

The UK's moment to lead:

Under-nutrition and the G8 Hunger Summit

TAKE ACTION:

The next few weeks will be critical for the fight to tackle under-nutrition. 925 million people – nearly a billion - in developing countries are undernourished. Under-nutrition is the single largest killer of children globally; is responsible for more than one third of all child deaths and has a significant effect on a child's ability to learn at school. The UK, and the world, has a crucial opportunity to turn things around. On 8th June, the UK's Department for International Development is hosting a 'Hunger Summit' event immediately before the big G8 meeting hosted by the UK in Northern Ireland. This is the UK's moment to lead.

Take action:

1. Write to your MP, explaining to them the huge scale of under-nutrition. Ask them to write to Rt. Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International Development, calling on her to:

- Commit at least £149million per year, over multiple years, at the Hunger Summit to funding financially sound, national nutrition plans, and commit to support future plans from countries with high levels of malnutrition. **This kind of ambitious pledge will galvanise other donors.**
- Seek international agreement at the summit on interim targets to reduce wasting and stunting over three years that contribute to the global goals for under-nutrition adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2012.

2. Join us at Parliament on Tuesday May 14th for a day of action! We will be getting a briefing from Mogove Walter Nyika, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture Practitioner from Zimbabwe; we'll then head to Parliament where we have a tour of the Houses of Commons lined up; before we head over to Central Lobby to meet with our MPs to discuss nutrition. **We want as many of you as possible to attend this event and have budget to support participation. If you would like to join us please email felix@results.org.uk. See background sheet 2 for more info.**

3. Join campaigners from the "Enough Food for Everyone If Campaign" gathering in Hyde Park in London on Saturday 8th June to show the UK Government and the world how much you care about this! See **Background Sheet 2** for how to get involved.

You can find details of your MP at www.theyworkforyou.com.

Introduction

Despite the poverty and hunger focus of the Millennium Development Goals, there has been a worldwide failure to address nutrition specifically. A major barrier has been a lack of investment, with less than 0.3% of global aid assistance being spent on nutrition. As a result the number of undernourished people in developing countries has actually risen from 824 million in 1990 to 925 million in 2010. This has huge implications for the life chances of the people affected, with poor nutrition leading to myriad development challenges such as: poor performance at school; increased susceptibility to disease; inability to work; increased risk of maternal and child mortality.

What do we mean when we say under-nutrition?

Under-nutrition is a form of malnutrition (the other form being obesity or overnutrition) that occurs due to a poor diet. Essentially under-nutrition is caused by a *lack* of something in a diet. This could be a lack of quantity of food, nutrients, proteins or calories. Under-

nutrition manifests itself in four main ways: **irreversible stunting** (chronic, long term under-nutrition), **wasting** (short term shock or starvation), **underweight** and **micronutrient deficient** (specific nutrient deficiencies).

How big a problem is under-nutrition?

Under-nutrition is a massive problem worldwide and is the single largest child killer globally, responsible for more than a third of child deaths. It is estimated that 165 million children under the age of five are stunted, 55 million are wasted and 112 million are underweight.

There are also huge economic implications of under-nutrition. Children who experience poor nutrition in the first 1000 days of life have a higher risk of developing lifelong physical and mental impairments. This can have negative consequences for their educational achievements and employment prospects later on in life. It is estimated that countries, such as India, with high levels of under-nutrition lose 2-3% of their gross domestic product each year from under-nutrition.

Under-nutrition is an inter-generational problem

Aside from the immediate negative impacts of under-nutrition on individuals and economies, under-nutrition has also been shown to have inter-generational impacts. For example, a mother who is stunted is more likely to have birth complications; is more likely to have a low birth-weight child, which is more likely to die in infancy or become stunted, thus completing the cycle from parent to child. Tackling under-nutrition and its causes can help break that cycle.

What can be done to tackle under-nutrition?

Effective interventions for combatting under-nutrition are well known. In 2008, the Lancet identified 13 nutrition specific interventions, addressing the immediate causes of under-nutrition, which would yield significant results if implemented. These specific interventions promote practices to improve nutrition (e.g. breastfeeding), reduce deficiencies in essential micronutrients in high-risk populations (e.g. vitamin A supplements), and prevent and treat moderately malnourished and acutely malnourished children.

Nutrition specific interventions, if scaled up properly, could reduce child deaths by 25% and stunting by one third. These need to be complemented with nutrition sensitive interventions which address the underlying causes of under-nutrition. These include improving food security, the status of women, childcare practices and access to water and sanitation.

Momentum is building to tackle this problem

We are at a key moment in history for turning the tide on under-nutrition. On 8th June David Cameron is hosting a ‘Hunger Summit’ in London, the plans for which were set out during the 2012 Olympic Games. The summit will bring together heads of state from the G8 as well as countries from the global south to make commitments on increasing funding for nutrition. This event is a once in a generation opportunity to raise the profile of under-nutrition and, most importantly, get countries to commit financial resources.

Support all over the UK

And we are not alone in this work. RESULTS is also part of a huge nation-wide campaign made of over 100 member organisations from UNICEF to Save the Children called the ‘Enough Food For Everyone IF’ campaign which is also focused on helping to end

hunger. The campaign includes our specific work on nutrition and also includes some additional asks around:

AID: Give aid to stop children dying from hunger. Help the poorest have enough food to live.

LAND: Stop poor farmers being forced off their land. Grow crops to provide food, not fuel.

TAX: If governments stop big companies tax dodging in poor countries, the money raised can be used to tackle malnutrition.

TRANSPARENCY: Governments and companies must be honest about their role in the food system.

On June 8th –the day of the Hunger Summit- the IF Campaign is organising a huge mass mobilisation event in Hyde Park called ‘The Big IF’. **We want you there to make a stand for the end of hunger.**

So what do RESULTS and IF want Justine Greening and the UK Government to do? How will our action help?

We want Justine Greening and the UK Government to make a **multiyear pledge of at least £149 million** per year to fund financially sound, national nutrition plans. A multiyear pledge is important because stunting takes years to correct and eradicate due to its complex causes. This figure comes from research done by the ‘IF’ campaign that estimates a global funding gap of \$10bn per year to tackle under-nutrition. This amount could provide a package of measures to improve nutrition that would reach all mothers and children who need help in the 36 countries that carry 90% of the world’s undernourished children. The plan is that these countries would pay half this cost and half would be matched by the donor community.

We also want the UK to commit to –and seek international consensus over- interim targets to ensure the world is on track to meet longer-term goals of a 40% reduction in stunting and less than 5% wasting in under-five’s by 2022, as set out by the World Health Assembly in 2012.

Our action this month is part of global movement, taken in conjunction with our RESULTS and ACTION partners around the world. The extended RESULTS family are all going to be working hard to push their representatives to make similar bold calls at the Hunger Summit on June 8th.