



Nutrition, the cornerstone of global health and equity

A call to action to G7 members and partners

Under prioritization of nutrition is fueling a global health crisis, including preventable child deaths, maternal mortality and slowing progress on the SDGs which are essential for G7's security and economic interests.

Nutrition is foundational to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underpinning progress across health, education, gender equality and economic growth. With 12 of the 17 goals highly relevant to nutrition,¹ meeting global commitments to the SDGs requires that the prevention and treatment of malnutrition to be treated as a non-negotiable. Yet despite its central role, nutrition remains under-prioritized in political attention, policy and financing.

Malnutrition in all its forms — undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, and diet related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) — is both a cause² and a consequence of multiple interconnected factors. While it is immediately determined by the diet and care a person receives, nutrition outcomes are also critically impacted by food, health, education systems; the socio-cultural environment, including gender norms, water, sanitation and hygiene; climate change; economic and political crises; and safety and security.

Multiple, repeated and severe global crises have led to worsening health and survival outcomes across the globe, particularly for women and children. The world is seeing a reversal in child survival, with increasing number of deaths among children. Child stunting is increasing for the first time in over two decades, undermining years of progress and causing irreversible damage to the physical and mental health of the next generation.³ In 2024, wasting, the most severe and deadly form of malnutrition, threatened the lives of 42.8 million children under five globally.⁴ Every year, millions of children continue to die from preventable causes while cost-effective, high-impact, evidence-based interventions remain underfunded and out of reach.

Investments in nutrition and development serve the G7 countries' national security and stability, boosts economic opportunities, and addresses collective global challenges.

¹ [Linking nutrition and the SDGs](#)

² 88% of countries (of the 141 countries analyzed) experience more than one form of malnutrition" <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018/burden-malnutrition/>

³ [UNICEF-WHO- World Bank: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates \(JME\)- Levels and Trends - 2025 Edition](#)

⁴ UNICEF / WHO / World Bank Group Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates. Key findings of the 2025 edition

According to a 2025 study by Standing Together for Nutrition, global development aid for nutrition programs has fallen by 44% compared to 2022⁵

This is both a moral and economic failure. At a time when governments are facing difficult fiscal choices, renewed action on nutrition and child survival requires stronger political leadership, smarter financing, and stronger support for country-led action. The world is at a critical juncture and the G7 provides a timely opportunity to help reverse current trends and **drive collective focused action to improve nutrition outcomes and accelerate progress towards the goal of zero preventable child deaths.**

Nutrition is foundational to health, well-being, learning, equity, human capital and resilient societies

Well-nourished populations are healthier, more productive, more resilient in the face of shocks and better equipped to contribute to their nation's growth. Nutrition is not just a health or food issue; it is a smart investment that powers education and learning, productivity, and long-term economic growth, with strong returns on investment. ⁶

According to the World Bank Investment Framework for Nutrition, every dollar invested in combating malnutrition yields a USD \$23 return

Recommendations

As G7 leaders meet amid escalating warnings that the war in Iran could drive an additional 45 million people into acute food insecurity — with devastating implications for nutrition and health — the already unprecedented global malnutrition crisis is set to worsen. Urgent action is needed to place nutrition at the centre of global health and development efforts, supported by sustainable financing and coordinated, resilient systems for integrated service delivery. Strengthening country-led systems must be the guiding priority of all G7 actions.

Specifically, G7 members and partners should:

Strengthen and optimize financing for nutrition

- **Leverage and improve the efficiency of existing funding for nutrition:** Invest in strengthening financing systems to better coordinate and track nutrition investments. Integrate nutrition across relevant sector plans and budgets to maximize financing for nutrition. Support implementation and accountability of all N4G commitments and the right to food and nutrition. Support standardized budget tracking across sectors and invest in institutionalized data and monitoring systems.

⁵ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-00898-3>

⁶ [Nutrition for Growth \(N4G\) Paris Declaration 2025](#)

- **Embed nutrition across G7 commitments:** G7 commitments must include clear outcomes on nutrition and child survival delivered across multiple sectors, backed by implementation and financing mechanisms, and aligned with country plans, policies, and priorities.
- **Mobilize new financing for essential child survival and nutrition interventions:**
 - Deploy bilateral and multilateral financing for high-impact, proven interventions that directly reduce preventable child deaths, including integrated nutrition services, immunization, and the prevention and treatment of malnutrition, particularly in the most fragile and conflict affected contexts where fiscal pressures and aid disruptions threaten continuity of care.
 - Support global initiatives and ensure successful replenishment of essential mechanisms (like the GFF) and development banks. Support global coordinated initiatives — such as the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty for policy strengthening at country level, the Global Compact on Nutrition Integration, and the Child Nutrition Fund — with unearmarked funding to address malnutrition.

Ensure universal access to essential nutrition actions (ENA)

- **Strengthen health systems to deliver integrated nutrition services through primary healthcare (PHC) and universal health coverage (UHC) platforms:** Address health system bottlenecks such as shortages in workforce capacity, supply chain weaknesses for nutrition commodities, financing gaps and fragmented information systems to enable improved, equitable and integrated delivery of comprehensive ENA through PHC and UHC platforms.
- **Invest in sustainable and nutrition-sensitive systems:** Increase investment in resilient health, food and social protection systems to support universal access to ENA, particularly during the first 1,000 days. This includes integrating nutrition into sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and strengthening preventive approaches alongside treatment of malnutrition.
- **Integrate nutrition into pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR):** Prioritize continuity of essential child survival and nutrition services in settings affected by conflict, displacement and climate-related shocks through resilience building and shock-responsive programming; support for frontline workers; strengthened community health and nutrition systems; and locally-led delivery approaches that reach women, newborns and young children at greatest risk, including pre-emptively ahead of shocks.

Adopt a one health approach to strengthen nutrition:

Strengthen integration of nutrition across relevant multilateral health, food systems and development initiatives.

- **Invest in climate-resilient and nutrition-sensitive health systems:** Prioritize nutrition as a core component of climate adaptation through the inclusion of nutrition-related actions

in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Leverage climate change and health vulnerability assessments to guide adaptive nutrition actions. The Green Climate Fund is a key mechanism to integrate nutrition into climate financing and should be fully funded.

- **Strengthen water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH):** Create mechanisms for stronger integration of WASH and nutrition in national policies and strategies. Promote resource bundling for joint WASH-nutrition program implementation. Document and disseminate experiences and successes of convergence models to support adoption and scale-up.
- **Integrate nutrition and neglected tropical disease (NTD) efforts through coordinated service delivery:** Strengthen integrated approaches that address the interlinkages between NTDs and malnutrition through coordinated delivery of mass drug administration, micronutrient supplementation and other community-based health and nutrition services, particularly for populations living in vulnerable situations and children.
- **Promote sustainable and nutrition-sensitive food systems:** Build nutrition-sensitive food systems that deliver affordable, safe and nutritious diets. Support legislative, fiscal, and regulatory policies and actions that promote healthier diets, safe fortified foods, and improved food labelling. Link research and innovation on food systems to scalable nutrition outcomes.

Strengthen country-led systems for greater accountability

- **Champion country-led leadership and action for child survival:** Support national targets, implementation action plans, regular progress reviews, robust multisector data and monitoring systems for nutrition, and sustained political attention to child survival and nutrition. Identify political champions in countries for greater accountability.
- **Back sustainable and domestically anchored financing pathways:** Support countries to expand fiscal space (e.g. through taxation reforms, debt swaps), improve budget prioritization and tracking, strengthen multisector coordination, and develop investment-ready plans and pooled financing approaches for essential nutrition and child survival services.
- **Promote national coordinated multisectoral action for nutrition:** Support the financing of sustainable national multi-stakeholder platforms to coordinate action across health, food systems, social protection and other allied sectors.

Annex: Generations at risk: What the data tells us

The scale of the global crisis is stark:

- **Current, preventable mortality:** Nearly five million children die each year before their fifth birthday, half are linked to malnutrition⁷, while maternal undernutrition, including anaemia, contributes to more than 115,000 maternal deaths globally each year.⁸
- **Malnutrition has long-term health and development consequences:** All forms of malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, and diet-related NCDs, have long-term consequences across the life cycle.
 - Women and girls are more vulnerable to malnutrition due to social norms and biological differences. Poor nutrition increases risks during pregnancy and childbirth, with strong intergenerational consequences on children’s development. Early-life malnutrition increases the risk of mortality and impaired growth and brain development.
 - Poor nutrition is a major risk factor driving NCDs, which are responsible for an estimated 41 million deaths annually.⁹
- **Estimated additional mortality as a result of aid cuts:** Based on current modelling estimates, a 20% reduction in health funding will result in up to 12 million additional child deaths by 2045.¹⁰
- **Malnutrition perpetuates poverty and economic inequality:** Poor nutrition undermines educational attainment, productivity and lifetime earning potential, while also weakening global economies and human capital development.
 - According to the World Bank, children who are stunted are up to 33% less likely to escape poverty as adults and earn significantly less over their lifetimes¹¹.

From a socio-economic lens, undernutrition costs the global economy USD \$761 billion (or \$2 billion per day) which is equivalent to 1% of global economy.¹²

⁷ [World Health Organization: Child mortality \(under 5 years\); Fact sheets - Malnutrition](#)

⁸ Balarajan Y, Ramakrishnan U, Özaltin E, et al. Anaemia in low-income and middle-income countries. *Lancet*. 2011;378(9809):2123–2135. [DOI] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]

⁹ [World Health Organization: Preventing noncommunicable diseases](#)

¹⁰ [Gates Global Goalkeepers Report 2025](#)

¹¹ [World Bank Group: The Economic Costs of Stunting and How to Reduce Them](#)

¹² [The cost of inaction: a global tool to inform nutrition policy and investment decisions on global nutrition targets](#) Sakshi Jain, Sameen Ahsan, Zachary Robb, Brett Crowley, Dylan Walters