



Press release

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## **High-level meeting in Abidjan calls for step change in efforts to tackle global nutrition crisis**

- The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Global Gathering in Abidjan brings together high-profile global leaders, 60 countries and 700 participants to discuss how to tackle malnutrition
- Global Nutrition Report 2017 finds urgent, integrated response needed for world to meet any of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals
- Côte d'Ivoire is honored to host the SUN Movement Gathering, which gives us the opportunity to share our experience with the 60 member countries of the SUN Movement in order to accelerate our recent progress in the fight against malnutrition.

**Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire** – Almost every country in the world now faces a serious nutrition-related challenge, whether stemming from undernutrition, obesity, or non-communicable diseases, leaders will hear at the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Global Gathering in central Abidjan today, where the Global Nutrition Report 2017 will be launched.

For the first time, the SUN Movement is hosting their Global Gathering in Africa. Abidjan will welcome more than 900 participants from 60 countries, spanning government, academia, civil society, the United Nations and the business community over the next three days. The meeting will review progress in tackling malnutrition and share innovations and best practice to drive progress.

Delegates will hear about a range of nutrition challenges and their economic impact. Evidence is clear that African economies lose between 1.9 and 16.5% of GDP annually to undernutrition, due to increased mortality, absenteeism, and chronic illnesses and associated costs, and lost productivity.

“The problem of malnutrition, be it undernutrition or obesity, is an alarming public health problem and real global concern. Malnutrition is at the heart of the problem of fighting extreme poverty, and an important dimension of social and human development,” said the **Honorable Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice-President of Côte d'Ivoire**. “I salute the international community for making nutrition a global priority and helping every citizen to live with dignity and reach their full potential”.

Children across Africa remain deeply impacted by malnutrition.

- At least 10 million children in Africa are now classified as overweight
- 59 million children in Africa are stunted, i.e. children are too short for their age due to lack of nutrients and suffering irreversible damage to brain capacity. Africa is the only region where absolute numbers are rising, due to population growth.
- 14 million children in Africa are defined as wasted, meaning they do not weigh enough for their height.

**Gerda Verburg**, the Coordinator of the SUN Movement said, “While progress has been made on undernutrition, we need to do more. Côte d'Ivoire is one member country of the SUN Movement which has stepped up and is investing in ending malnutrition. By hosting this important forum, they are sending a clear message – good nutrition is integral to achieving *all* the Sustainable Development Goals



(SDGs), and every country must make it a priority to ensure their people, nations and this planet thrives.”

Whilst historically undernutrition and obesity have been seen as distinct issues, there is growing evidence that undernutrition in earlier life increases the risk of obesity and cardiovascular disease in later life.

The Global Nutrition Report 2017 calls for nutrition to be placed at the heart of efforts to end poverty, fight disease, raise educational standards, reduce inequality and tackle climate change.

“The world can’t afford *not* to act on nutrition or we risk putting the brakes on human development as a whole,” said **Jessica Fanzo**, Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report’s Independent Expert Group. “We will not achieve any of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline unless there is a critical step change in our response to malnutrition in all its forms.

The report found there is a critical need for better data on nutrition - many countries do not have enough data to track the nutrition targets they signed up to and to identify who we are leaving behind.

“There are 10 million fewer children who are stunted today than there were when the SUN movement started seven years ago, but millions of children are still being left behind,” said UNICEF Executive Director **Anthony Lake**, who serves as Chair of the SUN Movement Lead Group. “To end malnutrition in all its forms, we need to expand our work – including by deepening our focus on children trapped in humanitarian emergencies and addressing the growing obesity epidemic that disproportionately affects the most disadvantaged children in every society – and integrate our efforts with other development sectors, breaking down the silos that limit our progress.”

**Ends**

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## Notes to Editors

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French contact to be added.

## About Scaling up Nutrition

Since 2010, the SUN Movement has inspired a new way of working collaboratively to end malnutrition, in all its forms. With the governments of SUN Countries in the lead, it unites people—from civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses and researchers—in a collective effort to improve nutrition. For more visit: [www.scalingupnutrition.org](http://www.scalingupnutrition.org)

## About the Global Nutrition Report

The Global Nutrition Report is an independently produced annual stock-take of the state of the world’s nutrition. The report tracks global nutrition targets on maternal, infant and young child nutrition and on diet related Non-Communicable Diseases adopted by member states of the World Health Organization as well as governments’ delivery against their commitments. It aims to make it easier for governments and other stakeholders to make - and deliver on - high impact commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms. The report can be viewed at: [www.globalnutritionreport.org](http://www.globalnutritionreport.org)