

Global nutrition policy review:

*What does it take
to scale up nutrition action?*

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Preface



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The double burden of undernutrition and obesity is one of the leading causes of death and disability globally. In 2011, 165 million children under the age of 5 years were stunted and 52 million had acute malnutrition, while 43 million were overweight or obese. Among adults, 500 million women were anaemic, and 500 million people were obese. Childhood malnutrition is the underlying cause of more than one in three deaths among children under the age of 5 years, and negatively affects cognitive development, school performance and productivity. Approximately 200 million children are unable to attain their full development potential because of stunting and micronutrient deficiency.

Improving nutrition is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the agenda for sustainable development. World leaders at the G8 and G20 summits acknowledged the importance of addressing nutrition in order to achieve development goals, and recognized that food security and nutrition are key for sustainable development. A healthy diet is an important means for preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), as stated in the High-level Political Declaration on the prevention and control of NCDs.

WHO conducted a review of the presence and implementation of nutrition policies in countries in order to identify gaps. This report summarizes the outcome of the analysis, conducted in 123 countries and territories. The review was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition, which was endorsed by the 65th session of the World Health Assembly in May, 2012.

More than 90% of the responding countries in each region have policies and programmes that cover issues such as undernutrition, obesity and diet-related NCDs, infant and young child nutrition, and vitamins and minerals. Nevertheless, major gaps were identified in the design and content of some policies and programmes, in nutrition

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