusions on Food and Nutrition Security in external assistance »* (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137318.pdf)

³ Proposed Global Targets for Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition. WHO Discussion Paper, 6 February 2012. http://www.who.int/nutrition/events/2012_proposed_globaltargets_back-groundpaper.pdf

⁴ This is described by the average annual reduction rate (AARR): Unlike the comparison of absolute changes, the AARR represents a constant reduction in terms of percentage of the previous value. In that sense, it reflects the fact that as stunting is reduced, further reduction becomes more difficult. So, as lower levels of stunting are attained, the same percentage of reduction represents a lower absolute reduction.

⁵ SWD (2013) 227, 19.06.2013

CHAPTER 2

Specific Objective

Achieving the WHA target implies doing more than at present. The Commission's target of reducing the number of stunted children under the age of five years by at least 7 million additional children by the year 2025 will contribute significantly to this global WHA target, representing as it does about 30% of the extra reduction needed if the WHA target is to be achieved (see Figure 1).

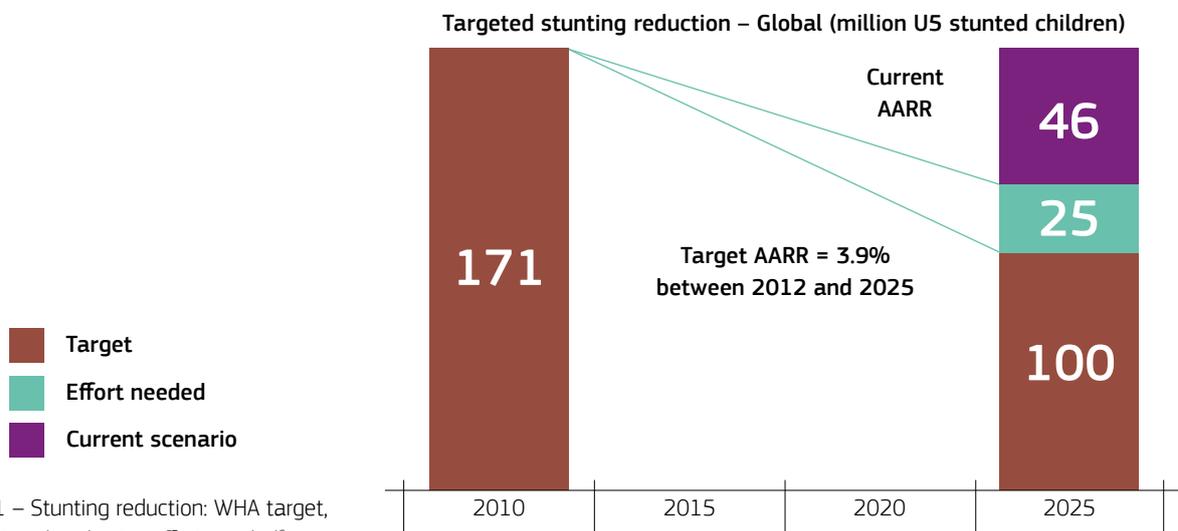


Figure 1 – Stunting reduction: WHA target, current trend and extra effort needed⁶.

The first 1000 days of life are considered critical in preventing under nutrition and its consequences. The Commission will therefore work towards improving the nutrition of mothers and children. It will specifically aim at:

1. Improving the nutritional status of **women before pregnancy (paying specific attention to adolescent girls)**;
2. Supporting growth from the earliest stage of life, **by addressing maternal under nutrition**;
3. Reducing **under nutrition in infants and children**⁷.

Activities will target populations most affected by under nutrition⁸; and be programmed in a manner that respects the principles outlined in the nutrition Communication:

- Alignment with country priorities (as per Aid Effectiveness principles);
- Responding through multiple sectors to address various determinants of under nutrition;
- Collaborative engagement, working in partnership with government, civil society and the private sector.

This Action Plan covers external assistance to address the main causes of under nutrition. In emergency contexts, humanitarian assistance will also address immediate and underlying causes of under nutrition⁹, while ensuring complementarity and coordination with development interventions.

⁶ WHO's global target is that by 2025, there will be a 40% reduction of the global number of children under five who are stunted. This target implies a relative reduction of 40% of the number of children stunted by the year 2025, compared to the baseline of 2010. This would translate into a 3.9% relative reduction per year between 2012 and 2025 and implies reducing the number of stunted children from the 171 million in 2010 to approximately 100 million in 2025, i.e. approximately 25 million less than what this number would be if current trends are not changed. An analysis of 110 countries for which stunting prevalence is available on at least two occasions in the 1995–2010 period reveals that global stunting is dropping at the rate of 1.8% per year (2.6% in countries with prevalence higher than 30%). In this period 20% of the countries have reduced stunting at a rate of 3.9% or higher.

⁷ The Lancet Series on Nutrition of 2008 identified the first '1000 days' as a 'crucial window of opportunity' for preventing and addressing undernutrition.

⁸ The Communication on Nutrition underlines that under nutrition is especially severe among poor rural populations and those suffering from discrimination. Recognising this, the EU is committed to supporting smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods.

⁹ As outlined in the Commission Staff Working Document "Addressing Undernutrition in Emergencies".

CHAPTER 3

Strategic Priorities

The EU's focus on women, children and adolescent girls and the 1000 day window of opportunity will be realised under each of the three strategic priorities outlined in the Nutrition Communication:

- **Strategic priority 1:** Enhance mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition.
- **Strategic priority 2:** Scale up actions at country level.
- **Strategic priority 3:** Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge-base).

These strategic priorities are inter-linked and inter-dependent. Enhancing mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition will help to scale up actions at country level. Greater knowledge for nutrition will ensure that such scale-up, and the EU's work on nutrition, is backed up by sound and informed decision-making and strengthened capacity at country level.

To be most effective, the EU's assistance will be integrated in an overall approach combining interventions on the three strategic priorities – as indicated by the needs and opportunities in the different country contexts, and in support of government-determined national priorities.

At national level, EU Delegations will describe their efforts in tackling under nutrition in *Country Fiches*. These Country Fiches will identify the outcomes to be realised in the country, the actions that will be required to do so, and the comprehensiveness that can be achieved by addressing under nutrition across relevant sectors. They will outline concretely how the EU's stunting target can be attained. The Country Fiches will take into consideration the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement country profiles and the CAADP¹⁰ nutrition country papers whenever relevant.



*Committee on World Food Security (CFS 40, Rome).
Photo by: FAO.*



*Herd of goats in Abalak (Niger, Africa).
Photo by: ©FAO/Issouf Sanogo.*



*Riverine farmers group meeting (Punjab, Pakistan, Asia).
Photo by: P Gatineau.*

¹⁰ The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) established as part of NEPAD in July 2003.

Strategic Priority 1

Enhance mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition

“To engage with focal points on nutrition in all relevant ministries in order to incorporate nutrition objectives and results in relevant sectors.”

Strengthen political commitment and good governance at country level

Leadership, good governance and national ownership are central in tackling under nutrition. To help achieve this, the Commission will support the mobilisation and political commitment to nutrition of governments, national institutions and civil society and solicit broader support from across the donor community (especially EU Member States) so that:

- Nutrition is prominent in national development priorities, with countries taking time-bound and measurable commitments such as national stunting reduction targets¹¹.
- Sound nutrition governance approaches are applied – including mobilisation of relevant sectors, adoption of national costed nutrition plans and strong coordination at the national level.
- Responsibilities for ensuring nutrition outcomes are clearly defined at the national level.
- Aid effectiveness for nutrition is enhanced through stronger donor coordination and alignment.

Actions to achieve strengthened nutrition governance requires EU Delegations to engage in policy dialogue and support country processes so as¹²:

- To enter into a dialogue on nutrition policy with governments at the highest level and engage with focal points on nutrition in all relevant ministries in order to incorporate nutrition objectives and results in relevant sectors (e.g. health, water and sanitation, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, education, social protection and contingency plans). At the time of writing 50 partner countries have joined the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and have taken significant high level commitments to ensure a prominent role for nutrition in their development agenda. The EU will support these countries in translating their commitments into actions at ministerial level. This dialogue will be facilitated by the enabling environment created by the SUN¹³. Preference will be given to those countries¹⁴ where nutrition appears prominently in the 2014-2020 National Indicative Programmes (most of these countries are members of the SUN).
- To advocate for nutrition in close coordination with other key partners, notably EU Member States, and develop joint advocacy frameworks;
- To foster, and participate in, donor coordination mechanisms and help secure closer alignment behind government priorities (notably in countries where the EU Delegation is SUN donor convenor);
- To support, and/or provide advice on, the development of effective multiple-sector nutrition strategies, coordination systems (such as through the SUN multi-stakeholder platforms), and costed action plans. Support will be provided through the dedicated Commission Nutrition Advisory Services (NAS). Closer collaboration will also be sought with key organisations with a mandate in nutrition and in country presence such as FAO, WHO and UNICEF.
- To support a sound and responsible involvement of Civil Society and Private Sector entities. This will require appropriate participatory mechanisms and exchanges of information at country level, while avoiding conflicts of interest. The SUN multi-stakeholder platforms may be a useful vehicle in this regard.

¹¹ Many countries have already established national stunting targets; this should be encouraged in many more, especially where stunting prevalence is high.

¹² A number of delegations such as Niger and Ethiopia are already engaged in leading these processes.

¹³ The EU has been instrumental in steering and supporting the Scaling-up Nutrition Movement since its launch in September 2010.

¹⁴ At the time of writing 33 EU Delegations have incorporated nutrition as an objective in one of the 2014-2020 NIP focal sectors.



Maintain political commitment and strengthen governance at international level

At the international level, the EU should strive to preserve the unprecedented level of political momentum that exists currently, promoting stronger governance of nutrition, greater coherence and a more effective international response. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the EU response is well coordinated with other international actors, and is closely aligned with national governments' strategic priorities.

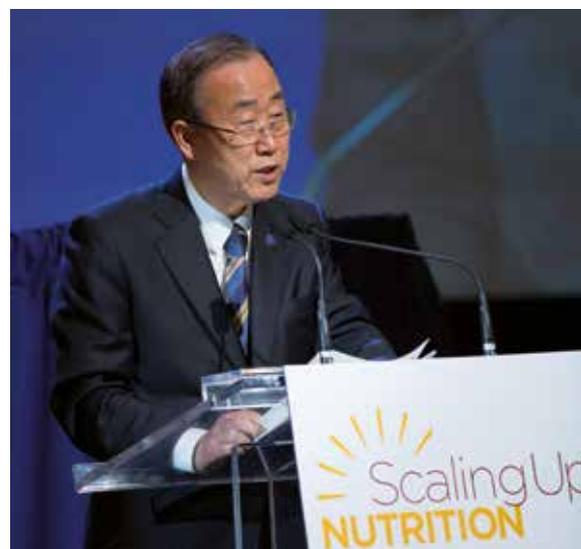
More specifically the Commission will:

- Encourage Member States to join SUN donor coordination fora at the international and country levels and promote coordinated interventions among EU Member States.
- Encourage consensus at the international level on the need to focus efforts on women infants and young children, with a special emphasis on the 1000 thousand days window of opportunity.
- Contribute to discussions about successes and challenges in scaling up nutrition so that lessons can inform relevant decision-making processes at country, regional and global level, including within the SUN, the WHA, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the CAADP and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition.
- Encourage coherence between regional and international initiatives and existing country-owned policies and programmes – such as national nutrition costed plans, the CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans and SUN coordination mechanisms.
- Continue its active role in the stewardship of the SUN movement (the Commissioner for Development is at present member of the SUN Lead Group), and its support of the coordination role played by the SUN.
- Continue its support to the strengthening of global accountability in nutrition, including its ongoing contribution to a reporting system to ensure that commitments made internationally (specifically in the framework of the Nutrition for Growth June 2013 Compact commitments) are honoured.
- Support South-South policy.

Kids from Pozuzo and Palcazú (Peru, South America).

Photo by: Enrique Castro Mendivil.

“The EU should strive to preserve the unprecedented level of political momentum that exists currently, promoting stronger governance of nutrition, greater coherence and a more effective international response.”



SUN Lead Group, New-York 2012.

Photo by: Ernesto Mora.

Strategic Priority 2

Scale up actions at country level

Strengthen human capacity and institutions/systems for effective delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries

Human and institutional capacities are too often a bottleneck for the effective national management of under nutrition. The EU will support the development of such capacity by:

Providing support to the development of national nutrition strategies/policies and costed action plans as well as national policy frameworks conducive to nutrition. This will include:

- Making available expertise to support the development of national nutrition strategies/policies.
- Providing support to partner countries to ensure coherence across different ministerial policies relevant to nutrition, and joined-up results frameworks.
- Strengthening legal frameworks relevant to nutrition (e.g. a national code on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, women's rights, labour laws), drawing on international human rights instruments to do so. Government capacity to implement and monitor adherence to these instruments will also be supported.

Supporting multi-sector and multi-actor coordination mechanisms that are designed in such a way as to build on and reinforce existing structures/systems. This will include:

- Facilitating multi-donor contributions to these coordination mechanisms;
- Providing consistent EU presence (directly or alongside Member States) at different technical fora and sector coordination meetings, so that nutrition can be consistently promoted.

Building managerial, strategic and leadership capacities, especially in government bodies. This could include:

- Supporting government personnel to develop technical capacity for nutrition in relevant sectors (health, food security/agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture, water/sanitation, social protection, education and research) – from planning and design to evaluation and advocacy (i.e. throughout the project cycle).
- Supporting the development of, and partnering with, regional centres of excellence for groups of countries willing to share training resources and expertise.

The Commission will build on the potential comparative advantage of working at the regional level to build capacity in partnership with regional organisations and initiatives¹⁵.



Farmer training of Trainers
(Dosso, Niger, Africa).

Photo by: FAO/Giulio Napolitano.

¹⁵ E.g. CAADP, the UEMOA, CARICOM or ASEAN.

Scale-up nutrition-specific actions

Nutrition specific actions include:

- Those interventions accepted as globally effective - as proposed by the Lancet series on nutrition (2008, 2013)¹⁶. However, new evidence continues to become available so the list of effective interventions is constantly evolving. This poses a challenge in terms of reflecting such developments in policies and programmes.
- Evidence-based interventions in specific contexts will also be supported. They may include, for example, the use of conditional cash transfers in Latin America designed to improve child and maternal nutrition; or a range of actions designed to diversify diets through increasing access to nutritious food at household level.



Breastfeeding (Mozambique, Africa).
Photo by: SUN movement.

However, scaling-up nutrition specific actions will not be enough to achieve the WHA targets. Even if the ten proven interventions identified by the Lancet were to be implemented to 90% coverage, this would still only reduce stunting by 21%. Further reductions in stunting will need to be addressed through tackling underlying and basic causes of under nutrition.

Scale-up nutrition-sensitive actions

Nutrition-sensitive interventions require that nutrition be explicitly incorporated within other sector approaches (such as health, education, agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture, water and sanitation, social protection) and the use of tools such as social transfers, so as to guide implementation towards improved nutrition outcomes. Nutrition-sensitive actions can be effective routes to improve nutrition as long as nutrition objectives are consistently incorporated in programme design, and nutrition criteria and indicators are included and monitored.

MAKING A PROGRAMME MORE NUTRITION SENSITIVE: FROM IDENTIFICATION TO EVALUATION

Programme Identification	Programme Design	Programme Implementation	Programme Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition situation and causes analysis. • Exploring opportunities and constraints (including capacity of governments as well as EUD). • Alignment with government priorities. • Coordination with other donors-joint programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition objectives. • Targeting with focus on children, women and adolescent girls. • Programme effectiveness (use existing evidence and/ or incorporate learning component). • Focal sector(s) have objectives and outcomes linked to prevention/reduction of undernutrition. • Strong monitoring integrated. • Capacity building integrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages with humanitarian programmes (where appropriate). • Close monitoring of activities and results-flexibility to adapt to changing environment. • Coordination and synergies with government and other donor programmes/ initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use nutrition indicators to assess progress and impact. • Programme effectiveness. • Capacity strengthening.

The EU Reference Document on nutrition¹⁷ provides guidance on how nutrition can be integrated in other sectors, both in terms of programme design but also in terms of the EU's planning processes. It outlines the types of actions that can help to achieve improved nutrition outcomes.

¹⁶ <http://download.thelancet.com/flatcontentassets/pdfs/nutrition-eng.pdf>

¹⁷ Brochure prepared by COM, DE, IE, FR, PL, UK EU Reference Document No.13: Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance, September 2011.



Production of Sacha Inchi (Peru, South America).

Photo by: Enrique Castro Mendivil.

Every effort should be made to ensure that actions target women before pregnancy, foetal under nutrition and under nutrition in infants and young children:

✓ **Agriculture¹⁸ and food security:**

In order to achieve impact, the focus of nutrition-sensitive actions in the agriculture and food security sector should be placed on smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods while improving availability and access to quality, diverse, nutrient-rich food for all, focusing on the most vulnerable. The main outcomes to be achieved are: 1) increasing purchasing power of women; 2) Improving access to nutritious food for women, adolescent girls and children; 3) Improving the household and/or women, adolescent girls and/or children's diet in quality and/or quantity;

At the same time, special attention needs to be paid on avoiding possible negative consequences of agriculture programmes – for example, on increasing women's workload; on environmental impacts; on increasing communicable diseases such as malaria through irrigation programmes; on undermining women's capacity to care for their children.

For availability: simply increasing production of the main staple crops has been shown to be ineffective in addressing under nutrition. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture requires attention to: targeting areas or groups worst affected by under nutrition; diversifying production (both for consumption and marketing); improving post-harvest technology; maximising the nutritional benefits of agricultural value chains (from production and conservation, to commercialisation and consumption); maximising the nutritional benefits of livestock (e.g. milk products for consumption and marketing); promoting food conservation and preservation (and thus off-season availability); supporting subsistence farming production of oil-rich crops, fruits and vegetables, and of fish and animal products; and, when proven effective, bio fortification¹⁹.

For access: improving the three dimensions of access (economic, physical access and behavioural) is key. This could include: supporting the economic empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, through the marketing of agricultural produce and animal husbandry; increasing options for off-farm employment for labour-based (land-poor) population groups; improved rural infrastructure to allow rural smallholders access to markets; targeted social transfers to groups worst affected by under nutrition; promotion of the use of nutrient rich food and healthy diets through fostering behaviour change; food fortification and bio fortification programmes (especially oil or cereals) to improve micronutrient or protein intake; local production (and use) of complementary foods.

✓ **Health:**

At present, many of the nutrition-specific interventions effective globally are delivered through the health sector. There are also nutrition-sensitive actions that can be delivered through the health sector. Such actions can involve the strengthening of information systems; legislation, policies and guidance to promote, protect and support the well-being of women and children; supporting the physical and mental health of women, adolescent girls and children; family planning services and reproductive health; building capacity of staff and systems; delivery of quality services with an equity-focused approach (especially at primary health care level); and supply chain support. For maximum effectiveness, nutrition-relevant actions need to be fully integrated into the health system, health strategy and health budget of a country.

¹⁸ References to Agriculture include fisheries, livestock and agroforestry.

¹⁹ In compliance with European regulations on Genetically Modified Organisms of staple crops.



*Social Cash Transfer (Salima, Malawi, Africa).
Photo by: Maria Winnubst.*



*An ethnic girl is drinking water from a source supported by the EU (Louangnamtha, Laos, Asia).
Photo by: Carine Malardeau.*



*School in Laos (Southeast Asia).
Photo by: European Commission.*

✓ Social Protection and social transfers:

There is increasing evidence of the specific contribution that social protection and social transfer programmes can make in reducing under nutrition and building resilience. They help address inequalities and household poverty; they can be used as channels to deliver nutrition-specific actions (for example distributing food supplements to mothers and young children, vouchers for buying nutritious food for mothers); and they can also help to build links with other services if the transfer comes with certain conditions (such as cash transfers linked to attendance at immunisation clinics). Where the EU, together with its partners, consider social transfers as an appropriate response to under nutrition in a particular context, maternal and child benefits will be prioritised. South-South cooperation could be instrumental in disseminating good practices in social protection (e.g. Brazil, Mexico).

✓ Water, Sanitation and hygiene:

By improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), WASH programmes can significantly improve nutrition, especially by addressing the nutritional impact of diarrhoeal disease. There is evidence that the greatest nutritional gains tend to be made through sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes²⁰. Gains are greatest when interventions are designed so as to achieve nutrition objectives. In any event, WASH programmes should seek to measure the impact of interventions in terms of nutritional outcomes so that we can better understand the factors that improve the performance of WASH interventions on reducing under nutrition.

✓ Education:

Education programmes consistently improve food and nutrition security in the long-term primarily through their benefits on future parents – most especially on future mothers. The Commission will seek to improve access to quality education for adolescent girls. The Commission will also seek to improve information on nutrition for vulnerable groups, women in particular. The Commission will support the inclusion/development of nutrition in the objectives of education policies and in core school curricula at both primary and secondary levels. Also, the EU will support the introduction of nutrition courses through universities and other tertiary institutions to build a cohort of personnel who can then work through extension services – such as agriculture and health – to support improved nutrition amongst vulnerable groups.

School feeding programmes are common in developing countries. Although they can diminish hunger, improve learning and increase enrolment/attendance, the evidence shows that they have a limited effect on the stunting of school age children. In any case, they cannot target the priority case of children under the age of two years (the critical window of opportunity). However, they can offer a platform for specific actions, notably regarding adolescent health and nutrition which in turn could improve the status before pregnancy.

²⁰ Esrey, S. A. (1996), Water, waste and well-being — A multi-country study. *Am J Epidemiol*, v 28 ol. 43, No 6, pp. 608–623.

Strategic Priority 3

Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge-base)

Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions: Information systems

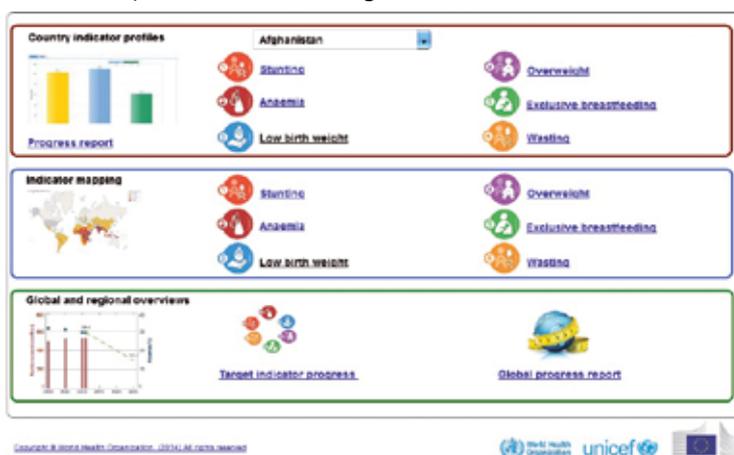
Information on nutrition is currently scattered over different platforms and sectors (health, agriculture, education, water and sanitation, etc.). Overviews at country level are often scarce, incomplete or too weak (limited availability and quality of the information and not adequate disaggregation). Information systems should be strengthened to overcome these weaknesses, so that each country can:

- Have a sound understanding of its nutritional situation and the underlying causes and consequences of under nutrition;
- Track progress in reducing stunting;
- Link stunting reductions to in-country nutrition investments and scaled up initiatives;

This is the aim of the work being undertaken by the EU and other donors under the SUN. It seeks to develop Networked National Nutrition Evaluation Platforms (NEPN). In line with this, the Commission will:

- Continue to support the adoption of ambitious, but feasible stunting reduction targets, primarily in high burden countries;
- Support the definition of common elements for the follow-up of these targets (baseline, calculation methods, etc.).
- Further support the development of multi-sectoral information systems on nutrition at national and regional levels - in collaboration with governments, SUN and all relevant international and regional organisations. This work will reinforce existing initiatives and help fill any gaps²¹. Of utmost concern is that there is no duplication of effort, nor undermining of government leadership and ownership of national systems.
- Ensure that ongoing EU support to national and regional information systems and to data collection initiatives, on sectors such as health, agriculture, education and water and sanitation, includes nutrition concerns.

For the development of information systems, the Commission will build on its traditional strong support towards regional organisations as key stakeholders in this regard.



“Whereas there is a good understanding of the effectiveness of nutrition-specific interventions there is less evidence about the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive interventions and policies.”

²¹ Particular reference will be made to the work of the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) initiated by FAO, IFPRI, and WFP supported by the EU and the US (USSAID), which represents a global effort to strengthen information systems for food and nutrition security and promote evidence-based analysis and decision making.

Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions

Future policies, strategies and activities on nutrition should be based, as far as possible, on evidence of their effectiveness and impact. The EU should therefore support applied research to identify the utility of nutrition-sensitive actions that are effective in certain contexts only. The Commission will also strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of its own programmes²², in order to better determine effective nutrition actions. It will seek to ensure that its programmes consistently target women before pregnancy, foetal under nutrition and under nutrition in infants and young children. Synergies will be sought between EU funded nutrition for development research and country level initiatives supported through EU funding. Synergies will also be sought between the data collection work being developed at national level (potentially through the NEPN) and research work on nutrition so that this information is used toward the improvement of decision making processes on nutrition.

✓ Research on Delivery Methods:

Through various reviews²³, there is a good understanding of nutrition-specific interventions needed for children to grow and develop to their full potential. We have far fewer examples of models that can take these interventions to scale however. The EU will therefore:

- Support research and documentation of the delivery methods/mechanisms that can best scale up these actions in different contexts.
- Support links between research and the work undertaken at country level, including through extension, capacity development, knowledge management and related activities.

✓ Research on Nutrition-Sensitive Actions:

Whereas there is a good understanding of the effectiveness of nutrition-specific interventions there is less evidence about the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive interventions and policies, notably over the long term. This is because, until recently, these interventions have rarely included a stated nutrition objective and hence are not being evaluated according to this criterion. Second, it is difficult to ascertain their impact on under nutrition when they are preventative or when a complex causal pathway is involved. Therefore there is a need both to test technologies with potential nutrition enhancing outcomes, and to develop appropriate indicators and targets based on an understanding of the causal chains linking actions to eventual impacts on stunting. The Commission will:

- Support research on the causal pathways and evolution of under nutrition (climate change, urbanisation, increased inequalities, risk factors as deficiencies, etc.);
- Support research on the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive interventions and policies, including by using new technologies/innovation and social transfers as a tool to reduce under nutrition.
- Support the systematic analysis of the cost-effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive actions.

The Commission will work mostly with specialised international and regional research institutions while keeping flexibility to target implementing partners with comparative advantages. It will support a policy dialogue with these institutions in order to promote a results oriented and demand-driven research. When relevant, South-South collaboration of research institutions will be encouraged. Synergies will be sought with research funded under the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020 (2014–2020).

Provide technical expertise to build capacities

In addition to financial resources, the EU should provide technical expertise and assistance in support of the strategic actions described above. Technical assistance will primarily target government counterparts and partners in order to support the strengthening of human and institutional/system capacity for effective multi-sectoral coordination and delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries. Advisory services to provide some targeted and high level expertise should also be mobilised to support EU Delegations and Headquarters in carrying out effective policy dialogue and in designing nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific programmes. Platforms will be put in place and reinforced so that staff can exchange experiences and lessons learned, and in order to provide guidance in a timely manner.



Input Assistance to Vulnerable Smallholder Farmers (Zimbabwe, Africa). Photo by: ©FAO/Desmond Kwande.



Testing wheat varieties resistance to climate change. Photo by: ©FAO/Jon Spaull.

²² See guidance given in the brochure prepared by COM, DE, IE, FR, PL, UK: *EU Reference Document No.13: Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance*, September 2011, page 49.

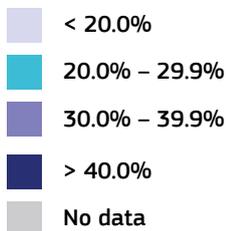
²³ The Lancet (2008), *The Maternal and Child Undernutrition Series* (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition>), The Lancet (2013), *The Maternal and Child Nutrition Series* (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>), Copenhagen Consensus 2008 and 2012 (<http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/>).

CHAPTER 4

Geographical scope

The ability of the Commission to achieve its stunting reduction target relies heavily on the work of EU Delegations in supporting countries that have a high rate of under nutrition. A number of countries have been identified with the potential to achieve significant impact on nutrition, based on the following criteria: (1) countries with a high burden of under nutrition and a strong potential to reduce under nutrition; (2) strong political commitment of the government and, ideally, a member of the SUN Movement; and (3) nutrition relevant focal sectors included in the EU Delegation's NIP 2014-2020. Other countries meeting the criteria will progressively join this group. In addition, the EU will also seek to address nutrition in its regional cooperation, where relevant.

Latest country prevalence estimates for stunting among children under-five years of age



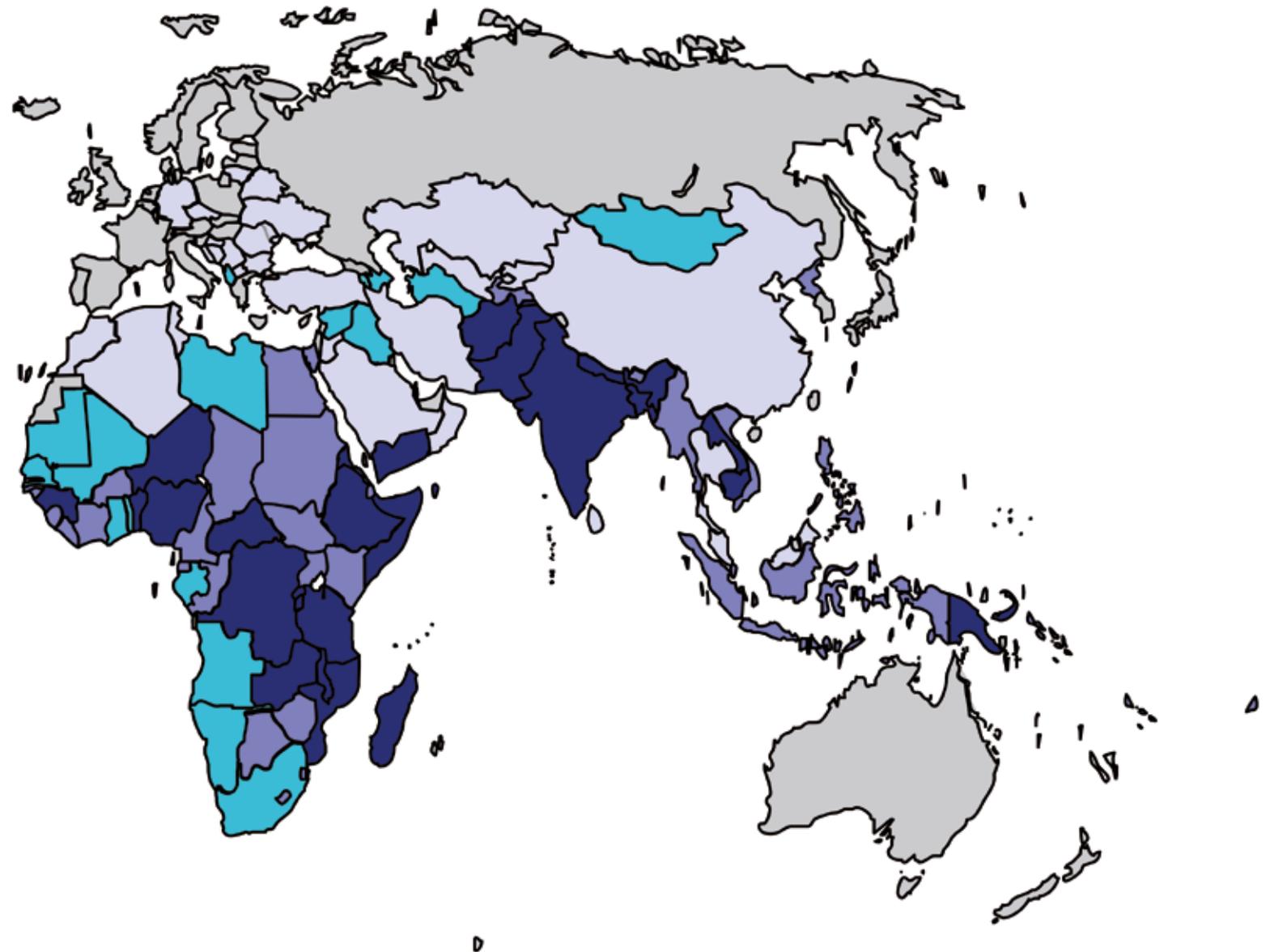
Source: UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (2012).





2-year old child eating rice, beans, bananas porridge micronutrient powders added (Indonesia, Southeast Asia). Photo by: UNICEF/Dorothy Foote.

“ The ability of the Commission to achieve its stunting reduction target relies heavily on the work of EU Delegations in supporting countries that have a high rate of under nutrition. ”



CHAPTER 5

Working in partnership

Progress towards achievement of the EU's stunting target will be most effective when the EU's investments are in support of country-led plans and coordinated with those of other donors and stakeholders, while avoiding duplication of efforts. The Commission will support nutrition activities included in the CAADP NAFSIPs, where they exist, and seek coordination of these activities with other plans related to nutrition. The EU will build on AGIR (Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience) in the Sahel and SHARE (Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience) in East Africa for a long term and sustainable approach to under nutrition reduction in these two regions. The Commission will also take account of other initiatives it supports at the regional and global levels, which focus on nutrition outcomes.

At the international and national levels, the EU should continue to work closely with the SUN Movement. SUN has helped galvanise international efforts to combat under nutrition, and bolstered country-level progress by providing a framework for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral coordination. SUN provides a strategic interface between country-level investments and international-level progress, and includes civil society organisations, private sector entities, donors, UN agencies and international financial institutions.

While ensuring coherence and synergies between services, the Commission will also work closely and in a coordinated manner with EU Member States and other donors. In-country, for example, it may be appropriate for the EU Delegation to facilitate key meetings between the EU Member States and Government and to provide a coordinating role to ensure that resources for nutrition are channelled in a complementary and coherent fashion, applying when possible division of labour and joint programming²⁴.



*SUN Global gathering (New York, USA, North America).
Photo by: SUN Secretariat.*

“ *SUN provides a strategic interface between country-level investments and international-level progress, and includes civil society organisations, private sector entities, donors, UN agencies and international financial institutions.* ”

²⁴ E.g. the EU Delegation Ethiopia is already conducting a joint programming exercise for nutrition.



*Civil Society Mechanism to the UN Committee on World Food Security 2014 Annual Forum.
Photo by: ©FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto.*

In countries where humanitarian interventions are on-going, the principle of complementarity and coordination between humanitarian and development interventions is key for the sustainability and effectiveness of nutrition interventions. A clear partnership will have to be developed with humanitarian partners through actions such as:

- Common sound risk and vulnerability assessments to generate a common understanding of root causes, affected population, situation and trends;
- Common operational assessments and programming through a more systematic coordination at the Delegation and Headquarter levels. When relevant, joint strategic planning and shared objectives will be sought.

This joined-up approach fits well with the EU's approach to making resilience a central aim of EU external aid. There is also scope for specific engagement with the Rome-based UN, the CFS and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) organisations, so as to capitalise on the opportunity offered by agriculture and food security programmes and projects for nutrition and to redress the existing predisposition of many donors to only address immediate causes of under nutrition.

The Commission will also include support to civil society in its approach to nutrition in order to enable participation/mobilisation and good governance, as well as to ensure awareness raising and communication on nutrition issues, in particular in their role to represent the voices of the most vulnerable and mobilise nutrition champions.

The Commission will also seek partnerships with the Private Sector and international financing institutions, as appropriate and without due prejudice, to capitalise on their comparative advantages and harness their expertise (e.g. product safety control, fortification, enforcement of certification and communication technologies and awareness raising through social marketing).

“ The Commission will also support civil society organisation in order to represent the voices of the most vulnerable and mobilise nutrition champions. ”

CHAPTER 6

Accountability for results

“Accountability for Results” has two broad components: 1) tracking financial investments in nutrition; and 2) measuring results and impact, including progress towards the 7 million target on stunting. For both components, the Commission is working and will continue to work closely with the SUN movement and other stakeholders, and will contribute and benefit from the movement’s accountability framework.

Tracking of financial resources

A number of SUN Movement Donors have agreed to improve the tracking of their spending both on nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions, using a common approach. Within the nutrition-sensitive category the intensity of the nutrition investments will also be assessed. A methodology for nutrition resource tracking has been agreed among the main donors²⁵ and will be applied for reporting starting in 2014 and using 2010 nutrition investments as the baseline.

Starting with a first report in 2014 SUN donors will regularly report on their nutrition investments using this common approach. A similar approach should eventually be used for tracking nutrition investments of the Governments of partner countries, CSOs and other partners, notably those which are part of the SUN Movement.

“A methodology for nutrition resource tracking has been agreed among the main donors and will be applied for reporting starting in 2014.”

Accountability – combining the elements

1. Funding

2. Programming

3. Results

4. Reporting



²⁵ The joint SUN donor (EU, WB, DFID, Ireland, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands) resource tracking methodological approach (fostered by the EU) was agreed at the SUN meeting in Lusaka on 1st December 2013.

“ A regular report informing on progress in stunting and monitoring of the scaling-up of international and national commitments will be produced. ”

Monitoring/measuring results

The Commission will operationalize the accountability framework on monitoring and measuring results discussed at the broader level for donors, under the SUN framework. At the same time it will engage in tracking progress in reducing stunting. In order to achieve this objective, it will support SUN countries in strengthening their capacity to monitor progress in the stunting reduction (and towards achieving their national targets, where they exist) and the scaling-up of interventions and promoting the creation of national nutrition evaluation platforms (NEPN). These platforms will form part of a Network, enabling standardisation of data and comparison of results. This network will build, as far as possible, on existing initiatives to monitor nutrition. A regular report informing on progress in stunting and monitoring of the scaling-up of international and national commitments will be produced.

The Commission will monitor its contribution to reducing stunting reduction on a country by country basis, according to national data and targets. This contribution will be set out in the country fiches by indicating the current trend in the country and the national/regional targets toward which it should contribute with a focus on improving the nutrition of mothers and children and the 1000 days window of opportunity. Country fiche information will also inform the Action Plan's monitoring framework developed for the Implementation Plan "Boosting food and nutrition security through EU action"²⁶.

Communicating results and lessons

The EU should improve its capacity to communicate its policy objectives to a broader audience and other organisations, to raise awareness concerning the importance of reducing under nutrition globally and to influence the development agenda. For each of the different strategic priorities specific communication actions will be designed and implemented. Communication actions will target different audiences and will be specifically designed for donor and partner countries.



Screening of malnutrition of children under 5 years (Lubombo, Swaziland, Africa).
Photo by: Stefano Perugini.

²⁶ SWD (2013) 104, 27.03.2013.

ANNEX

Operational Framework and Milestones to 2025

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1. ENHANCE MOBILIZATION AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT FOR NUTRITION

Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Year											
Strengthen political commitment and good governance at country level	Engage in policy dialogue on nutrition issues in food and nutrition insecure priority countries and promote the systematic inclusion of nutrition concerns in relevant sectors	Nutrition is mainstreamed in at least 30 programming documents (NIPs) ²⁷	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Technical support to governments in setting-up and implementing the appropriate policy framework at national and/or regional level (including costed action plans)	Development and finalisation of country fiches in at least 40 countries	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Support the development of at least 10 country nutrition strategies	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Encourage the establishment of nutrition coordination mechanisms at partner country-level	By 2015, EU Delegations are nutrition coordinators in at least 8 countries ²⁸	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		By 2014, EU Delegations participate in 20 coordination mechanisms	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Maintain political commitment and strengthen governance at international level	Continue EU's active role in the SUN movement	Contribute to the mid-term evaluation of the SUN	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Participate in all SUN lead group meetings			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Participate in the definition of the SUN mandate Post 2015			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
2 additional donors have joined the SUN			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Engage as a SUN donor convenor in at least 2 additional SUN countries			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Participate in International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2)			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

²⁷ So far 33 have included nutrition as part of the objectives of relevant sectors in at least 33 draft EU Delegation's NIP/MIP.

²⁸ We are already nutrition coordinators in 4 countries.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2. SCALE UP ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL

Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Year											
Strengthen human capacity and institutions/systems for effective delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries	Support the development of national nutrition strategies and the strengthening of legal frameworks	By 2017, at least 15 countries have received support from the EU	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Develop managerial, strategic and technical capacities in government bodies and EU Delegations	By 2016 senior officials in at least 10 partner countries have been trained by the dedicated Commission Nutrition Advisory Service	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		By 2015, 10 Delegations have been trained on nutrition mainstreaming or received technical support from the Nutrition Advisory Service	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		By 2015, e-learning material on nutrition is made available to EU Delegations and partner countries	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		By 2015, nutrition training is part of the pre-posting training for EEAS Staff	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Field guidance note to integrate nutrition in Agriculture is released	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		By 2015, an EU reference document "Addressing Under nutrition in External Assistance" taking account of new evidence could be released	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Guidance for 3 nutrition relevant sectors are released (WASH, social transfer, education)	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Exchange and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from programmes and projects together with government and key partners such as UN organisations, NGOs and businesses	Support to CAADP Agriculture Nutrition Capacity Development Initiative	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Scale-up nutrition-specific actions	Implement nutrition-specific interventions	By 2020, the EU should have committed at least 400 million EUR to nutrition-specific interventions ²⁹	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Scale-up nutrition-sensitive actions	Implement nutrition-sensitive interventions	By 2020, the EU should have committed at least 3.1 billion EUR to nutrition-sensitive interventions	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

²⁹ This pledge (including the breakdown between Nutrition Specific and Sensitive) was made by Commissioner Piebalgs in the Nutrition for growth G8 event in London in June 2013.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3. KNOWLEDGE FOR NUTRITION (STRENGTHENING THE EXPERTISE AND THE KNOWLEDGE-BASE)

Objectives	Actions	Indicators	Year											
Strengthening expertise	Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions: Information systems	Nutrition is included in relevant information systems. Results monitoring results and impact assessment are used for decision making	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Estimate and agreement of baselines and targets at country level using the AARR tool for national stunting Reduction Trends	By 2016, reduction targets are agreed with government in 20 countries ³⁰	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Review of our support to research on nutrition at country level, and at the regional and international level (including CGIAR). Impact on country programmes and potential improvements	By 2016, a repository of EU research for nutrition projects is available	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Continuation of the EU advisory services to EU delegations and Headquarters		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES

Working in partnership	Information is shared on a continuous basis with Member States, with the interservice group on nutrition and the civil society	Organise annually a workshop with Member States and Civil Society organisations at Headquarters	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Guidance is provided with ECHO on common assessment and programming with good practices and exchange of views	Common risk and vulnerability assessments and when relevant joint strategic planning carried out in 5 countries	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Accountability for results	Annual Report to UNGA – baseline is set in 2010 based on a methodology on resource tracking	Provide annually data on EU investment in nutrition	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Operationalise monitoring and measure of results	Establish the Networked National Nutrition Evaluation Platforms in 10 countries	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Support nutrition result framework in 5 countries	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Inputs for the progress reports to the SUN	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Communicating results and lessons		Specific communication actions are established	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25

³⁰ This dialogue is ongoing with a number of countries.

PART II

Foreign Affairs/ Development Council

Conclusions on the Action Plan on Nutrition

(12 DECEMBER 2014)

1. The Council recalls its Conclusions of 28 May 2013, which endorsed the Communication “Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in External Assistance: an EU policy Framework” and invited the Commission to develop an Action Plan setting out how to deliver on its stunting target.

Introduction

2. The Council reemphasises its concern at the persistent levels of malnutrition, especially in developing countries, where States are faced by the triple burden of under-nutrition, overnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies. The complex and multidimensional causes of malnutrition require a holistic and human rights-based approach, with a particular focus on women and children. The Council reaffirms the importance of strengthening synergies between humanitarian and development actors and welcomes ongoing efforts in this regard. In particular the Council encourages the adoption of approaches that build resilience at all levels, bearing in mind the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020 linking the resilience agenda and the piloting of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.
3. The Council recognises that hunger and malnutrition are both a cause and a consequence of underdevelopment. Malnutrition poses a serious threat to social development and economic growth. On the other hand, investing in nutrition provides positive social, economic and productivity returns. Malnutrition constitutes one of the major current global challenges that the international community faces in its fight against poverty, increasing inequality and social exclusion.
4. The Council therefore calls on the EU and its Member States to support efforts by partner countries facing a high malnutrition burden to place food and nutrition security high on the political agenda. In this regard the Council also calls for particular attention to and comprehensive consideration of food security and improved nutrition in the post-2015 framework, noting the proposals in this regard contained in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Nutrition interventions should seek to address the broader dimension of malnutrition, including overweight and diet related non communicable diseases. The promotion of international standards on safe and secure food should also be prioritised.
5. The Council encourages all the relevant stakeholders to play their respective role in the effective implementation of the commitments of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition through its associated Framework for Action, adopted at the 2014 Second International Conference on Nutrition. These documents will usefully feed into the discussions in the context of the post 2015 framework. Endorsed by the EU and its Member States, the Framework provides a set of recommended actions conducive to eradicating hunger and preventing all forms of malnutrition worldwide, including the attainment of the global nutrition targets set by the World Health Assembly for 2025.

Commission Staff Working Document “Action Plan on Nutrition”

6. The Council welcomes the presentation by the Commission of the Action Plan on Nutrition, which focuses on undernutrition and sets out how the EU can best support partner countries including in meeting the Commission target of reducing the number of chronic undernourished children under the age of five years by at least 7 million by 2025.
7. The Council recognises that achieving the World Health Assembly (WHA) target of reducing global stunting by 40% by 2025 (i.e. about 70 million children) implies scaling up our efforts significantly. The Council therefore welcomes the emphasis of the Nutrition Action Plan on the need to increase the current annual stunting reduction rate beyond current trends so that the above mentioned WHA target is attained by 2025. In this context the Council also welcomes the pledges of increased investment in nutrition by the Commission and some Member States through the 2013 Nutrition for Growth compact and other fora.
8. The Council emphasises the need to tackle both the underlying and immediate causes of undernutrition, with a particular focus on women and children. In this regard, the Council welcomes the commitment of the Commission and some Member States to implement nutrition-sensitive interventions across all relevant sectors, by integrating nutrition indicators and objectives into, inter alia, agriculture and food security, health, social protection, water and sanitation as well as education programmes, together with nutrition specific programmes which address the immediate causes and consequences of undernutrition.
9. Under-nutrition is a major factor behind the high prevalence of child morbidity and mortality and an obstacle to the full cognitive and physical development of those children who survive it. The Council therefore welcomes the specific focus of the Nutrition Action Plan on interventions and policies targeted at women and children, notably within the critical 1,000 day window of opportunity, i.e. good nutrition for pregnant women and until the second year of the child, and by prioritising women, children and adolescent girls, especially in poor rural areas and among the most vulnerable groups. The importance of breastfeeding of infants as part of nutrition specific interventions should be highlighted. The Council notes that the specific focus of the Nutrition Action Plan will be: (a) to enhance mobilisation and political commitment to nutrition; (b) to scale up actions at country level and (c) to increase knowledge of nutrition.
10. In this context, the Council welcomes the commitment of the Commission and a number of Member States to scale up actions at country level in the 2014-2020 period. The envisaged interventions should be gender sensitive, especially aiming at women and their empowerment, and should be designed to achieve the highest impact on reducing stunting and addressing its underlying causes; they should build capacity, knowledge and skills, they should reinforce and leverage expertise, investments and contributions from local stakeholders, governments, the private sector, knowledge institutes and NGOs.
11. Actions to strengthen national leadership, governance and ownership of nutrition objectives require EU Delegations and the representations of EU Member States to engage further in policy dialogue and to support national and regional processes. EU Joint programming provides a sound framework for better coordinating nutrition interventions as well as for supporting partner countries to define and implement national nutrition policies, particularly in countries with a high stunting burden, where there is a need and potential for common advocacy and action. The Council welcomes the commitment in the Action Plan to ensure synergy and coherence between country-owned policies and programmes on the one hand, and regional and international initiatives on the other hand.
12. The Council encourages the alignment of Member States interventions to existing national strategies of partner countries and close coordination with the Commission's Nutrition Action Plan and other international initiatives. Existing coordination mechanisms, such as the SUN movement and the Committee on World Food Security, should be reinforced. Consideration should be given to the work of other relevant UN committees such as the Standing Committee on Nutrition. In particular the Council welcomes the fact that 54 countries with high burdens of under-nutrition have now joined the SUN movement and are demonstrating political commitment to improve nutrition.
13. As part of the Action Plan the Council supports the Commission proposal to develop country fiches showing expected outcomes. Nutrition objectives should be consistently incorporated in programme design while nutrition criteria and indicators should be included and monitored. Moreover, the Council supports the Commission intention to strengthen national information management systems for nutrition, providing accountability for and communication of results to assess the impact, also at field level, of the Action Plan. The information generated may also serve to contribute results to the annual Global Nutrition Report. Accurate data at country level will support decision-making, resource allocation and policy development by national authorities in addition to providing accountability for and communication of results arising from the implementation of the Action Plan, at global and country level.

