

ENDING MALNUTRITION BY 2030:

A CALL TO ACTION TO ALL GOVERNMENT LEADERS

As the world embarks on the new era of sustainable development to end poverty in all its dimensions, your leadership is urgently needed to prioritize investments in nutrition. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that our governments have adopted requires a much stronger focus on ensuring that all people—but especially women and children—have the nutrition they need to thrive.

We call on you to use the Nutrition for Growth summit on the occasion of the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics to increase investments directed toward ending malnutrition in all its forms and achieving the internationally agreed-upon World Health Assembly targets to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition.

Every country in the world is affected by one or more forms of malnutrition as manifested in high rates of undernutrition, obesity or micronutrient deficiencies. It is however young children who are most harmed by malnutrition. Nearly half of deaths of children under age five are due to malnutrition, and over one quarter of those are due to suboptimal breastfeeding.^{1, 2, 3} Meanwhile, an estimated 159 million children under age five are developmentally stunted as a result of chronic undernourishment⁴ with another 50 million suffering the ravages of acute malnutrition.⁵ And increasingly, obesity is robbing children of their future health and well-being. In the next decade, it is estimated that over 70 million infants and young children will be affected by overweight and obesity, the vast majority of them living in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.⁶ All of these malnourished children represent a staggering loss of human and economic potential.

By contrast, greater investment in nutrition can save lives, unlock enormous gains in health and human capital, and boost a country's GDP by as much as 12%.⁷ The returns on investments in nutrition are among

some of the highest in global development according to several of the world's leading economists who have consistently argued that policymakers should prioritize spending on improving infant and young child nutrition.⁸

Yet despite the strong evidence of the importance and cost-effectiveness of investing in nutrition, current spending in this area is minimal. Countries are spending less than 1% of their budgets on nutrition and funding for efforts that directly impact nutrition outcomes likewise accounts for less than 1% of official development assistance.⁹

This is why we need your leadership to mobilize additional financing for nutrition and ensure strong accountability for improvements in the nutritional well-being of all people. The 2016 Nutrition for Growth summit provides a historic opportunity to shift the world onto a path that promotes greater health and prosperity for all by eliminating malnutrition in all its forms by 2030. This must be our legacy. We stand ready to support you, so that together we can create a healthier and brighter future for the next generation of children.

To sign on contact Manuel Claros (manuel@thousanddays.org) or visit us at <http://ow.ly/TcgVe>

[1] Black, Robert E., et al., 'Maternal and Child Undernutrition and Overweight in Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries', Lancet, vol. 382, no. 9890, 3 August 2013, pp. 427–451.

[2] UNICEF/WHO (2015). Breast feeding advocacy strategy initiative for the best start in life.

[3] WHO (2015). World Health Statistics Report. Geneva. (p.16).

[4] UNICEF/WHO/The World Bank, (2015). Levels & Trends in Child Malnutrition. UNICEF-WHO-WB Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates.

[5] Krusevec, Julia, Andrew Thompson, Monika Blössner, Elaine Borghi, Juan Feng, Umar Serajuddin for The United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Bank. 2015. "Levels & Trends in Child Malnutrition - UNICEF-WHO-The World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates"

[6] WHO (2015). Interim Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity. WHO/NMH/PND/ECHO/15.1. Geneva.

[7] Horton S. and R. Steckel. 2013. "Global Economic Losses Attributable to Malnutrition 1900–2000 and Projections to 2050." In The Economics of Human Challenges, ed B. Lomborg. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

[8] Hoddinott, Alderman, Behrman, Haddad, & Horton (2013). The economic rationale for investing in nutrition. Maternal and Child Nutrition 9(Suppl. 2): 69-82.

[9] National budgets; SPRING4; Save the Children; CRS database (2013) basic nutrition disbursements were projected to 2015 based on OECD reported growth projections

