Background

- During the 2012 World Health Assembly, a 13-year plan (2012-2025) to address maternal, infant and child nutrition — with biennial reporting to 2022 and final report in 2025 — was proposed.
- The aim of the plan is to alleviate the double burden of malnutrition in children, starting from the earliest ages of development.
- One of several global targets in the plan is a 40% reduction of the global number of children under five years of age who are stunted by 2025, compared to the baseline of 2010.

UNICEF-WHO-World Bank estimates of child malnutrition

- Annual review of available data with objective to derive a joint child malnutrition data set.
- Apply same peer-reviewed, multi-level model to obtain joint prevalence and burden number estimates for child stunting, underweight, wasting and overweight.
- A joint publication presents the latest estimates (in prevalence and burden numbers) for 2011 as well as trends from 1990.
- Estimates are presented by MDG, UN, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank regional classifications.

Below are the most recent estimates of prevalence and burden numbers by MDG region as well as Global trends between 1990 and 2015 for child malnutrition.

Questions related to the WHA resolution on maternal, infant and child nutrition may be directed to Dr Francesco Branca (WHO) (brancaf@who.int) or Dr Werner Schultink (UNICEF) (wschultink@unicef.org).

Questions related to the UNICEF-WHO-World Bank estimates of child malnutrition may be directed to Dr Mercedes de Onis (WHO) (deonism@who.int) or Dr Tessa Wardlaw (UNICEF) (twardlaw@unicef.org).

Key facts

- In 2011, an estimated 165 million children under five years of age worldwide were stunted (i.e., low height-for-age), a decrease from an estimated 253 million similar children in 1990.
- High prevalence levels of stunting among children under five years of age in Africa (36% in 2011) and Asia (27% in 2011) remain a public health problem, one which often goes unrecognized.
- In 2011, an estimated 101 million children under five years of age worldwide were underweight (i.e., low weight-for-age), a decrease from an estimated 159 million similar children in 1990.
- Although the prevalences of stunting and underweight among children under five years of age worldwide have decreased since 1990, overall progress is insufficient and millions of children remain at risk.
INFORMATION SHEET
UNICEF-WHO-The World Bank joint child malnutrition estimates

Estimated prevalence of stunting, underweight, wasting during 2011 by MDG region

Estimated burden numbers of stunting, underweight, wasting during 2011 by MDG region

Estimated Global prevalence and burden numbers of stunting 1990–2015

Estimated Global prevalence and burden numbers of underweight 1990–2015