



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 8 July 2014  
(OR. en)

11718/14

DEVGEN 179  
COHAFA 70  
ACP 118  
RELEX 589  
ALIM 8  
AGRI 488  
FAO 46  
SAN 283

#### COVER NOTE

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From: Secretary-General of the European Commission,  
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

date of receipt: 3 July 2014

To: Mr Uwe CORSEPIUS, Secretary-General of the Council of the European  
Union

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No. Cion doc.: SWD(2014) 234 final

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Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT  
Action Plan on Nutrition

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Delegations will find attached document SWD(2014) 234 final.

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Encl.: SWD(2014) 234 final



Brussels, 3.7.2014  
SWD(2014) 234 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Action Plan on Nutrition**

# An Action Plan to Reduce the Number of stunted children by 7 million by 2025

## 1. Rationale

Recognising that under nutrition poses a major global challenge the EU adopted in March 2013 the Communication: “*Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in External Assistance: An EU Policy Framework*”<sup>1</sup>. The related Council Conclusions of May 2013<sup>2</sup>, welcomed this Communication and invited the Commission to develop an Action Plan setting out how the Commission will deliver on its stunting target. Therefore, this Action Plan focuses particularly on one commitment - to reduce the number of stunted children under the age of five years by at least 7 million by the year 2025.

The Action Plan identifies how the Commission can work to improve nutrition at the national, regional and international levels, identifying the elements necessary for a more effective and accountable response to the fight against under nutrition. More specific actions are defined country by country in the National Indicative Programmes for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Commission efforts in tackling under nutrition will contribute to broader international efforts on nutrition, most notably those of:

- The World Health Assembly (WHA), and the resolutions passed in 2012 which endorsed 6 global targets focusing on maternal and child nutrition; and
- The Scaling-Up Nutrition movement (SUN movement), that seeks to harness the capability and willingness of international stakeholders in support of national government-led initiatives and priorities to tackle under nutrition.

The first of the WHA targets is a ‘40% reduction of the global number of children under five who are stunted’. It implies a global reduction of about 70 million stunted children (from 171 million in 2010 to approximately 103 million in 2025)<sup>3</sup>. If the current trajectory<sup>4</sup> of global stunting reduction (2.1%) continues, the expected number of stunted children worldwide would be approximately 126 million in 2025 (approximately 23 million short of the 103 million target). Thus, in order to achieve the WHA target, the pace of stunting reduction needs to be speeded up – simply maintaining current efforts in nutrition will not be enough. The EU’s Action Plan seeks to support enhanced progress towards reducing the global burden of under nutrition. By reducing the vulnerability generated by under nutrition the Nutrition Action Plan will complement and strengthen the Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “*Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition in External Assistance: An EU Policy Framework*” ([http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/enhancing\\_maternal-child\\_nutrition\\_in\\_external\\_assistance\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/enhancing_maternal-child_nutrition_in_external_assistance_en.pdf)); SWD (2013) 72, 12.03.2013, SWD (2013) 104, 27.03.2013

<sup>2</sup> « *Council conclusions on Food and Nutrition Security in external assistance* » ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137318.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137318.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> Proposed Global Targets for Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition. WHO Discussion Paper, 6 February 2012. [http://www.who.int/nutrition/events/2012\\_proposed\\_globaltargets\\_backgroundpaper.pdf](http://www.who.int/nutrition/events/2012_proposed_globaltargets_backgroundpaper.pdf).

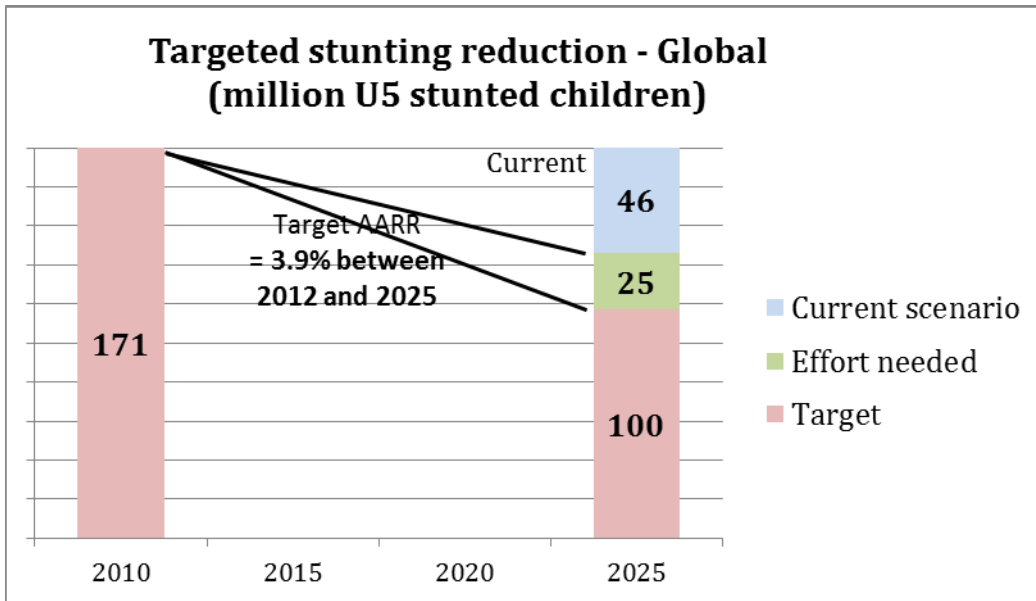
<sup>4</sup> This is described by the average annual reduction rate (AARR): Unlike the comparison of absolute changes, the AARR represents a constant reduction in terms of percentage of the previous value. In that sense, it reflects the fact that as stunting is reduced, further reduction becomes more difficult. So, as lower levels of stunting are attained, the same percentage of reduction represents a lower absolute reduction.

<sup>5</sup> SWD (2013) 227, 19.06.2013

## 2. Specific Objective

Achieving the WHA target implies doing more than at present. The Commission's target of reducing the number of stunted children under the age of five years by at least 7 million additional children by the year 2025 will contribute significantly to this global WHA target, representing as it does about 30% of the extra reduction needed if the WHA target is to be achieved (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Stunting reduction: WHA target, current trend and extra effort needed<sup>6</sup>



The first 1 000 days of life are considered critical in preventing under nutrition and its consequences. The Commission will therefore work towards improving the nutrition of mothers and children. It will specifically aim at:

1. Improving the nutritional status of **women before pregnancy (paying specific attention to adolescent girls)**;
2. Supporting growth from the earliest stage of life, **by addressing maternal under nutrition**;
3. Reducing **under nutrition in infants and children**<sup>7</sup>.

Activities will target populations most affected by under nutrition<sup>8</sup>; and be programmed in a manner that respects the principles outlined in the nutrition Communication:

<sup>6</sup> WHO's global target is that by 2025, there will be a 40% reduction of the global number of children under five who are stunted. This target implies a relative reduction of 40% of the number of children stunted by the year 2025, compared to the baseline of 2010. This would translate into a 3.9% relative reduction per year between 2012 and 2025 and implies reducing the number of stunted children from the 171 million in 2010 to approximately 100 million in 2025, i.e. approximately 25 million less than what this number would be if current trends are not changed. An analysis of 110 countries for which stunting prevalence is available on at least two occasions in the 1995–2010 period reveals that global stunting is dropping at the rate of 1.8% per year (2.6% in countries with prevalence higher than 30%). In this period 20% of the countries have reduced stunting at a rate of 3.9 % or higher.

<sup>7</sup> The Lancet Series on Nutrition of 2008 identified the first '1000 days' as a 'crucial window of opportunity' for preventing and addressing undernutrition.

<sup>8</sup> The Communication on Nutrition underlines that under nutrition is especially severe among poor rural populations and those suffering from discrimination. Recognising this, the EU is committed to supporting smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods.

- Alignment with country priorities (as per Aid Effectiveness principles);
- Responding through multiple sectors to address various determinants of under nutrition;
- Collaborative engagement, working in partnership with government, civil society and the private sector.

This Action Plan covers external assistance to address the main causes of under nutrition. In emergency contexts, humanitarian assistance will also address immediate and underlying causes of under nutrition<sup>9</sup>, while ensuring complementarity and coordination with development interventions.

### 3. Strategic Priorities

The EU's focus on women, children and adolescent girls and the 1000 day window of opportunity will be realised under each of the three strategic priorities outlined in the Nutrition Communication:

- Strategic priority 1: Enhance mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition
- Strategic priority 2: Scale up actions at country level
- Strategic priority 3: Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge-base).

These strategic priorities are inter-linked and inter-dependent. Enhancing mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition will help to scale up actions at country level. Greater knowledge for nutrition will ensure that such scale-up, and the EU's work on nutrition, is backed up by sound and informed decision-making and strengthened capacity at country level.

To be most effective, the EU's assistance will be integrated in an overall approach combining interventions on the three strategic priorities – as indicated by the needs and opportunities in the different country contexts, and in support of government-determined national priorities.

At national level, EU Delegations will describe their efforts in tackling under nutrition in *Country Fiches*. These Country Fiches will identify the outcomes to be realised in the country, the actions that will be required to do so, and the comprehensiveness that can be achieved by addressing under nutrition across relevant sectors. They will outline concretely how the EU's stunting target can be attained. The Country Fiches will take into consideration the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement country profiles and the CAADP10 nutrition country papers whenever relevant.

#### 3.1 Strategic priority 1: Enhance mobilisation and political commitment for nutrition

##### 3.1.1 Strengthen political commitment and good governance at country level

Leadership, good governance and national ownership are central in tackling under nutrition. To help achieve this, the Commission will support the mobilisation and political commitment to nutrition of governments, national institutions and civil society and solicit broader support from across the donor community (especially EU Member States) so that:

<sup>9</sup> As outlined in the Commission Staff Working Document "Addressing Undernutrition in Emergencies".

<sup>10</sup> The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) established as part of NEPAD in July 2003.

- Nutrition is prominent in national development priorities, with countries taking time-bound and measurable commitments such as national stunting reduction targets<sup>11</sup>.
- Sound nutrition governance approaches are applied – including mobilisation of relevant sectors, adoption of national costed nutrition plans and strong coordination at the national level.
- Responsibilities for ensuring nutrition outcomes are clearly defined at the national level.
- Aid effectiveness for nutrition is enhanced through stronger donor coordination and alignment.

Actions to achieve strengthened nutrition governance requires EU Delegations to engage in policy dialogue and support country processes so as<sup>12</sup>:

- To enter into a dialogue on nutrition policy with governments at the highest level and engage with focal points on nutrition in all relevant ministries in order to incorporate nutrition objectives and results in relevant sectors (e.g. health, water and sanitation, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, education, social protection and contingency plans). At the time of writing 50 partner countries have joined the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and have taken significant high level commitments to ensure a prominent role for nutrition in their development agenda. The EU will support these countries in translating their commitments into actions at ministerial level. This dialogue will be facilitated by the enabling environment created by the SUN<sup>13</sup>. Preference will be given to those countries<sup>14</sup> where nutrition appears prominently in the 2014-2020 National Indicative Programmes (most of these countries are members of the SUN).
- To advocate for nutrition in close coordination with other key partners, notably EU Member States, and develop joint advocacy frameworks;
- To foster, and participate in, donor coordination mechanisms and help secure closer alignment behind government priorities (notably in countries where the EU Delegation is SUN donor convenor);
- To support, and/or provide advice on, the development of effective multiple-sector nutrition strategies, coordination systems (such as through the SUN multi-stakeholder platforms), and costed action plans. Support will be provided through the dedicated Commission Nutrition Advisory Services (NAS). Closer collaboration will also be sought with key organisations with a mandate in nutrition and in country presence such as FAO, WHO and UNICEF.
- To support a sound and responsible involvement of Civil Society and Private Sector entities. This will require appropriate participatory mechanisms and exchanges of information at country level, while avoiding conflicts of interest. The SUN multi-stakeholder platforms may be a useful vehicle in this regard.

### *3.1.2 Maintain political commitment and strengthen governance at international level*

At the international level, the EU should strive to preserve the unprecedented level of political momentum that exists currently, promoting stronger governance of nutrition, greater coherence

<sup>11</sup> Many countries have already established national stunting targets; this should be encouraged in many more, especially where stunting prevalence is high.

<sup>12</sup> A number of delegations such as Niger and Ethiopia are already engaged in leading these processes.

<sup>13</sup> The EU has been instrumental in steering and supporting the Scaling-up Nutrition Movement since its launch in September 2010.

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing 33 EU Delegations have incorporated nutrition as an objective in one of the 2014-2020 NIP focal sectors

and a more effective international response. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the EU response is well coordinated with other international actors, and is closely aligned with national governments' strategic priorities.

More specifically the Commission will:

- Encourage Member States to join SUN donor coordination fora at the international and country levels and promote coordinated interventions among EU Member States.
- Encourage consensus at the international level on the need to focus efforts on women infants and young children, with a special emphasis on the 1000 thousand days window of opportunity.
- Contribute to discussions about successes and challenges in scaling up nutrition so that lessons can inform relevant decision-making processes at country, regional and global level, including within the SUN, the WHA, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the CAADP and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition.
- Encourage coherence between regional and international initiatives and existing country-owned policies and programmes - such as national nutrition costed plans, the CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans and SUN coordination mechanisms.
- Continue its active role in the stewardship of the SUN movement (the Commissioner for Development is at present member of the SUN Lead Group), and its support of the coordination role played by the SUN.
- Continue its support to the strengthening of global accountability in nutrition, including its ongoing contribution to a reporting system to ensure that commitments made internationally (specifically in the framework of the Nutrition for Growth June 2013 Compact commitments) are honoured.
- Support South-South policy.

### **3.2 Strategic priority 2: Scale up actions at country level**

#### *3.2.1 Strengthen human capacity and institutions/systems for effective delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries.*

Human and institutional capacities are too often a bottleneck for the effective national management of under nutrition. The EU will support the development of such capacity by:

*Providing support to the development of national nutrition strategies/policies and costed action plans* as well as national policy frameworks conducive to nutrition. This will include:

- Making available expertise to support the development of national nutrition strategies/policies
- Providing support to partner countries to ensure coherence across different ministerial policies relevant to nutrition, and joined-up results frameworks.
- Strengthening legal frameworks relevant to nutrition (e.g. a national code on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, women's rights, labour laws), drawing on international human rights instruments to do so. Government capacity to implement and monitor adherence to these instruments will also be supported.



*Supporting multi-sector and multi-actor coordination mechanisms* that are designed in such a way as to build on and reinforce existing structures/systems. This will include:

- Facilitating multi-donor contributions to these coordination mechanisms;
- Providing consistent EU presence (directly or alongside Member States) at different technical fora and sector coordination meetings, so that nutrition can be consistently promoted.

*Building managerial, strategic and leadership capacities, especially in government bodies.* This could include:

- Supporting government personnel to develop technical capacity for nutrition in relevant sectors (health, food security/agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture, water/sanitation, social protection, education and research) – from planning and design to evaluation and advocacy (i.e. throughout the project cycle).
- Supporting the development of, and partnering with, regional centres of excellence for groups of countries willing to share training resources and expertise.

The Commission will build on the potential comparative advantage of working at the regional level to build capacity in partnership with regional organisations and initiatives<sup>15</sup>.

### *3.2.2 Scale-up nutrition-specific actions*

Nutrition specific actions include:

- Those interventions accepted as globally effective - as proposed by the Lancet series on nutrition (2008, 2013)<sup>16</sup>. However, new evidence continues to become available so the list of effective interventions is constantly evolving. This poses a challenge in terms of reflecting such developments in policies and programmes.
- Evidence-based interventions in specific contexts will also be supported. They may include, for example, the use of conditional cash transfers in Latin America designed to improve child and maternal nutrition; or a range of actions designed to diversify diets through increasing access to nutritious food at household level.

However, scaling-up nutrition specific actions will not be enough to achieve the WHA targets. Even if the ten proven interventions<sup>9</sup> identified by the Lancet were to be implemented to 90% coverage, this would still only reduce stunting by 21%. Further reductions in stunting will need to be addressed through tackling underlying and basic causes of under nutrition.

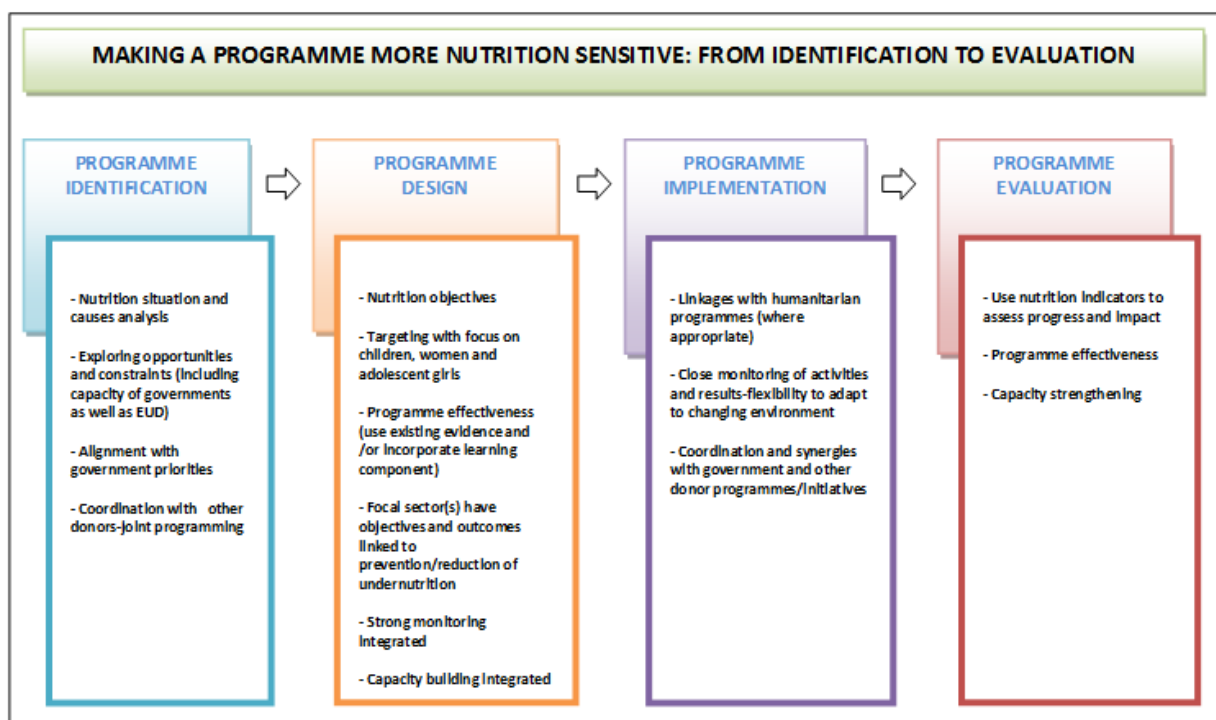
### *3.2.3 Scale-up nutrition-sensitive actions*

Nutrition-sensitive interventions require that nutrition be explicitly incorporated within other sector approaches (such as health, education, agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture, water and sanitation, social protection) and the use of tools such as social transfers, so as to guide implementation towards improved nutrition outcomes. Nutrition-sensitive actions can be effective routes to improve nutrition as long as nutrition objectives are consistently incorporated in programme design, and nutrition criteria and indicators are included and monitored.

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<sup>15</sup> E.g. CAADP, the UEMOA, CARICOM or ASEAN.

<sup>16</sup> <http://download.thelancet.com/flatcontentassets/pdfs/nutrition-eng.pdf>



The EU Reference Document on nutrition<sup>17</sup> provides guidance on how nutrition can be integrated in other sectors, both in terms of programme design but also in terms of the EU's planning processes. It outlines the types of actions that can help to achieve improved nutrition outcomes.

Every effort should be made to ensure that actions target women before pregnancy, foetal under nutrition and under nutrition in infants and young children:

- ✓ Agriculture<sup>18</sup> and food security:

In order to achieve impact, the focus of nutrition-sensitive actions in the agriculture and food security sector should be placed on smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods while improving availability and access to quality, diverse, nutrient-rich food for all, focusing on the most vulnerable. The main outcomes to be achieved are: 1) increasing purchasing power of women; 2) Improving access to nutritious food for women, adolescent girls and children; 3) Improving the household and/or women, adolescent girls and/or children's diet in quality and/or quantity;

At the same time, special attention needs to be paid on avoiding possible negative consequences of agriculture programmes – for example, on increasing women's workload; on environmental impacts; on increasing communicable diseases such as malaria through irrigation programmes; on undermining women's capacity to care for their children.

*For availability:* simply increasing production of the main staple crops has been shown to be ineffective in addressing under nutrition. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture requires attention to: targeting areas or groups worst affected by under nutrition; diversifying production (both for consumption and marketing); improving post-harvest technology; maximising the nutritional benefits of agricultural value chains (from production and conservation, to commercialisation and consumption); maximising the nutritional benefits of livestock (e.g. milk products for consumption and marketing); promoting food conservation and preservation (and thus off-season

<sup>17</sup> Brochure prepared by COM, DE, IE, FR, PL, UK *EU Reference Document No.13: Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance*, September 2011.

<sup>18</sup> References to Agriculture include fisheries, livestock and agroforestry.

availability); supporting subsistence farming production of oil-rich crops, fruits and vegetables, and of fish and animal products; and, when proven effective, bio fortification<sup>19</sup>.

*For access:* improving the three dimensions of access (economic, physical access and behavioural) is key. This could include: supporting the economic empowerment of smallholder farmers, and particularly women, through the marketing of agricultural produce and animal husbandry; increasing options for off-farm employment for labour-based (land-poor) population groups; improved rural infrastructure to allow rural smallholders access to markets; targeted social transfers to groups worst affected by under nutrition; promotion of the use of nutrient rich food and healthy diets through fostering behaviour change; food fortification and bio fortification programmes (especially oil or cereals) to improve micronutrient or protein intake; local production (and use) of complementary foods.

✓ Health:

At present, many of the nutrition-specific interventions effective globally are delivered through the health sector. There are also nutrition-sensitive actions that can be delivered through the health sector. Such actions can involve the strengthening of information systems; legislation, policies and guidance to promote, protect and support the well-being of women and children; supporting the physical and mental health of women, adolescent girls and children; family planning services and reproductive health; building capacity of staff and systems; delivery of quality services with an equity-focused approach (especially at primary health care level); and supply chain support. For maximum effectiveness, nutrition-relevant actions need to be fully integrated into the health system, health strategy and health budget of a country.

✓ Social Protection and social transfers:

There is increasing evidence of the specific contribution that social protection and social transfer programmes can make in reducing under nutrition and building resilience. They help address inequalities and household poverty; they can be used as channels to deliver nutrition-specific actions (for example distributing food supplements to mothers and young children, vouchers for buying nutritious food for mothers); and they can also help to build links with other services if the transfer comes with certain conditions (such as cash transfers linked to attendance at immunisation clinics). Where the EU, together with its partners, consider social transfers as an appropriate response to under nutrition in a particular context, maternal and child benefits will be prioritised. South-South cooperation could be instrumental in disseminating good practices in social protection (e.g. Brazil, Mexico).

✓ Water, Sanitation and hygiene:

By improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), WASH programmes can significantly improve nutrition, especially by addressing the nutritional impact of diarrhoeal disease. There is evidence that the greatest nutritional gains tend to be made through sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes<sup>20</sup>. Gains are greatest when interventions are designed so as to achieve nutrition objectives. In any event, WASH programmes should seek to measure the impact of interventions in terms of nutritional outcomes so that we can better understand the factors that improve the performance of WASH interventions on reducing under nutrition.

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<sup>19</sup> In compliance with European regulations on Genetically Modified Organisms of staple crops.

<sup>20</sup> Esrey, S. A. (1996), Water, waste and well-being — A multi-country study. *Am J Epidemiol*, v 28 ol. 43, No 6, pp. 608–623.

✓ Education:

Education programmes consistently improve food and nutrition security in the long-term primarily through their benefits on future parents – most especially on future mothers. The Commission will seek to improve access to quality education for adolescent girls. The Commission will also seek to improve information on nutrition for vulnerable groups, women in particular. The Commission will support the inclusion/development of nutrition in the objectives of education policies and in core school curricula at both primary and secondary levels. Also, the EU will support the introduction of nutrition courses through universities and other tertiary institutions to build a cohort of personnel who can then work through extension services – such as agriculture and health – to support improved nutrition amongst vulnerable groups.

School feeding programmes are common in developing countries. Although they can diminish hunger, improve learning and increase enrolment/attendance, the evidence shows that they have a limited effect on the stunting of school age children. In any case, they cannot target the priority case of children under the age of two years (the critical window of opportunity). However, they can offer a platform for specific actions, notably regarding adolescent health and nutrition which in turn could improve the status before pregnancy.

### **3.3 Strategic priority 3: Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge-base)**

#### *3.3.1 Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions: Information systems*

Information on nutrition is currently scattered over different platforms and sectors (health, agriculture, education, water and sanitation, etc.). Overviews at country level are often scarce, incomplete or too weak (limited availability and quality of the information and not adequate disaggregation). Information systems should be strengthened to overcome these weaknesses, so that each country can:

- Have a sound understanding of its nutritional situation and the underlying causes and consequences of under nutrition;
- Track progress in reducing stunting;
- Link stunting reductions to in-country nutrition investments and scaled up initiatives;

This is the aim of the work being undertaken by the EU and other donors under the SUN. It seeks to develop Networked National Nutrition Evaluation Platforms (NEPN).

In line with this, the Commission will:

- Continue to support the adoption of ambitious, but feasible stunting reduction targets, primarily in high burden countries;
- Support the definition of common elements for the follow-up of these targets (baseline, calculation methods, etc.)
- Further support the development of multi-sectoral information systems on nutrition at national and regional levels - in collaboration with governments, SUN and all relevant international and regional organisations. This work will reinforce existing initiatives and

help fill any gaps<sup>21</sup>. Of utmost concern is that there is no duplication of effort, nor undermining of government leadership and ownership of national systems.

- Ensure that ongoing EU support to national and regional information systems and to data collection initiatives, on sectors such as health, agriculture, education and water and sanitation, includes nutrition concerns;

For the development of information systems, the Commission will build on its traditional strong support towards regional organisations as key stakeholders in this regard.

### *3.3.2 Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions*

Future policies, strategies and activities on nutrition should be based, as far as possible, on evidence of their effectiveness and impact. The EU should therefore support applied research to identify the utility of nutrition-sensitive actions that are effective in certain contexts only. The Commission will also strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of its own programmes<sup>22</sup>, in order to better determine effective nutrition actions. It will seek to ensure that its programmes consistently target women before pregnancy, foetal under nutrition and under nutrition in infants and young children.

Synergies will be sought between EU funded nutrition for development research and country level initiatives supported through EU funding. Synergies will also be sought between the data collection work being developed at national level (potentially through the NEPN) and research work on nutrition so that this information is used toward the improvement of decision making processes on nutrition.

#### ✓ Research on Delivery Methods

Through various reviews<sup>23</sup>, there is a good understanding of nutrition-specific interventions needed for children to grow and develop to their full potential. We have far fewer examples of models that can take these interventions to scale however. The EU will therefore:

- Support research and documentation of the delivery methods/mechanisms that can best scale up these actions in different contexts.
- Support links between research and the work undertaken at country level, including through extension, capacity development, knowledge management and related activities.

#### ✓ Research on Nutrition-Sensitive Actions

Whereas there is a good understanding of the effectiveness of nutrition-specific interventions there is less evidence about the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive interventions and policies, notably over the long term. This is because, until recently, these interventions have rarely

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<sup>21</sup> Particular reference will be made to the work of the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) initiated by FAO, IFPRI, and WFP supported by the EU and the US (USSAID), which represents a global effort to strengthen information systems for food and nutrition security and promote evidence-based analysis and decision making

<sup>22</sup> See guidance given in the brochure prepared by COM, DE, IE, FR, PL, UK: *EU Reference Document No.13: Addressing Undernutrition in External Assistance*, September 2011, page 49

<sup>23</sup> The Lancet (2008), *The Maternal and Child Undernutrition Series* (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition>), The Lancet (2013), *The Maternal and Child Nutrition Series* (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>), Copenhagen Consensus 2008 and 2012 (<http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/>).

included a stated nutrition objective and hence are not being evaluated according to this criterion. Second, it is difficult to ascertain their impact on under nutrition when they are preventative or when a complex causal pathway is involved. Therefore there is a need both to test technologies with potential nutrition enhancing outcomes, and to develop appropriate indicators and targets based on an understanding of the causal chains linking actions to eventual impacts on stunting. The Commission will:

- Support research on the causal pathways and evolution of under nutrition (climate change, urbanisation, increased inequalities, risk factors as deficiencies, etc.);
- Support research on the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive interventions and policies, including by using new technologies/innovation and social transfers as a tool to reduce under nutrition.
- Support the systematic analysis of the cost-effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive actions.

The Commission will work mostly with specialised international and regional research institutions while keeping flexibility to target implementing partners with comparative advantages. It will support a policy dialogue with these institutions in order to promote a results oriented and demand-driven research. When relevant, South-South collaboration of research institutions will be encouraged. Synergies will be sought with research funded under the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020 (2014-2020).

### *3.3.3 Provide technical expertise to build capacities*

In addition to financial resources, the EU should provide technical expertise and assistance in support of the strategic actions described above. Technical assistance will primarily target government counterparts and partners in order to support the strengthening of human and institutional/system capacity for effective multi-sectoral coordination and delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries.

Advisory services to provide some targeted and high level expertise should also be mobilised to support EU Delegations and Headquarters in carrying out effective policy dialogue and in designing nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific programmes. Platforms will be put in place and reinforced so that staff can exchange experiences and lessons learned, and in order to provide guidance in a timely manner.

## **4. Geographical scope**

The ability of the Commission to achieve its stunting reduction target relies heavily on the work of EU Delegations in supporting countries that have a high rate of under nutrition. A number of countries have been identified with the potential to achieve significant impact on nutrition, based on the following criteria: (1) countries with a high burden of under nutrition and a strong potential to reduce under nutrition; (2) strong political commitment of the government and, ideally, a member of the SUN Movement; and (3) nutrition relevant focal sectors included in the EU Delegation's NIP 2014-2020. Other countries meeting the criteria will progressively join this group. In addition, the EU will also seek to address nutrition in its regional cooperation, where relevant.

## 5. Working in partnership

Progress towards achievement of the EU's stunting target will be most effective when the EU's investments are in support of country-led plans and coordinated with those of other donors and stakeholders, while avoiding duplication of efforts. The Commission will support nutrition activities included in the CAADP NAFSIPs, where they exist, and seek coordination of these activities with other plans related to nutrition. The EU will build on AGIR (Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience) in the Sahel and SHARE (Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience) in East Africa for a long term and sustainable approach to under nutrition reduction in these two regions. The Commission will also take account of other initiatives it supports at the regional and global levels, which focus on nutrition outcomes.

At the international and national levels, the EU should continue to work closely with the SUN Movement. SUN has helped galvanise international efforts to combat under nutrition, and bolstered country-level progress by providing a framework for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral coordination. SUN provides a strategic interface between country-level investments and international-level progress, and includes civil society organisations, private sector entities, donors, UN agencies and international financial institutions.

While ensuring coherence and synergies between services, the Commission will also work closely and in a coordinated manner with EU Member States and other donors. In-country, for example, it may be appropriate for the EU Delegation to facilitate key meetings between the EU Member States and Government and to provide a coordinating role to ensure that resources for nutrition are channelled in a complementary and coherent fashion, applying when possible division of labour and joint programming<sup>24</sup>.

In countries where humanitarian interventions are on-going, the principle of complementarity and coordination between humanitarian and development interventions is key for the sustainability and effectiveness of nutrition interventions. A clear partnership will have to be developed with humanitarian partners through actions such as:

- Common sound risk and vulnerability assessments to generate a common understanding of root causes, affected population, situation and trends;
- Common operational assessments and programming through a more systematic coordination at the Delegation and Headquarter levels. When relevant, joint strategic planning and shared objectives will be sought.

This joined-up approach fits well with the EU's approach to making resilience a central aim of EU external aid.

There is also scope for specific engagement with the Rome-based UN, the CFS and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) organisations, so as to capitalise on the opportunity offered by agriculture and food security programmes and projects for nutrition and to redress the existing predisposition of many donors to only address immediate causes of under nutrition.

The Commission will also include support to civil society in its approach to nutrition in order to enable participation/mobilisation and good governance, as well as to ensure awareness raising and

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<sup>24</sup> E.g. the EU Delegation Ethiopia is already conducting a joint programming exercise for nutrition.

communication on nutrition issues, in particular in their role to represent the voices of the most vulnerable and mobilise nutrition champions.

The Commission will also seek partnerships with the Private Sector and international financing institutions, as appropriate and without due prejudice, to capitalise on their comparative advantages and harness their expertise (e.g. product safety control, fortification, enforcement of certification and communication technologies and awareness raising through social marketing).

## **6. Accountability for Results**

“Accountability for Results” has two broad components: 1) tracking financial investments in nutrition; and 2) measuring results and impact, including progress towards the 7 million target on stunting. For both components, the Commission is working and will continue to work closely with the SUN movement and other stakeholders, and will contribute and benefit from the movement’s accountability framework.

### **6.1 Tracking of financial resources**

A number of SUN Movement Donors have agreed to improve the tracking of their spending both on nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions, using a common approach

Within the nutrition-sensitive category the intensity of the nutrition investments will also be assessed. A methodology for nutrition resource tracking has been agreed among the main donors<sup>25</sup> and will be applied for reporting starting in 2014 and using 2010 nutrition investments as the baseline.

Starting with a first report in 2014 SUN donors will regularly report on their nutrition investments using this common approach. A similar approach should eventually be used for tracking nutrition investments of the Governments of partner countries, CSOs and other partners, notably those which are part of the SUN Movement.

### **6.2 Monitoring/measuring results**

The Commission will operationalize the accountability framework on monitoring and measuring results discussed at the broader level for donors, under the SUN framework. At the same time it will engage in tracking progress in reducing stunting. In order to achieve this objective, it will support SUN countries in strengthening their capacity to monitor progress in the stunting reduction (and towards achieving their national targets, where they exist) and the scaling-up of interventions and promoting the creation of national nutrition evaluation platforms (NEPN). These platforms will form part of a Network, enabling standardisation of data and comparison of results. This network will build, as far as possible, on existing initiatives to monitor nutrition. A regular report informing on progress in stunting and monitoring of the scaling-up of international and national commitments will be produced.

The Commission will monitor its contribution to reducing stunting reduction on a country by country basis, according to national data and targets. This contribution will be set out in the country fiches by indicating the current trend in the country and the national/regional targets toward which it should contribute with a focus on improving the nutrition of mothers and children and the 1000 days window of opportunity. Country fiche information will also inform the Action

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<sup>25</sup> The joint SUN donor (EU, WB, DFID, Ireland, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands) resource tracking methodological approach (fostered by the EU) was agreed at the SUN meeting in Lusaka on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.



Plan's monitoring framework developed for the Implementation Plan "Boosting food and nutrition security through EU action"<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> SWD (2013) 104, 27.03.2013

### **6.3 Communicating results and lessons**

The EU should improve its capacity to communicate its policy objectives to a broader audience and other organisations, to raise awareness concerning the importance of reducing under nutrition globally and to influence the development agenda. For each of the different strategic priorities specific communication actions will be designed and implemented. Communication actions will target different audiences and will be specifically designed for donor and partner countries.

### **Annexes**

Operational Framework and Milestones to 2025

## OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EU NUTRITION ACTION PLAN

Strategic priority 1 Enhance mobilization and political commitment for nutrition														
Specific objectives	Actions	Indicators												
<b>Strengthen political commitment and good governance at country level</b>	Engage in policy dialogue on nutrition issues in food and nutrition insecure priority countries and promote the systematic inclusion of nutrition concerns in relevant sectors	Nutrition is mainstreamed in at least 30 programming documents (NIPs) <sup>27</sup>	1 4	1 5	1 6	1 7	1 8	1 9	2 0	2 1	2 2	2 3	2 4	2 5
	Technical support to governments in setting-up and implementing the appropriate policy framework at national and/or regional level (including costed action plans)	Development and finalisation of country fiches in at least 40 countries Support the development of at least 10 country nutrition strategies												
<b>Maintain political commitment and strengthen governance at International level</b>	Encourage the establishment of nutrition coordination mechanisms at partner country-level	By 2015, EU Delegations are nutrition coordinators in at least 8 countries <sup>28</sup>												
	Continue EU's active role in the SUN movement	By 2014, EU Delegations participate in 20 coordination mechanisms Contribute to the mid-term evaluation of the SUN												
		Participate in all SUN lead group meetings												
		Participate in the definition of the SUN mandate Post 2015												
		2 additional donors have joined the SUN												
		Engage as a SUN donor convenor in at least 2 additional SUN countries												
		Participate in International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2)												

<sup>27</sup> So far 33 have included nutrition as part of the objectives of relevant sectors in at least 33 draft EU Delegation's NIP/MIP

<sup>28</sup> We are already nutrition coordinators in 4 countries

Strategic priority 2											
Scale up actions at country level											
Strengthen human capacity and institutions/systems for effective delivery of services relevant to nutrition in high burden countries	Support the development of national nutrition strategies and the strengthening of legal frameworks	By 2017, at least 15 countries have received support from the EU									
	Develop managerial, strategic and technical capacities in government bodies and EU Delegations	By 2016 senior officials in at least 10 partner countries have been trained by the dedicated Commission Nutrition Advisory Service By 2015, 10 Delegations have been trained on nutrition mainstreaming Or received technical support from the Nutrition Advisory Service. By 2015, e-learning material on nutrition is made available to EU Delegations and partner countries By 2015, nutrition training is part of the pre-posting training for EEAS Staff Field guidance note to integrate nutrition in Agriculture is released By 2015, an EU reference document "Addressing Under nutrition in External Assistance" taking account of new evidence could be released Guidance for 3 nutrition relevant sectors are released (WASH, social transfer, education)									
	Exchange and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from programmes and projects together with government and key partners such as UN organisations, NGOs and businesses	Support to CAADP Agriculture Nutrition Capacity Development Initiative									
	Implement nutrition-specific interventions	By 2020, the EU should have committed at least 400 million EUR to nutrition-specific interventions <sup>29</sup>									
	Implement nutrition-sensitive interventions	By 2020, the EU should have committed at least 3.42 billion EUR to nutrition-sensitive interventions									
	Scale-up nutrition-specific actions										
	Scale-up nutrition-sensitive actions										

<sup>29</sup> This pledge (including the breakdown between Nutrition Specific and Sensitive) was made by Commissioner Piebalgs in the Nutrition for growth G8 event in London in June 2013.

Strategic priority 3 Knowledge for nutrition (strengthening the expertise and the knowledge-base)																	
<b>Strengthening expertise</b>	Build the evidence on effective nutrition actions: Information systems	Nutrition is included in relevant information systems. Results monitoring results and impact assessment are used for decision making.															
	Estimate and agreement of baselines and targets at country level using the AARR tool for national stunting Reduction Trends	By 2016, reduction targets are agreed with government in 20 countries <sup>30</sup>															
<b>Working in partnership</b>	Review of our support to research on nutrition at country level, and at the regional and international level (including CGIAR). Impact on country programmes and potential improvements.	By 2016, a repository of EU research for nutrition projects is available															
	Continuation of the EU advisory services to EU delegations and Headquarters																
<b>Accountability for results</b>	Information is shared on a continuous basis with Member States, with the interservice group on nutrition and the civil society	Organise annually a workshop with Member States and Civil Society organisations at Headquarters															
	Guidance is provided with ECHO on common assessment and programming with good practices and exchange of views	Common risk and vulnerability assessments and when relevant joint strategic planning carried out in 5 countries															
<b>Communicating results and lessons</b>	Annual Report to UNGA – baseline is set in 2010 based on a methodology on resource tracking	Provide annually data on EU investment in nutrition															
	Operationalise monitoring and measure of results	Establish the Networked National Nutrition Evaluation Platforms in 10 countries															
		Support nutrition result framework in 5 countries															
		Inputs for the progress reports to the SUN															
		Specific communication actions are established															

<sup>30</sup> This dialogue is ongoing with a number of countries