

Working Together for The Future of Ethiopia:

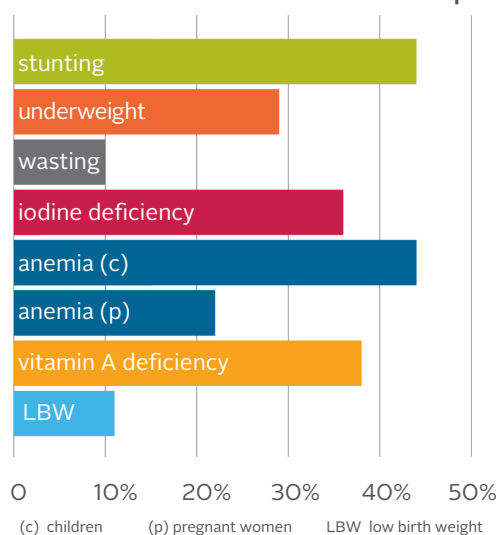
A Call to Action on Nutrition For the Media

July 2014

Today in Ethiopia, more than 40% of children are malnourished. Despite continued investment by the Government of Ethiopia and donors, and improvements in the nutrition situation over the last decade, malnutrition rates remain among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Malnutrition takes many forms**, including stunting (short for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age), iron deficiency anemia, vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency, and low birth weight (< 2.5 kg).
- **Twenty-two percent of pregnant women suffer from anemia**, increasing their risk of dying in pregnancy or childbirth and of having a low birth weight infant with an increased risk of dying.³
- **Thirty-six percent of women are iodine deficiency**, leading to impaired cognitive ability in their children.³

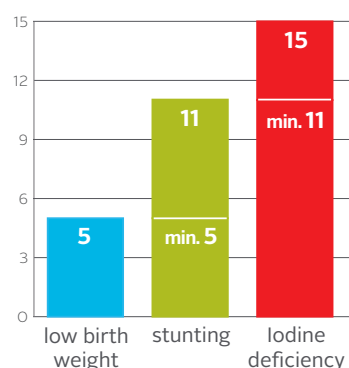
Prevalence of Malnutrition in Ethiopia^{1,2}



Why does this matter?

- **Malnutrition is the underlying cause of as many as 45% of child deaths** in Ethiopia.^{3,4,5}
- **Malnourished children are more likely to have repeated illnesses and infections** (such as diarrhea and respiratory infections), which can result in a significant financial burden, especially for poor families.^{4,5}
- **Malnourished children have an increased risk of chronic diseases in adulthood** (such as diabetes and heart disease).⁴
- **Malnutrition in childhood impairs physical growth and cognitive development, resulting in lost IQ points.**^{5,6}
 - In young childhood, a malnourished child learns to sit, stand, and walk later than their well-nourished peers.
 - Malnourished children enroll in school later, have more days out of school due to illness, perform worse in school, and complete fewer years of schooling.
 - Because of this, malnourished children become adults who earn less compared to their well-nourished and better-educated peers.

IQ Points Lost to Malnutrition⁶



- PROFILES estimates (2012) show that, by 2025, with no additional investment or effort to prevent and treat malnutrition at the community level, the number of infant and child deaths would be more than 800,000.³
- **Stunting alone will cost Ethiopia US\$25 billion in economic productivity losses** by 2025.³

But malnutrition is *preventable and treatable*.
The children of Ethiopia can be free of all forms of malnutrition *if we act now*.

- **By investing in proven, effective, and quality nutrition services implemented at scale by 2025, hundreds of thousands of lives would be saved and improved.** The economic productivity gains of such investment would also exceed US\$5 billion by 2025.³
- **Sustained intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination between the Federal Ministry of Health, other ministries, development partners, United Nations bodies, and international nongovernmental organizations is a precondition for expanding and sustaining quality nutrition service delivery** at the community level across the country.
- **Enacting and enforcing legislation that reinforces the National Nutrition Program is critical** to providing an enabling environment for nutrition, including fortification of foods (such as flour with iron, oil with vitamin A, and salt with iodine); restricting advertising of breast milk substitutes in the mass media; and providing a supportive environment for working mothers to breastfeed, including expanding maternity leave to 6 months.
- For a country like Ethiopia, nutrition is a smart investment; for every US\$1 spent on nutrition, there is a US\$30 return in health and economic benefits.⁷

How can you, as members of the media, help?

You decide what is news and what should be reported on. Reporting on the nutrition situation in Ethiopia is important and you can play a key role.

- Nutrition is an issue of personal interest to readers and viewers, and, as such, reporting on nutrition can expand readership and viewership to reach new audiences.
- The media can raise public awareness of the importance of nutrition in Ethiopia. Every family looks to their children as their future, and every parent wants her child to have the best start in life. Report on nutrition services and products that are available, why families should access them, and how.
- The media plays an important role as a voice for the public, and, in this role, the media can hold government and nongovernment institutions accountable for improving the nutrition situation in Ethiopia, promoting good governance for nutrition.
- Make nutrition a priority for reporting by including nutrition in your editorial policy, and give journalists opportunities to improve their capacity to report on nutrition issues.



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