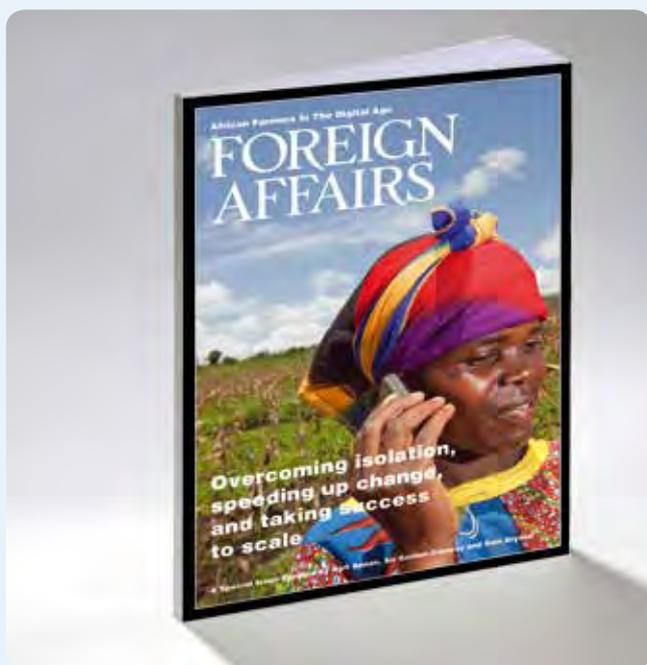


Did you know? You can now visit the *Sight and Life* website www.sightandlife.org on a regular basis to get the latest news about what is happening in the field of nutrition. You can also follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter @sightandlife**.

African Farmers in a Digital Age: Overcoming isolation, speeding up change, and taking success to scale



At a time when we are embracing a food systems approach to addressing the ever spiraling challenges of nutrition and breaking down silos to ensure nutrition is embedded across sectors, the task of engaging agriculture becomes increasingly important. This means not only getting closer to commercial agriculture, but also exploring how we can work with small-scale farmers who have often been bypassed in the past. *African Farmers in a Digital Age* is an excellent anthology, co-curated by Kofi Annan, Sir Gordon Conway, and Sam Dryden, that explores the future of African food systems and the role that digital solutions can play in overcoming the isolation of smallholder farmers and speeding up rural development. Farming is one of mankind's oldest endeavors, and digital

technology is one of its newest – and now the two need to come together. By thinking in terms not just of crops or yields or prices, but rather of an integrated food system that links all players in the agricultural economy, this publication allows us to see African agricultural issues in a new light. From mobile phones to big data, from nutrition to climate change, this collection covers it all, with contributions from authors who have something powerful to say and the authority to be heard.

“Enabling smallholder farmers to grow more food and sell it in formal markets for a fair price would change life for almost every poor person in Africa”

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations 1997–2006

Making the food systems in Africa as robust as possible will have numerous benefits: it will not only address hunger and food insecurity but will also fight poverty, disease, and malnutrition in all its forms; create businesses and jobs; boost the continent's economies; and improve its trade balances. All of which we desperately need if we are to achieve the SDGs.

Take the time to enjoy and be challenged by this publication, which can be downloaded from:
www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/381860/

Did You Know?

More than 80 percent of African agricultural production comes from smallholders. The new African food system should be built around the idea that agriculture is about more than producing calories; it is about changing society. Its five components should be:

1. Valuing the smallholder farmer
2. Empowering women
3. Focusing on the quality as well as the quantity of food
4. Creating a thriving rural economy
5. Protecting the environment

Call for Action against Mycotoxin Contamination in Developing Countries

A Working Group of world-leading experts convened by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) recently reviewed the health effects of aflatoxins and fumonisins. The panel concluded that these mycotoxins are not only a cause of acute poisoning and cancer but also a likely contributor to the high levels of stunting in children in affected populations. The Working Group also identified effective measures to reduce mycotoxin exposure in developing countries. Their recommendations have been published in the report *Mycotoxin Control in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*, [available for download at www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/wrk/wrk9/IARC_publicationWGR9_full.pdf](http://www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/wrk/wrk9/IARC_publicationWGR9_full.pdf) (also available in French and Spanish).

The panel evaluated 15 interventions against mycotoxins, considering the strength of the evidence as well as its completeness and transferability at an individual, community, or national level. Four of the measures were adjudged ready for implementation. The intervention for which the strongest evidence of improvement to health exists, but which is also the most difficult to achieve, was to increase dietary diversity. Other strategies deemed ready for implementation included sorting of the crop; a package of post-harvest measures, including improved storage; and in Latin America for maize, optimized nixtamalization.

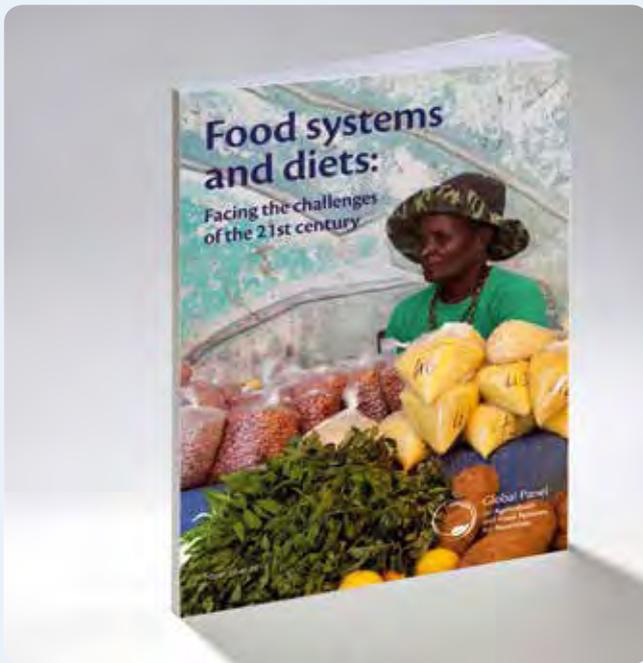
“It is time to put the existing knowledge and technology into action to control mycotoxin food contamination in low-income countries,” says Dr J David Miller, Chair of the IARC Working Group.

“It is time to put the existing knowledge and technology into action to control mycotoxin food contamination in low-income countries”

Did You Know?

- > Despite a sustained investment in research over the past 60 years, aflatoxin as an agricultural problem has not diminished. Hotter summers and, in 2015–2016, an intense El Niño year, have tended to increase the geographic area affected each year.
- > An estimated 500 million of the poorest people in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia are exposed to pervasive, biological toxins, aflatoxins and fumonisins on a daily basis simply by eating their staple diet of groundnuts, maize, and other cereals.
- > Exposure occurs throughout life at levels far in excess of internationally accepted norms.

The Global Panel's Foresight Report Food Systems and Diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st century



Food Systems and Diets is a really important and timely report that takes a close look, using modeling and trend analysis, at the extent to which food systems are delivering healthy diets today. It assesses whether they are fit for the future, and then makes important recommendations and gives pragmatic advice for leaders at the most senior levels in countries and international organizations. Yet it is also of direct relevance to all policy-makers, decision-makers, professionals, business people, experts and researchers with interests in food systems and diets.

“Only a response on the scale and commitment used to tackle HIV/AIDS and malaria will be sufficient to address malnutrition in all its forms”

Key findings include the fact that the growing nutrition crisis requires decisive action now in order to avert profound consequences for the health of populations, health care costs and economic growth, and that current food systems are not delivering healthy diets. Unless things change, we are unlikely to reach the targets we have set. There is too much focus on food quantity rather than quality, consumers are not being helped to make healthy and affordable food choices consistent with optimal nutrition outcomes – in fact, the trend is in the opposite direction.

All the various elements that make up food systems need to be harnessed so that they nourish rather than merely feed people. This requires the public and private sector to work together, creating opportunities for interventions that decision-makers can tailor to specific country contexts.

The good news is that there are many ways in which policy-makers can reshape food systems. The report sets out ten clear priorities for action and gives detailed advice and guidance, which will be of practical and immediate use to decision-makers.

The Executive Summary is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and, together with the full report, can be found at: www.glopan.org/foresight

Did You Know?

The last edition of the *Sight and Life* magazine was dedicated to food systems. If you missed it, you can go to our website www.sightandlife.org, click on Library and download edition 30(1)/2016. Why not also follow us on Facebook and @sightandlife on Twitter.

A Fair Chance for Every Child

Such a simple title, yet as stated in the foreword of this annually important publication, “Inequity imperils millions of children and threatens the future of the world.” The 2016 UNICEF State of the World’s Children is an uncomfortable read, but reaches to the heart of the *Sight and Life* vision – to improve the lives of the world’s most vulnerable populations. The reality is that for millions of children, their futures are shaped from birth by inequities. But the report highlights how this can change – and is changing – for many, as the world makes progress in some areas and scales up cost-effective interventions that work, such as vaccines, oral rehydration salts and better nutrition. As we all recognize the need for multi-sectoral approaches if we are to find sustainable solutions to the world’s most pressing problems, the report should be read from cover to cover.

“Inequities and dangers perpetuate intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and inequality that undermine the stability of societies and even the security of nations everywhere”

It is, as always, filled with valuable information covering the key issues – health, education, poverty, useful text boxes, interesting perspectives, and tables at the end giving country, regional and global statistics.

Most important of all, it gives advice on what needs to be done – the pathways to equity. These are defined in terms of five concepts:

1. Increasing **information** about those being left behind
2. **Integrating** efforts across sectors to tackle the multiple deprivations that hold so many children back
3. **Innovating** to accelerate progress and drive change for the most excluded children and families
4. **Investing** in equity and finding new ways of financing efforts to reach the most disadvantaged children
5. **Involving** everyone, beginning with communities themselves, and with businesses, organizations and citizens around the world

This report really jolts us into always remembering to put the children first (political commitment), not to take our eye off the ball (resource provision), and to rapidly scale up the successful implementation (collective will) of many great interventions in order to achieve the required impact.

To download the report and read case studies accompanied by evocative photo essays, please go to www.unicef.org/sowc2016/

Did You Know?

While methods to calculate monetary poverty provide a useful yardstick against which to measure social progress, they are limited, and do not take into account other crucial dimensions – such as lack of education, health, water or sanitation – that are extremely important for understanding how children experience poverty. Child poverty is best seen as a combination of monetary and non-monetary factors at both the household and individual levels.

The Cost of Malnutrition: Why policy action is urgent

The Cost of Malnutrition is the third technical briefing from the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. It provides compelling evidence on the economic value of reducing malnutrition with its estimated impact on the global economy of as much as US\$3.5 trillion per year. This report is specifically designed for policy-makers, particularly those in ministries of economic planning and finance, who require convincing that poor nutrition impacts economic growth and is worth investing in: US\$1 generates a US\$16–20 return on investment.

The briefing has developed an excellent framework highlighting the pathways from malnutrition to economic loss at the individual, societal and national levels as a consequence of mortality, ill health, impaired physical growth and impaired cognitive development – none of these individual factors being mutually exclusive.

“Although the price of addressing malnutrition can be huge, evidence shows that the cost of doing nothing is immeasurably greater”

Prof. K Srinath Reddy President of the Public Health Foundation of India and Global Panel member

It explains that because there are numerous ways by which malnutrition can generate financial costs, there have been an increasing number of approaches used to estimate the relevant costs and losses, and the prices of various interventions. What is more, calculations of the costs of malnutrition have often isolated one or other pathway in order to simplify estimates of short- and long-term impacts on society, which makes it hard to assess packages of, or alternatives among, policy interventions.

The price of interventions, both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive, is laid out in the report, but so too are the rewards. Finally, The Cost of Malnutrition makes six recommendations:

1. Governments should calculate the direct and indirect cost of malnutrition in all its forms for their own country

2. Standardized metrics must be developed to support more effective communication of findings to policy-makers
3. Viable options for policy and program interventions across the food systems must be identified and costed
4. A national Common Results Framework should be established to shape monitoring and reporting on progress
5. Rigorous data should be generated to support ongoing assessment of cost-effective actions across the food system and food environment
6. Knowledge gaps and data deficiencies on the costs and benefits should be urgently addressed

This is compulsory reading for anyone working in nutrition who has to make the argument for the value of investing.

Did You Know?

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition is an independent group of influential experts committed to tackling the global challenges in food and nutrition security. Their three explicit objectives are to:

1. Generate and stimulate a stronger evidence base for how changes in agriculture and food systems can improve nutrition
2. Create and promote a new understanding of the role and future potential of agriculture and food systems in improving nutrition
3. Catalyze collaboration in agricultural and food systems that will improve diets and nutrition outcomes for all.

Follow The Global Panel on Twitter @Glo_PAN or visit their website to read interesting blogs and subscribe to their newsletter: www.glopan.org

Investing in Nutrition: The foundation for development



Investing in Nutrition is a really great and user-friendly resource with excellent visuals that summarizes the analysis of the costs, impacts, and investments needed to achieve targets, and outlines how governments, donors, the private sector, foundations, and others can come together to finance nutrition actions at scale.

“More work is needed to ensure the cost-effectiveness of existing spending, address implementation bottlenecks and knowledge gaps, and strengthen delivery mechanisms for high-impact interventions”

The report has two important take home messages: the need to set priorities and the need to approach financing differently.

The time has come to prioritize where we focus investments in nutrition. The analysis undertaken suggests that priority should be given to a set of the most cost-effective interventions, all of which can be scaled up immediately. This smaller package requires an annual investment of just over US\$2 billion a year above current baseline spending over the next ten years. It will save some 2.2 million lives and – together with anticipated progress in food availability and diversity, women’s health and education, along with investments in water and sanitation – could result in 50 million fewer children stunted in 2025 compared to 2015.

To achieve this, however, we need a new approach to financing partnerships – an approach that requires donors, countries, innovative financing mechanisms, businesses, and even consumers themselves act in “global solidarity.” National ownership and domestic financing must be maximized, and each partner will need to contribute according to its financing capacity and comparative advantage.

The briefing can be downloaded at

www.thousanddays.org/tdays-content/uploads/Investing-in-Nutrition-The-Foundation-for-Development.pdf

Did You Know?

It is estimated that country governments currently spend US\$2.9 billion and donors provide just under US\$1 billion annually to address stunting reduction, wasting, anemia, and exclusive breastfeeding. This means that on average, countries are spending just 1% of their health budgets on the kind of high-impact nutrition-specific programs that save lives and pay significant dividends down the road.

Fighting Malnutrition: A new momentum



At a time when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been set, there has been a commitment to implement the outcomes of the International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2) and the action plan of the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2025, as well as the Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) action plan. The Decade of Action for Nutrition has been declared, and there is a collective responsibility within the UN system to engage, to act and to implement in order to support countries in delivering on their responsibility in realizing their citizens' right to nutritious food. The Strategic Plan of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition for 2016–2020 is an important document, especially as the UN interagency work on nutrition needs to catalyze joint approaches and actions so as to achieve greater synergy and effectiveness of UN agency activities at the global and country levels. As the report states, “The UN system can and should

indeed provide unified support to further advocacy for nutrition, help develop and implement robust country nutrition strategies, broker agreements and convene stakeholders, develop guidelines and analytical/monitoring tools, strengthen information systems, and leverage financial and technical assistance.”

The Strategic Plan outlines four strategic objectives:

1. Maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition
2. Support consistent and accountable delivery by the UN System
3. Explore new and emerging nutrition-related issues
4. Promote knowledge sharing across the UN System

Did You Know?

Do you know the six mandated functions of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)?

1. To provide global strategic guidance and advocacy in nutrition, to ensure engagement and investment at the highest level and to ensure progress towards nutrition security for all
2. To enhance dialogue and linkages, fostering joint nutrition action, partnerships and mutual accountability between UN agencies
3. To harmonize concepts, including methodologies and guidelines, policies and strategies in response to the nutritional needs of countries
4. To facilitate knowledge, exchange of practices, tools and needs, enhancing coherence of the global nutrition public goods agenda and identifying emerging issues
5. To communicate on global trends, progress, and results and to enhance global advocacy through networks and platforms
6. To engage in and facilitate dialogue with stakeholders across health, food security, water and sanitation and social protection constituencies for strengthening nutrition action and mainstreaming nutrition into development policies.

SISN 2016–20 Strategic Plan: Bringing together the ‘Knowledge World’ and the ‘Action World’



As countries move from talk about scaling up nutrition to action, the challenge they are increasingly facing is how to scale up efficiently and effectively. This is where implementation science becomes vital, and the Society for Implementation Science in Nutrition (SISN) has now launched its 2016–20 Strategic Plan. This document forms the bedrock of SISNs operations going forward and outlines the framework and values under which the Society will deliver against its strategic goals to progress the Implementation Science for Nutrition agenda. The plan highlights five imperatives:

1. Implementation as learning and adaptation:

Implementation must be approached as an iterative and continuous, knowledge-intensive process of learning and adaptation, on varying time scales.

2. The implementation spectrum:

Implementation research includes a wide range of decisions, processes and capacities, together with capacity-strengthening.

3. The implementation knowledge portfolio:

It is critical to broaden our understanding and concept of the diverse types of knowledge needed to inform and guide implementation.

4. The implementation research capacity agenda:

It is necessary to develop, adapt, reform and/or strengthen research methods, practices and capacities to align with the distinctive needs of implementation and to mobilize the necessary human, organizational and financial resources.

5. The institutional landscape:

It is essential to ensure that the political economy and governance dynamics at global and national (and sub-national) levels are included in implementation research agendas.

“Nutrition research has historically focused on knowledge for ‘WHAT’ to implement – there now is an imperative to focus on knowledge of ‘HOW’ to implement.”

In order to turn their words into actions and stimulate and drive change in the focus, norms and practices in organizations and systems for implementation as well as in research, the society has prioritized goals and set up a number of Working Groups. These groups are currently led by Board members with some Founding Member involvement, but SISN are inviting participation from the wider membership to support them in delivering on these goals. They are also looking to widen their membership – so if you would like to become part of this new frontier in nutrition, [visit www.implementnutrition.org](http://www.implementnutrition.org) and connect with them on their LinkedIn page.

SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap 2016–2020: From inspiration to impact



At the 2016 United Nations General Assembly, the SUN Movement launched its new Strategy and Roadmap, which will move the focus from inspiring countries to sign up and develop costed nutrition plans to driving for impact. The vision is for a world free from malnutrition in all its forms by 2030. Achieving this will be led by governments and supported by organizations and individuals and through collective action will ensure that every child, adolescent, mother and family can realize their right to food and nutrition, reach their full potential, and shape sustainable and prosperous societies. The goals are fully aligned with the WHA targets for maternal, infant, and young child nutrition by 2025, in addition to relevant targets for preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases. The Movement has developed four strategic objectives:

1. Expand and sustain an enabling political environment
2. Prioritize and institutionalize effective actions that contribute to good nutrition
3. Implement effective actions aligned with Common Results
4. Effectively use, and significantly increase, financial resources for nutrition

The SUN Movement's next phase will focus on translating momentum into results for people who suffer due to malnutrition everywhere.

A core message is to start with what exists and continuously improve – for impact. For this, countries are urged to continuously improve country planning and implementation to end malnutrition; mobilize, advocate and communicate for impact; strengthen capacity for multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration at all levels; and ensure equity, equality and non-discrimination for all, with women and girls at the center of efforts.

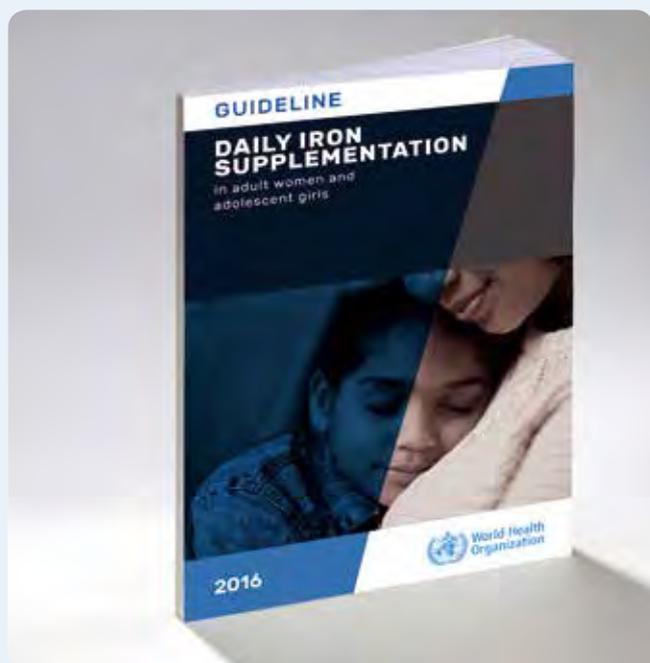
This detailed but easy-to-read report, which also includes useful visuals and graphics, will provide you with everything you need to know about the SUN movement. Whether you want to read about the movement's the history and the roles and responsibilities of its various groups, obtain more detail on the roadmap to the strategic objectives, or learn about the tools that have been established to help track progress, inform corrective actions and share learnings, **it is certainly worth downloading from the revamped website:** www.scalingupnutrition.org.

Did You Know?

The SUN Movement has 10 Principles of Engagement, which guide its myriad actors in mitigating conflicts of interest, and effectively working together to end malnutrition, in all its forms.

1. Be transparent about intentions and impact
2. Be inclusive
3. Be rights-based
4. Be willing to negotiate
5. Be predictable and mutually accountable
6. Be cost-effective
7. Be continuously communicative
8. Act with integrity and in an ethical manner
9. Be mutually respectful
10. Do no harm

10 Guidelines for Iron Supplementation



The WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development has this year released two sets of guidelines specific to iron supplementation. One covers daily iron supplementation in infants and children living in settings where anemia is highly prevalent, and is divided into four recommendations. The first, for infants and children aged 6–23 months, is a strong recommendation based on a moderate quality of evidence which suggests a supplementation scheme of 10–12.5 mg elemental iron to be given daily for three consecutive months in a year. The second, for preschool-age children aged 24–59 months, is also a strong recommendation based on a very low quality of evidence, and the suggested supplementation scheme is 30 mg elemental iron given daily for three consecutive months in a year. The third is for school-age children aged 60 months and older, and is a strong recommendation with high quality of evidence for supplementing with 30–60 mg elemental

iron daily for three consecutive months in a year. The final addresses iron supplementation in malaria-endemic areas. It is a strong recommendation, based on high-quality evidence, that the provision of iron supplementation in these infants and children should be done in conjunction with public health measures to prevent, diagnose and treat malaria.

The second guideline considers iron supplementation in menstruating adult women and adolescent girls living in settings where anemia is highly prevalent ($\geq 40\%$ anemia prevalence) as a preventive strategy for implementation at the population level. It provides a strong recommendation based on a moderate quality of evidence, for daily iron supplementation of 30–60 mg elemental iron for three consecutive months in a year.

The full documents are available at www.who.int/nutrition/publications/micronutrients/guidelines/daily_iron_supp_children and www.who.int/nutrition/publications/micronutrients/guidelines/daily_iron_supp_womenandgirls respectively.

Did You Know?

In 2011:

- > Approximately 300 million children globally had anemia
- > One in three non-pregnant women were anemic, totaling some 500 million worldwide

Other Useful Nutrition Resources

> **The 2016 Global Food Policy Report**

This is the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) flagship report that puts into perspective major food policy issues, developments, and decisions. This year's report takes a special look at how food systems can best contribute to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. **It has a great interactive on-line version.** www.ifpri.org/publication/2016-global-food-policy-report

> **WHO Guideline Update on HIV and Infant Feeding**

A vitally important read. The objective of this guideline is to improve the HIV-free survival of HIV-exposed infants by providing guidance on appropriate infant feeding practices and use of ARV drugs for mothers living with HIV. The guideline is intended mainly for countries with high HIV prevalence and settings in which diarrhea, pneumonia and undernutrition are common causes of infant and child mortality. **Available at** apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/246260/1/9789241549707-eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1

> **Stunting: The Evidence and the Required Actions to Stop Stunting in South Asia**

The Maternal and Child Nutrition (MCN) Journal has published a supplement entitled "Stop Stunting in South Asia. Improving Child Feeding, Women's Nutrition & Household Sanitation" that was funded and made open-access by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. It comprises six review articles, eight original articles, and six commentaries by eminent experts, and although focused on South Asia, **it is applicable globally: compulsory reading.** onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mcn.2016.12.issue-S1/issuetoc

> **SUN Movement Newsletter:**

Always inspirational as one reads about how the 57 SUN countries are translating their plans into actions. To subscribe, go to the bottom of the home page **of the SUN website** scalingupnutrition.org. Twitter handle: @SUN_Movement.

> **IDD Newsletter**

The Iodine Global Network, a non-governmental organization dedicated to sustained optimal iodine nutrition and the elimination of iodine deficiency, celebrates 30 years of existence this year and ensures that we do not forget about the importance of salt iodization in our work addressing micronutrient malnutrition. The Network's newsletter has comprehensive articles covering all aspects related to iodine, its deficiency, and prevention strategies from across the world. **To sign up, visit:** www.ign.org. Twitter handle: @IGN_ICCIDD.

> **The UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)**

The UNSCN has two publications that are well worth reading. The first is SCN News, a biannual peer-reviewed publication that features a selected topic, in addition to regular columns with updates of interest to nutrition and development practitioners. The second is SCN E-Newsletter, which contains brief nutrition news, announcements, vacancies and nutrition updates. **Subscribe at:** www.unscn.org/en/publications/publications-mailing-lists/ mailing-lists.php. Twitter handle: @UNSCN.

> **Twitter handles and hashtags**

For those active on social media, here are twelve Twitter handles and hashtags **you might like to follow / watch:** [@sightandlife](https://twitter.com/sightandlife) [@CIFFchild](https://twitter.com/CIFFchild) [@ThousandDays](https://twitter.com/ThousandDays) [@gateshealth](https://twitter.com/gateshealth) [@countdown2030](https://twitter.com/countdown2030) [@GNReport](https://twitter.com/GNReport) [#2030Together](https://twitter.com/2030Together) [#InvestinNutrition](https://twitter.com/InvestinNutrition) [#hiddenhunger](https://twitter.com/hiddenhunger) [#foodfortification](https://twitter.com/foodfortification) [#NutritionDecade](https://twitter.com/NutritionDecade) [#NutritionReport](https://twitter.com/NutritionReport)

Giving Food Fortification the Attention it Deserves



Participants of the Radcliffe Exploratory Workshop “Building Multi-Nutrient Food Fortification Policy in Emerging Democracies in the Context of Mongolia”

Standing, from left to right: Laura Rowe, President, PHC; Dr Soninkhishig, Professor of Nutrition, Mongolian University of Science and Technology; E Enkhbileg, COO, APU company; Dr Baymatogtoh, Nutrition Officer, Mongolian Ministry of Health; Dr Klaus Kraemer, Director, *Sight and Life*; Dr Wafaie Fawzi, Professor, Harvard University; Dr Bayartulga, State Secretary, Mongolian Ministry of Food and Agriculture; Bolorsaikhan, CEO, VitaFit company; J Badamtsetseg, Trail Coordinator, MHI; RA Grace, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Janet Rich-Edwards, Director of Developmental Epidemiology at the Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Dr Michael Cannon, CDC; Dr Helena Pachón, Food Fortification Initiative; Dr Rebecca Lander, Instructor, University of Colorado School of Medicine; Sabri Bromage, researcher, MHI; Tsendjav Enkhjargal, Media Representative, MHI. **Seated, from left to right:** Dr Tuyatsetseg, Director of the School of Industrial Technology, Mongolian University of Science and Technology; Dr Lynnette Neufeld, Director of Monitoring, Learning and Research, GAIN; Dr Baymbasuren, Deputy Minister, Mongolian Ministry of Health; Dr Ganmaa, Assistant Professor, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Dr Undraa, Governor of Mongolia; Dr Choijamts, ERB Chair, Mongolian Ministry of Health.

Enkhjargal Tsendjav

Media Representative, Mongolian Health Initiative (MHI)

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University is well known for organizing seminars and workshops which bring together Harvard faculty experts and other experts from around the world to discuss pressing public policy issues and emerging ideas. To that end, former Radcliffe Institute Fellow Prof. Davaasambuu Ganmaa organized a workshop entitled 'Building Multi-Nutrient Food Fortification Policy in Emerging Democracies', which was held from October 3–5, 2016 at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

The relevance of food fortification to Mongolia

Since 2011, the Mongolian Health Initiative NGO (MHI), founded by Dr. Ganmaa, has conducted a nationwide micronutrient survey among Mongolian adults. According to Sabri Bromage, a researcher at MHI, multiple micronutrient deficiencies are highly prevalent among both urban and rural Mongolian adults. These deficiencies could be addressed by



means of industrial fortification. The workshop aimed to identify challenges to food fortification in Mongolia, discuss how these challenges have been approached in other contexts, and develop a plan for advancing fortification policy in Mongolia.

Workshop discussion topics

Workshop delegates from Mongolia – including an MP, a state secretary, a deputy minister, and top academics – and industry leaders from around the world discussed the history and current situation of food fortification in Mongolia. Although a food fortification law was drafted in 2009 for staples, fortification never expanded beyond iodization of salt. However, the necessary consumption data and industrial infrastructure now exist to support the use of wheat flour and milk as key food vehicles for fortification. International experts made valuable observations. For example, Helena Pachón (Food Fortification Initiative) explained why mandatory fortification would be more effective than voluntary fortification, while vitamin D expert Michael Holick explained why vitamin D fortification of milk would be safe and effective.

Workshop outcomes

Following the workshop, a fortification working committee was established in the Mongolian Parliament, and the Mongolian Ministry of Food and Agriculture hosted a follow-up conference to discuss implementation. Delegates included representatives from government, industry and academia, as well as consumers. Policy-makers and industry are now aware that food fortification is a cost-effective means of tackling micronutrient deficiencies in Mongolia. Next steps will include the development of an effective monitoring system to ensure that foods are adequately fortified according to national guidelines.