

# If Not Now, When?

## CENTERING NUTRITION IN THE PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

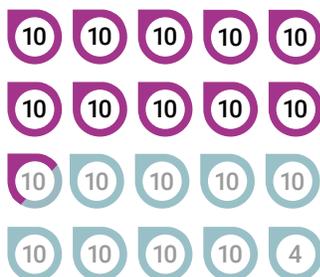
### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, 5.3 million children died under the age of five,<sup>1</sup> and almost half of these deaths can be attributed to undernutrition.<sup>2</sup> The world is substantially off-track to meet nutrition goals,<sup>3</sup> and the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbates this issue. In a vicious cycle, shocks to nutrition will increase vulnerability to illnesses, which, in the long-term, reduce chances to escape poverty cycles and may halt economic growth. The cost to the global economy from this lack of progress – before COVID-19 – is US\$3.5 trillion annually<sup>4</sup> and is a constant limiting factor in all other development agendas, including health, and in driving economic development.

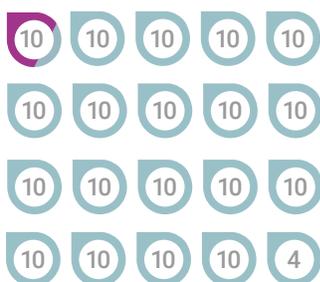
Urgent and scaled-up action, including new and increased financial resources for nutrition, is essential and cannot wait. We must invest in evidence-based and measurable nutrition actions that we know are most cost-effective, save the most lives, and are most sustainable. We must also build nutrition into universal health coverage (UHC) plans and programs because nutrition is key to so many other health issues. **If we don't act now, then we miss a key opportunity to transform the lives of millions of children and women and set the world on a different track.**

### Lack of Progress

**106** countries will achieve  
**1** WHA nutrition target



**8** countries will achieve  
**4** WHA nutrition targets



Each pointer represents 10 countries. 194 total

### Recommendations

- 1** Nutrition interventions must be appropriately included in the sub-national, national, and global COVID-19 response and recovery plans. Efforts are rightly focus on the COVID-19 response at present, but we should not lose sight of the compounding impact that existing malnutrition will have on vulnerable populations
- 2** New and additional financial commitments to nutrition must be made by all partners; they must be ambitious, in line with the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Commitment-Making Guide, and recognize the resource gap for nutrition-specific interventions.
- 3** To have maximum impact, resources must be invested in high-impact, evidence-based interventions and the tools that will ensure success and accountability.
- 4** All commitments must also be made in-line with the Tokyo N4G Summit's accountability process to allow for better tracking and monitoring of nutrition investments and, in turn, increased impact. Through alignment and coherence of the reporting frameworks, it will provide an essential opportunity to build a comprehensive picture of both the scale of global investments in nutrition as well as the impact of these investments.

## What the World Needs to See

For the beginning of this new decade, to produce accelerated progress on nutrition, civil society looks to all partners to make commitments that fulfil the three criteria below. Ambitious commitments that are measurable and accountable and focus on the following areas would have a transformative impact on efforts to reduce the burden of malnutrition around the world.

CRITERIA

**01** New and additional investments in both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programming.

CRITERIA

**02** Invest new and additional resources in high-impact, evidence-based intervention and the tools that will ensure success & accountability.

- A Improving women and adolescent girls' nutrition;
- B Tackling stunting;
- C Reducing wasting;
- D Ensuring no missed opportunities to integrate nutrition in other areas, such as health, education, building climate resilient and nutritious food systems, global health emergencies and pandemics, and water and sanitation; and
- E Ensuring accountability for impact by ensuring adequate funding for civil society to hold governments and each other accountable, investing in the data that drives programs and the data that demonstrates progress.

CRITERIA

**03** All commitments must be made together with a clear accountability mechanism to allow for better tracking and monitoring of nutrition investments.

### Global nutrition targets 2025



**STUNTING**

TARGET:  
40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted



**ANAEMIA**

TARGET:  
50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age



**LOW BIRTH WEIGHT**

TARGET:  
30% reduction in low birth weight



**CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT**

TARGET:  
No increase in childhood overweight



**BREASTFEEDING**

TARGET:  
Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%



**WASTING**

TARGET:  
Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%



The choices and investments that leaders make now will accelerate — or impede — achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

1 UNICEF (Sep 2019). Under-five mortality. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/>  
 2 UNICEF (Mar 2020). Malnutrition. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>  
 3 SDG 2 is "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture." <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg2>  
 4 Global Panel (2016). The cost of malnutrition: Why policy action is urgent. London: UK: Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.  
 5 SUN Movement, International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition, SUN Civil Society Network (2020). "COVID-19 And Nutrition: SUN Movement Information Note". [https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SUN-COVID-19\\_InformationNote\\_ENG.pdf](https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SUN-COVID-19_InformationNote_ENG.pdf)