

Media Update

14 October 2016

UNICEF

Press Release

Five in six children under two not getting enough nutrition for growth and brain development - UNICEF

NEW YORK, 14 October 2016 – Five in six children under two years old are not fed enough nutritious food for their age, depriving them of the energy and nutrients they need at the most critical time in their physical and cognitive development, according to a new UNICEF report.

“Infants and young children have the greatest nutrient needs than at any other time in life. But the bodies and brains of millions of young children do not reach their full potential because they are receiving too little food, too late,” said France Begin, Senior Nutrition Adviser at UNICEF. “Poor nutrition at such a young age causes irreversible mental and physical damage.”

The nutrition situation in Pakistan for children under two is dire. Children are not getting enough food nor nutritious food. Three in ten babies haven’t been fed any solid foods by the age of 11 months. While slightly more than half of children are fed the minimum number of times per day, a rate slightly better than rates seen globally, children are not getting enough food. Nearly 5 out of 10 children in households face moderate or severe food insecurity.

While 30 out of every 100 children globally eat four or more food groups a day, only 3 in 100 of children in Pakistan have that luxury. Virtually no children get the right vitamins and minerals in their diets. An average household in Pakistan spends more on tea, sugar, confectionaries than vegetables, fruit, nuts, and meat. The vast majority simply cannot afford a nutritious diet.



UNICEF data show that poor nutritional practices— including the delayed introduction of solid foods, infrequent meals and lack of food variety – are widespread, depriving children of essential nutrients when their growing brains, bones and bodies need them the most. The findings reveal that:

Globally, making nutritious foods affordable and accessible to the poorest children will require stronger and more targeted investments from governments and the private sector. Cash or in-kind transfers to vulnerable families; crop diversification programmes; and fortification of staple foods are key to improving nutrition for young children. Community-based health services that help caregivers learn better feeding practices, and safe water and sanitation – absolutely critical in preventing diarrhoea among children – are also vital.

“We cannot afford to fail in our fight to improve nutrition for young children. Their ability to grow, learn and contribute to their country’s future depends on it,” Begin said.

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Note to editors

UNICEF’s report *From the First Hour of Life*, provides a global mapping of infant and young child feeding practices. Part I, released on 29th July, focuses on breastfeeding; part II, released on 14th October, is on complementary feeding for children aged six months to two years.

World Food Day Week is celebrated annually on 16th October to raise awareness about undernutrition and to secure commitments for ending hunger in all its forms.

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[Download broadcast quality photos and video.](#)

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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UNICEF

Press Release

Over 300,000 children under five died from diarrhoeal diseases linked to limited access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene in 2015 - UNICEF

Simple act of handwashing with soap could save thousands of lives

Download multimedia content for Global Handwashing Day at:

<http://weshare.unicef.org/mediaresources>

NEW YORK/ISLAMABAD, 14 October 2016 – With cholera spreading fast in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, and with a new outbreak in war-ravaged Yemen, UNICEF urges children, families and communities to make washing hands with soap a habit to help prevent the spread of diseases.

On the eve of Global Handwashing Day, UNICEF says that, in 2015, more than 300,000 children under the age of five died globally from diarrhoeal infections linked to poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation – a rate of more than 800 per day. Yet many of these deaths could have been prevented through the simple act of handwashing with soap.

“Every year, 1.4 million children are dying from largely preventable diseases like pneumonia and diarrhoea,” said UNICEF’s global head of water, sanitation and hygiene Sanjay Wijesekera. “These are staggering numbers, but they could be greatly reduced by working with children and families to adopt a very straightforward solution – handwashing. We know, for example, that handwashing with soap before meals and after using the toilet could reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal infections by 40 per cent.”

Proper handwashing practice also contributes to the healthy development of children by keeping them in school. Handwashing actually improves school attendance by reducing the spread of preventable diseases, which means children are not staying home because of illness.

“Handwashing just makes sense as a frontline preventive measure to keep children safe from disease – it’s simple, cost effective and a proven lifesaver,” said Wijesekera.



Every year, approximately 53,000 children in Pakistan die from diarrhea linked to poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Ensuring proper hygiene including hand washing with soap at critical times is essential to reducing these cases. Government studies suggest that only about 63.5% of households in Pakistan are reported to have water and soap available for hand washing, the statistics are more stark in rural areas.

Unicef and its partners work alongside communities to promote the use of low cost handwashing facilities at households. In schools, UNICEF promotes group handwashing sessions where children receive information on hygiene promotion which they later replicate at home.

“A simple act like handwashing with soap could make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of a child,” said Cris Munduate, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Pakistan. “Not only does it help prevent diseases, it also reduces the likelihood that they will suffer from undernutrition. Children suffering from continuous bouts of diarrhea or other infections resulting from poor water and sanitation are most likely to fall behind in school or drop out altogether. Urgent action is needed to ensure that even the most deprived children have access to safe water and sanitation facilities. On this Global Handwashing Day let us all resolve to make handwashing a habit.”

Facts on Handwashing:

- 1 gram of faeces contains 100 million bacteria.
- Approximately 1 in 5 people globally wash their hands after using the toilet.
- Each year, 1.7 million children do not live to celebrate their fifth birthday because of diarrhoea and pneumonia.
- When children wash their hands with soap after going to the toilet or before eating, they reduce their risk of getting diarrhoea by more than 40 per cent.
- Acute respiratory infections like pneumonia are the leading cause of death in children under the age of five.
- Evidence suggests that handwashing with soap after using the toilet and before eating could reduce the pneumonia infection rate among children by around a quarter.

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United Nations

Secretary-General Message

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN 15 October 2016

Rural women make up nearly half the agricultural labour force around the world. They grow, process and prepare much of our food. They are the backbone of rural communities, and in many households they have the key responsibility for food security, education opportunities and healthcare.

But the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are forcing many rural women to migrate, increasing instability for their families and communities and creating an obstacle to development and growth.

Natural disasters, together with recurrent slow-onset crises like drought, affect rural women disproportionately, adding to the challenges they already face in accessing food, healthcare, education and information.



Many rural women move in order to find more productive land and improve their lives and those of their families. But migration can increase their isolation and marginalization. Others are left behind when male family members leave to seek opportunities elsewhere. Both groups need the support of the international community, as an integral part of the debates around migration and development.

Simple changes in policy can benefit rural women and help them to cope with the effects of the changing climate. For example, regulating remittances and reducing transaction costs can empower rural women economically, so that they can build the resilience of their families and communities. Training and access to information on climate-resilient agriculture and technology can make a critical difference. But too often, these are considered to be men's issues and women are excluded from benefitting.

As we consider how we can better respond to the movements of refugees and migrants, I call upon everyone to take the special needs and concerns of rural women into account.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to leave no one behind. To deliver on that, we must help rural women to thrive, and to access the support and information they need, so that they can fulfil their potential without leaving their communities.

United Nations

Secretary-General Message

WORLD FOOD DAY

16 October 2016

As the global population expands, we will need to satisfy an increasing demand for food. Yet, around the world, record-breaking temperatures, rising sea levels and more frequent and severe droughts and floods caused by climate change are already affecting ecosystems, agriculture and society's ability to produce the food we need. The most vulnerable people are world's



poorest, 70 per cent of whom depend on subsistence farming, fishing or pastoralism for income and food.

On this World Food Day, we highlight the close link between climate change, sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security with the message that “The climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too.” Without concerted action, millions more people could fall into poverty and hunger, threatening to reverse hard-won gains and placing in jeopardy our ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Agriculture and food systems must become more resilient, productive, inclusive and sustainable. To bolster food security in a changing climate, countries must address food and agriculture in their climate action plans and invest more in rural development. Targeted investments in these sectors will build resilience and increase the incomes and productivity of small farmers, lifting millions from poverty. They will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and safeguard the health and well-being of ecosystems and all people who depend on them.

Next month, the historic Paris Agreement on climate change will enter into force. This will provide a much-needed boost to global efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, limit temperature rise and promote climate-compatible sustainable agriculture.

On this World Food Day, I urge all Governments and their partners to take a holistic, collaborative and integrated approach to climate change, food security and equitable social and economic development. The well-being of this generation and those to come depends on the actions we take now. Only by working in partnership will we achieve a world of zero hunger and free from poverty, where all people can live in peace, prosperity and dignity.

United Nations

Secretary-General Message



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

17 October 2016

We are approaching the end of the first year of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda is a universal vision for peace, prosperity and dignity for all people on a healthy planet. Achieving this objective is inconceivable without fulfilling the mandate of SDG 1 to end poverty in all its forms.

Today, some 1 billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 800 million endure hunger and malnutrition. But poverty is not simply measured by inadequate income. It is manifested in restricted access to health, education and other essential services and, too often, by the denial or abuse of other fundamental human rights.

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of marginalization and social exclusion. To fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, we must address the humiliation and exclusion of people living in poverty.

Humiliation and exclusion are powerful drivers of social unrest and, in extreme cases, the violent extremism that is troubling so many parts of our world. But, in most instances, people living in poverty respond to these societal ills with stoic resilience as they work to escape the degrading reality of their daily lives.

The duty of all Governments and societies is to address systemic socio-economic inequalities and facilitate the engagement of all people living in extreme poverty so they can help themselves, their families and their communities to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

The message of today's observance is "Moving from Humiliation and Exclusion to Participation: Ending Poverty in All its Forms". We must break down the walls of poverty and exclusion that plague so many people in every region of the world. We must build inclusive societies that promote participation by all. We must ensure the voices of all those living in poverty are heard.



On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us listen to and heed the voices of people living in poverty. Let us commit to respect and defend the human rights of all people and end the humiliation and social exclusion that people living in poverty face every day by promoting their involvement in global efforts to end extreme poverty once and for all.

