

WORLD VISION'S CALLS TO LEADERS FOR THE 2012 G20 SUMMIT

- **IMPROVE** nutrition and food security outcomes for children through 'nutrition-sensitive' agriculture and increased support for country efforts to reduce undernutrition.
- **ENSURE** a stronger focus on children within the sustainable development agenda.
- **INCORPORATE** the perspectives of Least Developed Countries in future G20 planning by establishing an annual consultation process between the G20 and Least Developed Countries.

THE G20 HAS PROVEN ITSELF to be a powerful mechanism to build coordinated global action around key economic and financial issues. As part of these efforts, the G20 has taken a number of steps to improve address volatile food prices, increase agricultural production and improve food security. However, action to date by the G20 on the global nutrition crisis is missing the urgency and focus that the scale and severity of the problem requires. Inadequate nutrition is the underlying cause of over 2.5 million child deaths annually,¹ and limits the growth and potential of more than 170 million children worldwide.²

The G20 is rightly concerned with building global economic stability. However, it should give a similar level of targeted attention to improving nutrition outcomes for children. Good nutrition provides one of the first and best chances for child survival and development throughout life, and its positive impacts are also felt by families, communities and countries. Proper nutrition during a child's first 1,000 days – through pregnancy to two years of age – supports healthy brain development, physical growth, and the

ability to stave off or fight immediate threats to life during and after childbirth, and deadly childhood illness. Nutrition is so critical to human well-being that investing in improved nutrition that reduces infant and child stunting can lead to an estimated two to three per cent growth in the economic wealth of developing countries.³

The critical role of agriculture and food security policies and programmes in reducing child under-nutrition has been recognised by the G20 Agriculture Ministers. However, the G20 governments have yet to deliver a comprehensive and sustainable response to address those issues.

The leaders of the world's largest economies must accept their political and moral responsibility to provide the sustained focus, action and resources needed to turn the tide against undernutrition. The G20 leaders must send a strong signal to other world leaders in 2012, including at the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil, that they will invest and play their part in giving millions more children the best start to life.



World Vision calls on the G20 leaders to:

I. Improve nutrition and food security by:

- ensuring that agriculture policies, programmes and development assistance support country-led strategies that are 'nutrition-sensitive' and include improved child nutrition as a key measurable objective;
- endorsing the Framework for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)⁴ and supporting country scale-up of efforts to reduce undernutrition; and
- providing more and better-coordinated support for small-scale farmers, with a special focus on women farmers.

To date, areas that have the potential to improve nutrition for children – such as agriculture and food security, social welfare, and education – have not mobilised their resources in a coordinated way, and in some cases are not working to improve nutrition at all. In order for agricultural and other food security interventions to contribute to improved nutrition security, improved nutrition outcomes – particularly for children – must be an explicit objective of agricultural policy and programmes, with the integration of nutrition outcomes in performance measurement systems.

In their 2011 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture, G20 Agriculture Ministers called for specific attention to be given to 'improving the quality and diversity of agricultural production and to developing a nutrition-sensitive agricultural policy in all parts of the world in order to ensure access to nutritious food.'⁵ However, the G20 leaders did not highlight this subsequently as an area for action within their 2011 Deauville Communiqué. G20 leaders must now task Agriculture Ministers within G20 member countries to develop nutrition-sensitive agricultural policies and also to provide support for countries with a high burden of undernutrition to develop and implement these. One mechanism for this is the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. Many G20 countries already have endorsed the SUN Framework and the recently formed SUN Leaders Group includes Ministerial representatives from five of the G20 members, including Indonesia, the United States and the European Union.

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.



2. Ensure a stronger focus on children within the sustainable development agenda by:

- establishing child health and nutrition outcomes as key indicators for measuring impact across sectors and ministries including agriculture, energy, climate and the environment;
- continuing to scale up efforts to meet existing international goals to improve maternal and child health.

The health status of children is one of the best measures of sustainable development. Moreover, research shows that 'a 5% improvement in child survival raises economic growth by 1% per year over the subsequent decade.'⁶ However, over 7 million children under the age of five still die each year, mainly from preventable causes, and almost one third of these deaths are in G20 member countries.⁷

The G20 has an opportunity to provide leadership in further reducing these deaths to meet the Millennium Development Goal deadline of 2015 and also ensuring that sustainable approaches to development prioritise better child health and nutrition outcomes by including relevant key indicators in development plans and programmes.

3. Incorporate the perspectives of Least Developed Countries in future G20 planning by establishing an annual consultation process between the G20 and Least Developed Countries.

The G20 invites a small number of non-member countries to participate in the summit each year. This practice should be supplemented by a specific consultation process with Least Developed Countries early in the annual planning process. At present, the special needs and perspectives of the Least Developed Countries are rarely considered by the G20 members, who tend to have different priorities. Such a consultation process, along with thorough reporting back on actions taken by the G20, can serve to broaden its perspective as well as ensure greater legitimacy for the group.

REFERENCES

- ¹ UNICEF, 2011, *Levels and trends in child mortality 2011*, <http://www.childinfo.org/files/Child_Mortality_Report_2011.pdf>.
- ² WHO, 2012, <http://www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/20120215_stc_pr_children_malnutrition/en/index.html>, accessed 18 April 2012.
- ³ Hoddinott, J., et al., 2008, 'Effect of a nutritional intervention during early childhood on economic productivity in Guatemalan adults,' *The Lancet* 371 no. 9610 (2 Feb 2008), 411–16.
- ⁴ The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement links over 100 organisations and groups committed to working together to fight hunger and under-nutrition. The SUN Framework focuses on scaling up proven solutions for improving nutrition during the vital 1,000-day window from conception to a child's second birthday. See <<http://www.scalingupnutrition.org>>.
- ⁵ http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2011-06-23_-_Action_Plan_-_VFinale.pdf.
- ⁶ Anderson, E. & Hague, S., 2007, *The impact of investing in children: Assessing the cross-country econometric evidence*, Overseas Development Institute and Save The Children, Working Paper 280, London.
- ⁷ UNICEF, 2011, *State of the World's Children 2012*. <http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2012-Main_Report_EN_13Mar2012.pdf>.