Challenges and Impacts of Poor Nutrition

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WHAT IS THE MALNUTRITION BURDEN?
Malnutrition in all its forms is a large scale and universal problem

- 2 billion people lack key micronutrients like iron and vitamin A
- 2.1 billion adults are overweight or obese
- 151 million children are stunted
- 38 million children are overweight
- 51 million children are wasted
- 88% of countries face a serious burden of either two or three forms of malnutrition

Burdens have changed over time

Stunting trends in children under the age of five

Burdens have changed over time

Overweight trends in children under the age of five

WHO IS VULNERABLE?
The poor are nutritionally vulnerable

• While some regions of the world have been successful in terms of reducing poverty, gains have not been even.

• P20: 1.4 billion men, women and children who are the poorest 20% of the global population living below the international poverty line ($1.90/day) plus the people who are most vulnerable to falling back into extreme poverty. They hold the stunting burden.

• In high income countries, the obese tend to be poor.

Source: Development Initiatives P20 Report 2016
WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?
Causal pathway of malnutrition

**Intergenerational consequences**
- **Short-term consequences:** Mortality, morbidity, disability
- **Long-term consequences:** Adult height, cognitive ability, economic productivity, reproductive performance, overweight and obesity, metabolic and cardiovascular diseases

**IMMEDIATE causes**
- Inadequate dietary intake
- Household food security
- Inadequate care and feeding practices
- Unhealthy household environment and inadequate health services

**UNDERLYING causes**
- Household access to access to adequate quantity and quality of resources: Land, education, employment, income, technology
- Inadequate financial, human, physical and social capital

**BASIC causes**
- Social cultural, economic and political context

Three consequences

1. HEALTH
   • With overweight/obesity and undernutrition, higher risk of morbidity, mortality, disability and low quality of life
   • With undernutrition, particularly stunting as a proxy, higher risk of lifelong cognitive impairments
   • Undernutrition increases risk and pace of being obese and suffering from NCDs into adulthood = double fate

2. SOCIAL
   • With undernutrition, 22 - 45% reduction in lifetime earnings
   • 1% loss in adult height = 1.4% loss in productivity
   • With overweight/obesity and undernutrition, higher lifetime health costs

3. ECONOMIC
   • Estimated to range from 2-3% of GDP, to as much as 16% in most affected countries
Societal costs to overcome malnutrition

- Cost of ending hunger: estimates range from **US$7 billion to US$265 billion** annually to 2030.

- Cost to (1) reduce the number of stunted children by 40%; (2) reduce the number of women of reproductive age with anemia by 50%; (3) increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding up to 50%; and (4) reduce and maintaining child wasting to a level of less than 5%: **US$7 billion** annually to 2025.

- Global obesity costs an estimated **2 trillion annually** or 2.8% of global GDP.

- **We need more financing for nutrition:** ODA only 0.5% on undernutrition, 0.01% on NCDs.

WHAT IS A MAJOR DRIVER OF THE BURDEN?
Diets and food systems are transforming

Traditional Food Systems
Receding Famines
Rural, subsistence, smallholder farming
Diets high in grains, tubers, low in animal source foods, seasonal access to local fruits & vegetables
High labor intensity jobs on farms, mines
Cook food at home with less fuel efficiency
High stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and communicable diseases, shorter life expectancy

Mixed Food Systems
Transitioning Economies
Peri-urban, urban, service-based economy
More processed & packaged foods, street food, vegetable oils and sugar
Increased sedentary-type work, increase public transport and cars
Eat prepared foods away from home, cook less
Increased obesity, non-communicable diseases, longer life expectancy but more disability

Modern Food Systems
Mainly urban or connected, small town living
More dietary diversity and variety, access to animal source foods, fruits and vegetables
Greenspace, bike pathways, purposeful physical activity
Eat away from home, food deliveries
High obesity and non-communicable disease burden, but better health care, thus higher life expectancy

Adapted from: Popkin and Drewnowski 1993
Diets are a top risk factor of disease

WHERE IS THERE AN OPPORTUNITY?
Leaving no one behind: The SDGs

“These are universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike. They are integrated and indivisible. The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized... As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.”
Integrate nutrition into the SDGs

Improving nutrition will be a catalyst for achieving goals throughout the SDGs…

...and tackling underlying causes of malnutrition through the SDGs will help to end malnutrition.

Global Nutrition Report 2017
The motivation to act

- The scale of malnutrition raises alarms.
- The societal costs of unhealthy diets and their health outcomes are considerable.
- Food systems face enormous challenges as well as opportunities.
- Solutions and evidence to act are available and leadership must come from governments and intergovernmental organizations.
- We need **disruptive change** and **action cannot wait**.
- Seize this moment to make the SDGs impactful.
Thank you!

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