

Statement by the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Coordinator;
WHA 73 - agenda item 11.1 Primary Health Care

Honourable Chair

I deliver this statement in my capacity as UN Assistant Secretary-General and coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.

Good nutrition, especially during a child's first 1,000 days from conception to age two, is the foundation for health, physical and cognitive development. It is key to build immunity and to protect against illness. It helps prevent non-communicable diseases, risk factors for higher COVID-19 morbidity and mortality.

However, COVID-19 has disrupted food systems, health and nutrition services, and caused massive losses of jobs and livelihoods, aggravating the global malnutrition crisis. Acute hunger is set to double this year, and without urgent action, more than 10 000 additional children will die each month due to acute malnutrition.

Strong primary health care is crucial for ending malnutrition in all its forms, by providing essential preventive and curative services to improve maternal and child health and nutrition and address non-communicable diseases.

Essential nutrition actions like management of acute malnutrition, breastfeeding and dietary counselling, and provision of micronutrient supplements MUST be among the core services delivered to everyone through primary health care, including by Community Health Workers.

Investing in high-impact, low-cost nutrition interventions has the potential to unlock the potential of millions of children, to halt the vicious intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, poverty and exclusion, and build more stable and resilient societies.

I call on WHO and its Member States to ensure nutrition is fully integrated in the Operational Framework for Primary Health care and in all upcoming plans and policies relevant to Universal Health Coverage.

Thank you.