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# AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT HIGH-LEVEL NUTRITION SIDE EVENT

Achieving Nutrition Goals in Africa Post-Malabo:  
Public and Private Sector Sustainable Nutrition Financing

## POST-EVENT COMMUNIQUÉ



## BACKGROUND

Many African countries have made progress towards reducing undernutrition, notably under-5 stunting, and adolescent and adult underweight. However, progress to address malnutrition across the region remains uneven. Only six countries<sup>1</sup> are on course to meet the global target for stunting among children under 5, and obesity is on the rise across the continent as countries are faced with the double burden of malnutrition.

### **Accelerated progress for nutrition financing is required across all sectors including the private sector to achieve the global nutrition goals and SDGs.**

The African Union Summit High-Level Nutrition Side Event on Achieving Nutrition Goals in Africa Post-Malabo took place on February 16th, 2024 with the following objectives:

- Accelerate the Malabo achievement and review nutrition indicators and sustainable financing strategies for integration into the AU Post-Malabo Agenda.
- Introduce the Private Sector Framework for nutrition and accelerate home-grown school feeding.
- Share experiences and lessons on sustainable nutrition financing across African countries.
- Share tools and resources being developed to support countries in achieving nutrition financing goals and initiatives that can accelerate progress.



Attendees and Moderator Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong at the African Union Summit High-Level Nutrition Side Event.



*We stand at a pivotable juncture, approaching the conclusion of the Malabo declaration in 2025. This comes at a time when political will and commitment to nutrition are at their highest, and when there is increased awareness that malnutrition is not only an African program but a global challenge. Despite being endowed with vast agricultural potential, Africa remains beset with formidable nutrition obstacles in ensuring food security and adequate nutrition for its population. In 2022, it was reported that 2.4 billion people comprising men, women and youth living around rural areas did not have access to safe and nutritious foods all year long.*

**H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas**  
CEO AUDA-NEPAD

<sup>1</sup> Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Sao Tome & Principe, Eswatini, Zimbabwe

## KEY MESSAGES

African leaders have expressed a clear commitment in accelerating nutrition improvement. The question becomes, how do we move the financing agenda forward to ensure sustainable nutrition financing and programming across sectors? Below are four key messages and a recommended way forward that emerged from the high-level nutrition side event.

### **KEY MESSAGE 1: Institutionalize guidelines for nutrition financing and resource tracking within annual budgeting.**

Through the Malabo Declaration and CAADP Framework, African governments agreed to allocate at least 10% of the national budget to agriculture and rural development. These commitments have resulted in important progress towards improved food security. Now, for the Post-Malabo agenda, it will be critical to ensure nutrition is elevated within the framework to reinforce the need for African governments to institutionalize guidelines for sustainable nutrition financing, including setting targets for nutrition financing across sectors integral to the food system and nutrition. Guidance on how to elevate nutrition as a development objective across investments should also appear in government budget processes, led by Ministries of Finance.

For example, the [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Nutrition Financing Tracking Tool](#) helps empower Member states to actively engage in their national public finance processes, provide a comprehensive baseline evaluation of the public funding allocated to nutrition programs, and establish a tool for tracking progress in the reporting of public financing for nutrition initiatives.



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*The lessons learned from Malabo should serve as a blueprint for galvanizing African governments to prioritize nutrition and allocate an appropriate percentage of their national budgets toward addressing this critical issue.*

**H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas**  
CEO AUDA-NEPAD

Experiences shared from Nigeria, Malawi, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire each point to the importance of institutionalizing nutrition financing and resource tracking within annual planning and budgeting processes. Dr. Patricia N'Goran, Adviser to the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and SUN Focal Point emphasized the importance of multisectoral plans involving all sectors and the challenges that arise when priority plans are not institutionalized. Mrs. Chito N. Nelson, Deputy Director, Head of Food and Nutrition Division, Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Nigeria shared the benefits of an institutionalized budget tagging system for nutrition in ensuring budgets are properly tracked.

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*The intersection between governments, private sectors, NGOs, CSOs, and other partners and specifically community, will be very important to advance the targets that have been set in different commitments, including the SDGs. We need to look at mobilizing joint financial resources so that we can have a more inclusive and sustainable nutrition outcome.*

**Dr. Patricia N'Goran**  
Adviser to the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and SUN Focal Point

## KEY MESSAGE 2: Intensify country-led resource mobilization to ensure the sustainability of funding and reduce the risk of fragmentation across partners.

African countries are currently investing significant amounts of domestic resources into platforms, infrastructure, and systems critical to delivering essential nutrition actions. Resource mobilization efforts and external financing should help support these country-led efforts. Channeling funding through government-managed systems will not only strengthen these systems but also help ensure limited fragmentation of funding across partners.

For example, the Government of Ethiopia's [Seqota Declaration Resource Mobilization Plan for the Expansion and Scale-Up Phases](#) launched on February 13th, 2024, outlines time-bound financing targets from both domestic and external sources. During the high-level AU Side Event, four Seqota Declaration hero awards were presented to individuals who made significant contributions to the Seqota Declaration goal of reducing stunting in children under two by 2030.



From left to right: Dr. Sisay Sinamo Boltena, Dr. Kesete Admasu, Frealem Shibabaw, H.E. Ato Demeke Mekonnen, Dr. Lia Tadesse, H.E. Dr. Dereje Duguma and Mrs. Hiwot Darsene



*Investment in nutrition still lags far behind what is needed. For instance, in the case of Ethiopia, the total investment gap for nutrition and food strategy stands at 50%. Currently, the government is making annual budgetary allocations for the Seqota Declaration from its treasury budget. The federal government allocation is matched by the regional governments through the costed woreda-based planning process. Development partners co-financing the government treasury budget allocation and mobilizing resources from the private sector needs to be considered as a new way of working together for sustainable financing for nutrition and maximize the impact of the nutrition investment in Ethiopia.*

**H.E. Dr. Dereje Duguma**  
State Minister of Health, Ethiopia

### **KEY MESSAGE 3: Strengthen existing country investments to maximize their impact on nutrition outcomes and ensure more strategic use of funding.**

Investments across sectors could be optimized for nutrition by including an explicit nutrition objective and embedding nutrition within results frameworks. For example, school feeding programs were discussed as a powerful platform to deliver high-impact nutrition interventions. As reported by WFP African Union Principal Office Director, United Nations Representative AU, and UN ECA, Dr. Hameed Nuru, **80% of school feeding programs are currently funded domestically by Member States.**

While more research needs to be done to assess how these programs can elevate nutrition, this is an important opportunity for external partners to align funding with country priorities to support government ownership, build sustainability, and maximize impact. School feeding programs can also serve as a broader catalyst for economic growth and poverty reduction by harnessing country agricultural development, as seen with the [Private Sector Guidelines for Home-Grown School Feeding Programs](#), presented by Ms. Kefilwe Roba Moalosi, Senior Nutrition and Food Safety Programme Officer, AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with FAO.

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*As we look to the future beyond the expiration of the current Malabo declaration targets, it is important that we not only recommit to investment in agriculture and nutrition, but in a transformation agenda that maximizes domestic spending as well as outlines clear investment cases for donors and the private sector to build a stronger, healthier, African continent together.*

**ASG Ms. Afshan Khan**

UN Assistant Secretary-General Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Coordinator



*Attendees and Technical Session Panelists at the African Union Summit High-Level Nutrition Side Event.*

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*It's the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that we need to address the issue of nutrition - not only looking at one sector like agriculture or health, but also looking at other aspects such as the water, sanitation and hygiene, and social protection program.*

**Ms. Providence Mavubi**

Director of Agriculture and Industry, COMESA

## **KEY MESSAGE 4: Mainstream nutrition within national planning and budgeting processes as a priority at all levels of government - national and subnational.**

Resources are not allocated to unplanned interventions. Therefore, the planning process was identified by country nutrition representatives as an important step in ensuring the budget is allocated and financing is available. This is relevant at all levels – national and sub-national all the way down to local levels of government. The Costed Woreda Based Planning in Ethiopia is an exemplar planning tool that is used by woredas (districts) at sub-national level to drive multi-sectoral planning where interventions are costed and budgetary allocation from the community, development, regional, and federal government are indicated for each of the interventions and financing gaps are identified for resource mobilization on annual basis. Experiences shared from Nigeria, Malawi, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire expressed the importance of financing frameworks developed at the sub-national level to aid in the annual planning and budgeting process.

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*We have to look at establishing state-level sustainable nutrition financing frameworks. A process has started where states in Nigeria look inwards to see other sources of funding other than traditional sources.*

**Mrs. Chito N. Nelson**

Deputy Director, Head of Food and Nutrition Division, Dept. of Social Development  
Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Nigeria

Mr. Blessings Muwalo, Deputy Director of Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Department of Nutrition, Malawi, shared the experience of tracking nutrition resources at the district level and how this supports a national-level framework for nutrition across sectors. Mrs. Mary Mpereh, Technical Advisor, Food Systems and Nutrition Security, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) Ghana shared how after capacity strengthening efforts were undertaken to prioritize planning and budgeting for nutrition at the district level and district financing frameworks were put in place, nutrition budget allocations increased significantly.

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*Mobilizing adequate resources for nutrition is a priority...routinely tracking resources is essential to inform policy.*

**Mubita Luwabelwa**  
SADC Director of Policy, Planning and  
Resource Mobilisation

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*To achieve our goals, we must consider mainstreaming of nutrition-related activities within governmental annual planning and budgeting.*

**Dr. Mohamed Kadah**  
COMESA Assistant Secretary-General

## **WAY FORWARD**

Nutrition champions across Africa are calling for a Nutrition Financing Transformation Agenda for Africa that includes country-driven actions that address challenges to sustainable nutrition financing, and a clear, measurable pathway to:

- 01** Strengthen Governance & Accountability for Nutrition
- 02** Enhance Country-led Resource Mobilization for Nutrition
- 03** Capitalize Sustainability of Funding for Nutrition and Unlock Public-Private Sector Funding
- 04** Strengthen Annual Planning and Budget Management Processes to Elevate Nutrition

If you would like to engage in the development of the Nutrition Financing Transformation Agenda for Africa, please sign up for more information through the SUN Financing Capacity Development Platform. [Please click here](#) to sign up for more information.

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