

Doc. No.	Item & Subject
EB150/30	17 Maternal, infant and young child nutrition-Draft decision

Your Excellency,

I would like to address agenda item number 17 regarding Maternal, infant and young child nutrition-Draft decision.

Over the past 40 years, Oman has made considerable progress in reducing the prevalence of under nutrition in its various forms.

Nonetheless, the prevalence of some forms remains relatively high, with 11.4% of children under 5 years affected by stunting and 9.3% affected by wasting, as of 2017. Low birth weight also remains considerably high, affecting 11.8% of children in 2008. There is a well-established system of identifying registration and close follow up to all malnutrition cases in Primary Healthcare with a clear guideline for management.

On the other hand, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in young children is considered low, despite increasing from 2.4% to 4.2% between 2009 and 2017. The rate of exclusive breast-feeding increased from 16% to 23%; anemia in women of reproductive age decreased from 32% in 2008 to 27.8%.

The government of Oman focused on combatting malnutrition and maternal young child nutrition over the past few years, and implemented several strategic interventions in this regard.

For example, in December 2021, Oman launched the National Nutrition Strategy and Framework for Action 2020 -2030, in line with the strategy for nutrition for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region 2020 -2030. The strategy addresses all forms of malnutrition and provides a framework to support MOH and other stakeholders to achieve the Oman 2040 vision of becoming a regional model for health and wellbeing. It includes 6 areas of action, one of which is developing a resilient food system. This has already started in Oman by contributing to the National dialogue for food system in 2021.

Oman also launched the National Breast-Feeding Campaign in early 2021, with a focus on increasing the rate of exclusive breast-feeding. And to address current micronutrient deficiencies, soon new fortification guidelines will be released. In addition to the fortifying flour with iron and folic acid, vitamin B12 and vitamin D will be included. Additionally, all dairy products will also be fortified with vitamins A and D. In addition to diet fortification, all pregnant women also get a supplementation of iron and folic acid; and all children get a supplementation of vitamin A accompanying the immunization schedule at 12 and 18 months.

Since June 2019, a 50% tax was started for sugar-sweetened beverages in a step to tackle obesity in the community. In addition, to combat overconsumption of salt, the Omani standard for bread was released in May 2019 to limit the amount of salt used. This is in addition to the ban since 2014 of marketing of unhealthy food during children programs on TV and Radio, which came in line with the child law. It is hoped that more measures will be achieved in the coming years.

Thank you your Excellency

Speaker: Sultanate of Oman