

AFRICAN UNION

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**NUTRITION BREAKFAST MEETING AT THE 23rd ORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE
AFRICAN UNION (AU) HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT**

MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA,

26TH JUNE 2014

REPORT

1. Introduction

The African Union (AU) Nutrition Champion, His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho, hosted a breakfast meeting on 26th June 2014, on the margins of the 23rd Ordinary Session of AU Heads of State and Government, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. This was followed by a press conference on 27th June, during which the King addressed the media.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the side event was to advocate to and sensitize Africa's policy makers at the highest level, to obtain their commitment to invest more in nutrition. Others included to:

- (a) Elaborate on priority areas where global, coherent and coordinated action is needed to eliminate stunting in the continent;
- (b) Obtain commitment of national, regional and global stakeholders in support of Africa's goal to reduce child stunting; and
- (c). Provide a platform to evidence and communicate the commitment of Africa to prioritize a coordinated approach to nutrition, in particular child nutrition.

3. Participants

In attendance were several Heads of State, Ministers, Parliamentarians and other government officials from various African Union (AU) Member States, including The Republic of Botswana, the Republic of Cameroun, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Guinea, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Liberia, the Republic of Mali, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Namibia, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the Republic of Seychelles, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Togolese Republic, the Tunisian Republic, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Zambia and the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Other participants included Save the Children International, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nation's Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Secretariat of the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, individual experts and media.

4. Opening Remarks

The breakfast meeting on nutrition was opened by **His Excellency Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko**, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the AU Commission, who extended a warm welcome to all participants and drew their attention to the importance of improved nutrition for socio-economic development of Africa. In his words, Dr. Kaloko informed

the meeting that “Africa’s development agenda 2063, which is people centered and aimed at positioning the continent in the global arena cannot afford to rest on malnourished children who will be ill prepared to take up their position in the future”.

5. Introducing the subject for the meeting

The Chair person of the African Union Commission, **Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma** introduced the subject for discussion at the breakfast meeting. In her remarks, Dr. Zuma emphasized that improved nutrition is a critical element for health and the development of Africa. She noted that if Leaders in African are talking about investing in our most precious resources over the next 50 years, then the most precious resource to target for such investment are people on the continent, particularly children. She recounted the importance of improved nutrition on child growth and development, and the long term positive benefits this has on health and educational achievements. Finally, Dr. Zuma implored African Leaders, policy makers and program people to employ a multisectoral approach to solving the nutrition problem, by addressing all the socio-economic determinants of malnutrition.

6. Remarks from Civil Society Organizations

Speaking on behalf of Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Mr. Franco Wandabwa, the Africa Advocacy Director for Save the Children International stressed the commitment of CSO and other development partners to work with the AUC and national governments to address the problem of malnutrition on the continent.

7. Remarks from the United Nations

Dr. David Nabarro, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition, provided remarks on behalf of the United Nation’s Organizations. His speech centered on three main points: (1) paying attention to nutrition (by addressing both under- and over-nutrition) is one of the most significant activities African Leaders can possibly be doing; (2) increasing number of African countries are joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, by which the leaders of these countries pledge to take grater action to improve nutrition; and (3) having nutrition sensitivity into all government policies is important. Dr. Nabarro stressed that, looking ahead into the future, various policies on the continent, including those on agriculture, gender water and sanitation and social protection should have a nutrition focus onto them.

8. Speech by the African Nutrition Champion, His Majesty, King Letsie III of Lesotho

After expressing gratitude, His Majesty King Letsie III confirmed his humble acceptance of the assignment as African Nutrition Champion. He assured all those present that he will do everything possible to ensure issues related to nutrition security remain firmly on Africa’s development agenda. He further stressed the enormity of malnutrition and food

insecurity on the continent, the devastation this is having on the continent's socio-economic development and called on all governments and other stakeholders to undertake the necessary actions to address these. The King commended ongoing efforts being done to improve nutrition on the continent, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the study on Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA), the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger (REACH) initiative. However, He recommended the need for policy makers and program implementers to ensure strong linkages among initiatives targeted at addressing malnutrition and embark on scaling up proven interventions. In his concluding remarks, His Majesty, King Letsie III called for a paradigm shift from viewing malnutrition and hunger as solely a health problem to envisioning these as a multisectoral problems, the solution of which requires collaboration and linkages among the work of different sectors. He further suggested the need for a change in mindset of equating food security with nutrition security, and called for the AU Assembly to make a separate declaration on nutrition security for Africans. Finally, the King called for increased government investment in nutrition and the need to do things differently in the post 2015 development era.

9. Observations and questions

Comments were made by dignitaries from various countries including, Cameroun, Lesotho, Mali, Nigeria, Saharawi, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda. Their comments are summarized as part of the recommendations below.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Moving forward, the following were recommended:

- Discussion on nutrition should be handled as a central theme of the main AU summit
- Improving nutrition is critical for Africa's development. Heads of state, government and heads of institutions should do everything to implement robust and comprehensive interventions to address the malnutrition problem in Africa.
- The causes of malnutrition are numerous and therefore multisectoral approach should be used to tackle this problem.
- Interventions targeted at improving nutrition should include, increased production and access to nutritious foods, large scale food fortification, enhanced use of technology, improved education (both formal and informal), particularly of women and social protection for vulnerable families
- Measures should be put in place to addressing the continuous conflicts and to remove economic and other sanctions placed on some African countries, to help address the nutrition problem.
- African Leaders should start considering what they can do differently so that at the next AU summit, participants will be talking about substantive progress made between now and then with regards to reducing the rates malnutrition on the continent.

Programme

26TH JUNE 2014

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08:00-08:05	Opening remarks , by H.E. Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC
08:05-08:15	Introducing the subject of the meeting , by H.E Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AUC
08:15-08:30	Remarks by: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Civil Society Organization, by Mr. Franco Wandabwa, Representative from Save the Children International2. The United Nations Organizations, by Dr. David Nabarro, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition
08:30 – 8:45	Keynote Address , by His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho
08:45 – 8:55	Discussions
08:55 – 9:00	Wrap-up and Closure