



Canada



Moving forward in partnership: Promoting an integrated school health and nutrition package

Side event on the margins of the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board
Supported by the African Union, the Governments of Canada and the Russian Federation

Wednesday, 20 November 2019, 13:45 –14:45

Auditorium, WFP Headquarters

Lunch will be served in the Peace Garden from 13:15 to 13:45

Context

Ensuring children are healthy and well-nourished while in school is crucial to their ability to learn and thrive. Very simply: sick children cannot attend school and hungry children cannot learn. School health and nutrition is essential for children to grow into productive and healthy citizens who can participate in a country's development. After all, the development of a country's human capital is the sum of its population's health, skills, knowledge, and experience. Human capital matters for people, economies, societies, and global stability and it matters over generations. When countries fail to invest productively in human capital, the costs are enormous, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable children.

Growing children and adolescents have critical phases of development that need specific interventions. An integrated package of support to school children and adolescents is needed, at scale. School feeding is a vital and cost-effective component of this integrated package and when combined with other key essential health and nutrition interventions can be a game-changing contribution to the healthy development of children in school.

While there have been many advances – 39 countries in Africa have school feeding programmes managed and financed by governments and over 30 million children are receiving school feeding – more than 60 million children across Africa who live in extreme poverty still do not have access to these school health and nutrition programmes. For many of these countries, underinvestment in human capital leads to a loss of economic potential ranging, from 50 to 70 percent in the long-term. Africa's Human Capital Index score of 0.40 puts the region at 40 percent of its potential. The partnership with the African Union and its Member States will be key to advocate for health and nutrition in school and to implement this joint intervention across the continent.

The World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) propose a collaborative approach to provide an integrated package of support through schools. By working together, the agencies are looking to ensure that by 2030, all vulnerable school children, especially girls and adolescents, receive nutritious school feeding together with a package of school health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions. These interventions will specifically address the barriers that girls, as well as marginalized and highly vulnerable children, face. The partnership will support the achievement of education outcomes, along with health and nutrition-related outcomes.

With support of the Government of Canada, the first countries to pilot this integrated approach are Niger and Chad. In these countries, as part of a multi partner resilience approach, WFP, UNICEF and

UNFPA are establishing a new School Health and Nutrition Programme for children and adolescents to increase attendance at the primary and secondary school levels and improve learning conditions in displacement settings, addressing, in particular, the barriers to education faced by girls and adolescent girls and improving their nutrition.

Objectives

To highlight the importance of increasing commitment and support towards an integrated package of school health and nutrition to ensure all children can learn and thrive in school and develop their human potential, especially across the African continent.

The side event would serve to showcase inter-agency cooperation through projects in Niger and Chad and present the African Union's engagement in partnering and scaling up this initiative across the continent.

Through presentations and inputs by African Union officials, ambassadors and senior management of WFP, the audience will be presented with concrete examples of the implementation of the integrated package with a focus on the efficiency gains obtained through coordination between agencies.

Tentative agenda

- 13:15 Lunch will be served at the Peace Garden
- 13:45 Welcome and opening remarks
Ms Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director Programme and Policy Development Department
- 13:50 Introductory perspectives
- *Mr David Beasley, Executive Director*
 - *His Excellency Hisham Mohamed Badr, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt*
 - *His Excellency Victor Vasiliev, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation*
- 14:00 Facilitated podium discussion with questions and observations from the floor
Moderator: *Ms Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director Programme and Policy Development Department*
Panellist:
- *His Excellency M. Ali Bety, Haut Commissaire de l'Initiative i3N, Government of Niger*
 - *Her Excellency Alexandra Bugailiskis, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada*
 - *Mr. Ali Hassane - Acting Deputy Representative of UNFPA Niger*
 - *Mr Sory Ouane, Niger Country Director WFP*
- 14:40 Closing remarks
Her Excellency Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang, African Union Commissioner of Human Resources, Science and Technology