

Introduction:

GLOBAL NUTRITION TARGETS POLICY BRIEF SERIES

Background

Recognizing that accelerated global action is needed to address the pervasive and corrosive problem of the double-burden of malnutrition, in 2012 the World Health Assembly (WHA) unanimously agreed to a set of six global nutrition targets that by 2025 aim to:

- Reduce by 40 per cent the number of children under 5 who are stunted;
- Achieve a 50 per cent reduction in the rate of anemia in women of reproductive age;
- Achieve a 30 per cent reduction in the rate of infants born low birth weight;
- Ensure that there is no increase in the rate of children who are overweight;
- Increase to at least 50 per cent the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months; and
- Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5 per cent.

Scope and Purpose of the Briefs

As part of its efforts, the World Health Organization (WHO) will develop a series of six policy briefs linked to each of the global targets that can guide national and local policymakers on what actions should be taken at scale in order to achieve the targets. There are evidence-based, effective interventions that can produce results in multiple targets.

Recognising that the six targets are interlinked, the purpose of these briefs is to consolidate the evidence around which interventions and areas of investment

need to be scaled up and guide decision-makers on what actions need to be taken in order to achieve real progress toward improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition. Particular attention will be given to implementation issues concerning these scaling-up processes as well as potential barriers impeding equity in access to such interventions from a “social-determinants of health” approach.

Ultimately, the briefs will serve as a guide for an overarching narrative to help unite stakeholders around common options to fight the double-burden of malnutrition effectively.

Status of the Briefs

The series of six policy briefs will also provide guidance around the implementation of priority interventions. WHO is pleased to present an initial draft of the first in the series, the stunting policy brief—to be launched during the 67th World Health Assembly in May 2014, along with a demonstration of a web-based, interactive tool to support country-level target setting that is currently being developed.

In order to make the policy briefs useful advocacy tools for all actors, we envision carrying out broad, multi-stakeholder consultations over the next four months. These policy briefs will then be finalised and disseminated through events, meetings, and multiple other channels throughout the year.

Key Policy Actions and Implementation Guidance

Guidance on actions to be taken to scale up effective priority interventions should include both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments, through an inter-sectoral approach for achieving the targets.

Targets need to be set at country level, in relation to country-level baselines and expected annual reduction rates. Target achievement also requires an assessment of the resources available, including availability of data; integrating nutrition across multiple sectors, such as health, food systems, agriculture, social services, water, sanitation and hygiene; developing comprehensive policy frameworks for implementation at scale and for the promotion of equitable access to the recommended interventions; creating institutional mechanisms of engagement of required actors; and developing and implementing suitable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Links to Global Goals Through 2030

Since the adoption at the 65th WHA, these global nutrition targets have helped focus the global community on six key areas aimed at improving the nutritional status of mothers, infants and young children. To accelerate progress and reduce malnutrition in all its forms, these six global nutrition targets are receiving attention in the discussion over post-2015 development goals. If adopted in that framework, with 2030 as a time horizon, we expect further improvements in nutrition.