



Saving our Future: A Call to Action to Reverse Malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Side event on the margins of the annual session of the Executive Board

Thursday, 21 June 2018 from 13:15 – 14:45

Aula I, WFP Headquarters

Context

Both acute and chronic malnutrition continue to cause mortality, human suffering and economic loss in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). According to the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, the number of people in need of nutrition assistance in the DRC amounts to 4.6 million in 2018 – an increase of half a million compared to 2017. In South Kivu and the Greater Kasai region where the most recent Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys were completed, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) ranges from 11 percent to 15 percent while under-five mortality rates are now exceeding emergency thresholds^{1,2} in these recently surveyed areas. Nutrition survey³ results also indicate that the prevalence of acute malnutrition in Tanganyika and Maniema is at an historical high.⁴

An average of 43 percent of children under five are stunted in the DRC. The 2017 Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) study revealed that the annual cost associated with child undernutrition in the DRC is estimated at 4.56 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Objectives

1. To **alert Member States** of the very serious nutrition crisis in the DRC, which gives every indication of worsening unless it is immediately addressed.
2. To **activate an urgent** call to action if we are to reverse what has turned into a perfect malnutrition storm for the DRC's women and children.
3. To **highlight that the pathway to scale-up nutrition impact** in the DRC is through a multi-sectoral and integrated package of targeted nutrition services.
4. To **highlight the cost of undernutrition** in the DRC.

¹ Nutrition Survey Report (SMART) in Uvira, Nundu and Fizi health zones, South Kivu Province, United Nations Children's Fund - Le programme national de nutrition (UNICEF-PRONANUT), December 2017.

² Nutrition Survey Report (SMART) in Tshikula and Mukumbi health zones, Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental, Action contre la faim (ACF) Health Zones, July - August 2017.

³ Monitoring of the nutrition situation to identify nutritional status and risk factors in a population.

⁴ Tanganyika Rapid Needs Assessment Report, November 2017.

Agenda

The discussion will be moderated by Ms Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Assistant Executive Director, Operations Services. Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah Zeid will be the special guest at the side event and will open the discussion, reflecting on her recent visit to the DRC and activate the call to action. Her Royal Highness Princess Zeid will be joined by a panel of speakers including:

- Ms Lola Castro, WFP Regional Director for Southern Africa will provide an overview of the crisis, touching upon the layers of stress that the country currently faces.
- His Excellency Albert Tshiseleka Felha, Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo will highlight his Government's commitment to improving the nutrition situation.
- Ms Lauren Landis, WFP Director of Nutrition will offer her thoughts on the package of services that is required to restore nutrition in the DRC.

A question and answer session will follow the presentations.

Proposed participation

The session will be open to all delegations and partners and interpretation will be provided.