

Defeating malnutrition requires 'critical step change'

Language English



Malnutrition has become so pervasive globally that it threatens achievement of any of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), says the 2017 Global Nutrition Report, launched 3 Nov.

"We will not achieve any of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline unless there is a critical step change in our response to malnutrition in all its forms," said Corinna Hawkes, Co-Chair of the Report's Independent Expert Group and Director of the Centre for Food Policy at City University London, at this year's launch.

In all 140 countries studied, the report found 'significant burdens' of three important forms of malnutrition used as an indicator of broader trends: 1) childhood stunting, children too short for their age due to lack of nutrients, suffering irreversible damage to brain capacity, 2) anaemia in women of reproductive age, a serious condition that can have long-term health impacts for mother and child, and 3) overweight adult women, a rising concern as women are disproportionately affected by the global obesity epidemic.

The report found the vast majority (88%) of countries studied face a serious burden of two or three of these forms of malnutrition, highlighting the damaging impact of malnutrition on broader global development efforts.

The report found that overweight and obesity are on the rise in almost every country. Two billion of the world's 7 billion people now overweight or obese and there is a less than 1% chance of meeting the global target of halting the rise in obesity and diabetes by 2025. In addition:

- At least 41 million children under five are overweight, with the problem affecting high and lower income countries alike
- At least 10 million children in Africa are now classified as overweight
- One-third of North American men (33%) and women (34%) are obese.

Rates of undernutrition in children are decreasing, the report said, with recent gains in some countries. But global

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progress is not fast enough to meet internationally agreed nutrition goals, including the SDG target 2.2: to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

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