INITIATIVE “TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF CHILD UNDERNUTRITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BY 2015”

A Global Priority for Tackling Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean

Gordana Jerger
Deputy Regional Director
United Nations World Food Programme
Latin America and the Caribbean
A decrease of 1% in malnutrition rate achieves a 4% decrease in poverty.

A decrease of 1% in poverty rate achieves a 0.25% decrease in malnutrition rate.

5% decrease in malnutrition rate

20% decrease in poverty rate

An efficient way of fighting poverty is to address hunger – especially child chronic undernutrition.

Chronic malnutrition, the best indicator of the quality of life, is a sign of a structural problem.
To have a lasting impact, it is critical to break the inter-generational cycle of hunger. To reduce poverty, there must be policies, strategies and programs specifically tackling undernutrition.
Increased infant mortality and morbidity and chronic illness - increased health care costs and future productivity losses

Reduced cognitive development - higher drop-out and repetition rates and lower retention rates - added costs to education sector

Low(er) productivity in adult life

Inter-generational transmission
# Undernutrition has a High Economic Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CRC</th>
<th>DREP</th>
<th>GTM</th>
<th>HND</th>
<th>NIC</th>
<th>PAN</th>
<th>SLV</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>317.6</td>
<td>671.6</td>
<td>3,128.40</td>
<td>780.1</td>
<td>264.3</td>
<td>321.5</td>
<td>1,175.30</td>
<td>6,658.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to GDP</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
<td><strong>11.40%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.60%</strong></td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The economic and social cost of preventing undernutrition is minimal compared to the negative economic impact of hunger.

More than 2.5 million children in the region aged between 0 and 36 months display serious height and weight deficiencies.
Concrete Initiatives

INITIATIVE “TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF CHILD UNDERNUTRITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BY 2015”
Regional Political Endorsement and Process

- **Chile, April 2005:** Meeting of Health Ministers of South America
- **Cartagena, Colombia, July 2005:** Regional Technical Consultation “Overcoming Hunger and Malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean to Achieve the MDGs”
- **Belize, September 2005:** RESSCAD XXI - Meeting of Health Ministers of Central America and Dominican Republic
- **Panama City, Panama, June 2006:** Regional Technical Consultation on “Towards the Eradication of Child Malnutrition in Central America and Dominican Republic by 2015” organized by WFP and IDB
- **Panama City, Panama, July 2006:** Central American Integration System (SICA) Summit
- **Guatemala, September 2006:** RESSCAD XXII - Meeting of Health Ministers of Central America and Dominican Republic
- **Lima, Peru, November 2006:** technical consultation "Towards the Eradication of Child Undernutrition by 2015 in the Andean Region“ organized by the governments of Peru and Chile with WFP. Lima Declaration.
- **Guatemala City, Guatemala, March 2007:** IDB Annual Meeting of Governors
- **Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, March 2007:** REMSAA XXVIII – Meeting of Health Ministers of the Andean Area
“TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF CHILD UNDERRUTRITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BY 2015”

Building on existing national efforts, strengthening champion programs, promoting best practices in tackling child chronic undernutrition

- Preventive approach with a focus on children under 3 years of age and pregnant and nursing woman
- Attention to cultural reality and vulnerable groups, specifically indigenous and Afro-descendant populations
- Promotion of breast feeding
- Integration of vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Guaranteeing adequate nutritional contribution to target populations
- Promotion of local nutritional habits
- Promotion of growth control programs and integral health care
- Empowering local communities to become the main player in the fight against chronic malnutrition
- Inter-institutional collaboration
Regional component: key cross-cutting issues

- improved public policies and institutional strengthening
- effectiveness evaluation of programs
- raising awareness among decision-makers for increased public resource allocation for preventative interventions focusing on infant undernutrition with an inter-institutional approach
- strengthening at least the following complementary activities: drinking water and sanitation and early childhood stimulation
- knowledge management on evidence-based high-impact project design and effective programs, and information sharing among policy makers and practitioners
- promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms
The INITIATIVE is well advanced in Central America (jointly supported by WFP and IDB) – national plans being finalized

Partnerships forged for institutionalization of national initiatives in the Andean region

Strong UN inter-agency support

“TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF CHILD UNDERNUTRITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BY 2015”
If the international community acts now in support of targeted interventions, Latin America and the Caribbean could be the first region to achieve the hunger target of the first MDG by 2015.

Less than 1% of ODA allocated to direct nutritional interventions.

“TOWARDS THE ERADICATION OF CHILD UNDERNUTRITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BY 2015”