

\$4B for Nutrition Now: The World Bank's Moment to Lead at the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit

October 2024

The Case for \$4 Billion

The World Bank must commit at least \$4 billion in nutrition financing annually for the next three fiscal years (FY26-FY28) to tackle the global nutrition crisis at the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G). This commitment is essential to scale up nutrition interventions worldwide, with an estimated \$13 billion needed annually to adequately address malnutrition over the next decade. Now is an opportune moment for the World Bank to demonstrate leadership and drive significant progress in global nutrition outcomes. We urge the Bank to make an ambitious commitment at the N4G Summit to meet both the financial and non-financial needs required to tackle malnutrition globally.

Call to Action

The World Bank should commit **at least \$4 billion in nutrition financing annually for the next three fiscal years (FY26-FY28) to tackle the global nutrition crisis at the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G)**. Within this commitment, it should:

Strengthen IDA21 Policy Package to Deliver on Nutrition:

- Incorporate specific nutrition sub-indicators into the IDA Scorecard to monitor service access across countries. This will enable standardized data collection and improve accountability.
- For each such sub-indicator, set annually reviewed numerical/quantitative results targets for IDA countries and publish sub-indicator results annually.

Enhance the Crisis Response Window (CRW) to Address the Critical Role that Nutrition Interventions Play within Crisis Prevention, Preparedness, and Response:

- Increase the CRW and Early Response Financing (ERF) by at least **50%** above the current ceiling of **\$1 billion**. This will amplify the Bank's ability to support countries facing acute malnutrition and food insecurity.
- Provide technical assistance for integrating nutrition into national crisis preparedness and response plans.

Align with UHC Target To Deliver on Nutrition Outcomes:

- Clearly define how many of the **1.5 billion** beneficiaries under the UHC target will gain access to nutrition services, especially in IDA countries where **92% of food-insecure populations** reside.
- Support countries to embed nutrition services within their health strategies, ensuring comprehensive approaches to health and nutrition.

Strengthen Global Challenge Programs to improve Nutrition and Food Security for vulnerable populations:

- Incorporate nutrition initiatives into HNP, SPJ, and AGF programs, while embedding nutrition specialists within the World Bank Group for high-quality technical support.
- Target interventions for children in fragile and marginalized communities through school meals and early childhood nutrition programs to ensure immediate relief and long-term well-being.
- Co-develop and implement with countries Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans (FSCPPs) for an early and coordinated response to emerging nutrition and food security crises.
- Provide sufficient funding and technical expertise for the successful delivery of the FSCPPs.

Enhance the Trust Fund Window on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) to accelerate action and impact:

- Integrate nutrition into Phase 3 (2023-2030) of the Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Program (RSR-ADSP) to help IDA countries develop adaptive and resilient social protection systems that include nutrition.
- Enhance transparency and increase financial commitments from RSR-ADSP donor markets to accelerate impact and action.

Accelerate impact through the Healthy Lives, Nutrition, and Population (HLNP) Program:

- Boost funding to strengthen health and nutrition programs while delivering high-quality technical assistance for effective strategy implementation.
- Utilize IDA21 investments to strengthen health systems and drive the delivery of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) to effectively prevent, detect, and treat malnutrition across all age groups.

Strengthen Transparency and Accountability in Nutrition Investments:

- Establish clearer coding for “nutrition” and “food security” in the public database to enhance accountability and allow for consistent reporting on financing.
- Commit to regular, comprehensive reporting on the impact of nutrition investments to improve monitoring and progress assessment.

The 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit presents a critical opportunity for the World Bank to affirm its leadership in the global fight against malnutrition. By committing at least \$4 billion annually for the next three fiscal years, the Bank can significantly enhance its efforts to address the urgent nutrition crisis facing millions. Implementing the proposed strategies will not only elevate the visibility of nutrition within its financing mechanisms but also ensure that the most vulnerable populations receive the support they desperately need. Now is the time for the World Bank to take decisive action and pave the way for transformative change in nutrition outcomes worldwide.

Background

The World Bank’s Role in Financing Nutrition

Malnutrition is a critical global health issue, with almost 600 million people projected to be chronically undernourished by 2030, while over one billion adolescent girls and women currently suffer from various forms of malnutrition, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable women and children.¹ The World Bank's [Nutrition Investment Framework](#) emphasizes the urgent need for increased investments in undernutrition, projecting a remarkable return of \$23 for every \$1 spent—totaling an estimated \$2.4 trillion in economic benefits. With the cost of inaction potentially reaching \$41 trillion over the next decade, the upcoming [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#) in March 2025 is a crucial opportunity for leaders and civil society to unite and make bold commitments to address this crisis. Together, we can drive meaningful change for the world's most vulnerable populations.

The World Bank plays a critical role in financing nutrition interventions, having increased its investments over the past decade. However, recent analysis shows that at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2021, the Bank committed \$500 million through the [IDA Crisis Response Window's Early Response Financing](#) and pledged up to \$2.5 billion for “nutrition-contributing activities” through IDA and IBRD for FY21 and FY22 - a commitment that fell short of leveraging the necessary financing to address urgent nutrition needs. As the [International Development Association \(IDA\)](#) undergoes its 21st replenishment that aims to raise over \$100 billion, and with the realignment of key Global Challenge Programs—which includes a Food and Nutrition Security program—now is the time for the World Bank to take a leadership role in nutrition financing. We urge the Bank to increase the profile of nutrition in IDA 21 and take complementary action in order to be in a position to make an ambitious commitment at the N4G Summit to meet both the financial and non-financial needs required to tackle malnutrition globally.

Call to Action

We call on the World Bank to make a commitment at the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit of at least \$4 billion a year for the next 3 fiscal years (FY26, FY27 and FY28).

This commitment should also include the following policy undertakings:

- **IDA21 Policy Package:** The World Bank should strengthen implementation of the “People” focus area policy commitment to better support countries to promote child development by expanding access to maternal and child health and nutrition services, and improving nutrition delivery systems by:
 - Building sub-indicators into the IDA Scorecard and the associated narratives for tracking access to nutrition-specific services across all IDA countries. This will ensure standardized data collection, enabling improved monitoring of the People

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, World Food Programme, and World Health Organization. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023: Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation, and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum*. FAO, 2023.

and Gender policy commitments and, more generally, assessment of nutrition service access and outcomes. For example, this could include sectoral sub-indicators that track the number of children under 5 years of age who benefit from programs to prevent and treat child stunting and wasting, child growth and development, access to nutritious food, and the number of pregnant women who benefit from the prevention and treatment of anemia. Disaggregating data by age and gender will provide a clearer understanding of the Bank's impact on children and women; and

- For each such sub-indicator, setting annually reviewed numerical/quantitative results targets for IDA countries and publishing sub-indicator results annually. This will help track progress, ensure accountability, and guide countries in making evidence-based decisions to optimize maternal and child health and nutrition interventions.
- **Crisis Response Window (CRW):** 2023 marked the fourth consecutive year of rising numbers of people in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification/Cadre Harmonisé² Phase 3³ or above. The World Bank should address the critical role that nutrition interventions play within crisis prevention, preparedness, and response within the CRW as part of IDA21 by:
 - Increasing the CRW and Early Response Financing (ERF) by at least 50% above the ceiling of \$1 billion, which was reached in the first fiscal year of IDA20;
 - Supporting countries with technical assistance to address acute malnutrition in their crisis preparedness and response plans; and
 - Support countries by making the process more efficient to increase the pace of disbursements; and
 - Revising the triggering criteria for food security crises in the CRW by lowering the eligibility threshold to IPC Phase 2 and eliminating the requirement for countries to show a worsening trend of at least five percentage points, which will provide the Bank staff greater discretion to respond more swiftly to emerging food insecurity and malnutrition events.
 - Food security programs need to be specifically designed for the unique challenges of fragile and conflict-affected regions. Ensuring the continuity of services, such as school meals and emergency food distribution, is crucial, and these interventions must be tailored to address the specific needs of children in these difficult environments.
- **Alignment with UHC Target to Deliver on Nutrition Outcomes:** The World Bank should prioritize integrating nutrition services within its Universal Health Coverage (UHC) financing target by:
 - Clarifying the percentage of beneficiaries under the UHC target (1.5 billion people) who will gain access to nutrition services, particularly in IDA countries, where 92% of the world's food-insecure populations reside. The IDA

²The [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) is a collaborative initiative that enhances food security and nutrition analysis to inform decision-making across countries. It provides a standardized classification system for assessing the severity of food insecurity and malnutrition, guiding emergency responses and long-term policy planning. The [Cadre Harmonisé \(CH\)](#) complements the IPC by harmonizing methodologies specifically in the Sahel and West Africa, enabling rigorous analysis of food security situations and fostering coordinated responses to crises.

³ In the IPC framework, [Phase 3](#) (Serious) indicates that populations face significant food consumption gaps and elevated acute malnutrition. To trigger Emergency Response Financing (ERF) for Phase 3, two criteria must be satisfied: (1) a portion of the population must be classified as IPC Phase 3 or higher, and (2) there must be at least a 5% increase in the percentage of people classified as IPC Phase 3 or higher. The World Bank's Technical Expert Group on Food Security verifies these conditions prior to recommending action.

Replenishment Agreement should explicitly state that at least 400 million people will benefit from social protection services, 700 million from health services, and 300 million from nutrition services.

- Providing countries with technical support to embed nutrition services within national health strategies and programs, including workforce development and supply chain strengthening, to facilitate progress towards the UHC target.
- **Global Challenge Programs (GCP):** The World Bank should provide clarity on the implementation of the GCPs, which include interventions from HNP, SPJ, and Agriculture and Food (AGF), by:
 - Providing clarity on the implementation of the GCPs, which include interventions from HNP, SPJ, and Agriculture and Food (AGF) by incorporating nutrition into the planned initiatives, ensuring high-quality technical assistance to effectively structure the programs, and utilizing investments to not only achieve the aims of the overall policy package but also to enhance the specific objectives of the GCPs;
 - Placing greater emphasis for improved Food & Nutrition Security on vulnerable children, especially those in fragile, conflict-affected, and marginalized communities. Targeted interventions, such as school meal programs, early childhood nutrition support, and food assistance for malnourished children, are essential to ensure both immediate relief and long-term well-being; and
 - Embedding more nutrition specialists across the World Bank Group, including the AGF.
- **Trust Fund Window on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS):** The World Bank should continue to strengthen efforts to accelerate action and impact through the new Trust Fund Window on FNS under the Rapid Social Response (RSR) Program by:
 - Integrating nutrition into Phase 3 (2023-2030) of the Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Program (RSR-ADSP)⁴, formerly known as the Rapid Social Response (RSR) Program, to help IDA countries build adaptive and resilient social protection systems that incorporate nutrition; and
 - Enhancing transparency of and increasing financial commitments from RSR-ADSP donor markets.⁵
- **Healthy Lives, Nutrition, and Population (HLNP) Program:** The World Bank should increase the impact of the HLNP Program by:
 - Increasing funding to ensure robust financial support for health and nutrition programs;
 - Providing high-quality technical assistance to countries, helping them implement effective strategies such as Optima and nutrition public expenditure reviews; and
 - Leveraging these resources to achieve the nutrition and health outcomes outlined in the current IDA21 policy package.

⁴ The [Rapid Social Response \(RSR\) Program](#), now the Rapid Social Response Adaptive and Dynamic Social Protection Program (RSR-ADSP), is a key instrument for implementing the World Bank's [Social Protection and Jobs Compass](#) to achieve universal protection and to increase equity, resilience, and opportunities for all vulnerable households. Phase 3 (2023-30) of the Program currently focuses on gender, COVID-19 responses, the global consequences of the war in Ukraine, climate change, green jobs, conflict, migration, and other critical areas.

⁵ The RSR-ADSP is supported by Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, the GHR Foundation and UBS Optimus Foundation.

- Using IDA21 investments to catalyze the health systems strengthening required to comprehensively deliver [Essential Nutrition Actions](#) (ENA) which would prevent, detect, and treat malnutrition for people of all ages.
- **Nutrition Investment Transparency and Accountability:** The World Bank should outline a pathway towards consistent reporting and clearer coding in the public database by:
 - Updating the public database to reflect clearer coding for “nutrition” and “food security” investments, enabling stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to hold the Bank accountable. The database should also include a detailed funding breakdown, allowing for consistent reporting on nutrition-specific and sensitive financing; and
 - Regularly publishing comprehensive reports that provide insights into the impact of its nutrition investments, thereby facilitating better monitoring and progress assessment towards achieving its commitments.

Background details

To establish a feasible yet ambitious financial target for addressing global nutrition, this Call to Action recommends an annual commitment of \$4 billion from the World Bank for fiscal years 2026-2028. This figure exceeds the previous commitment of \$2.5 billion made at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2021, underscoring the urgent need to scale up efforts to combat malnutrition. Current estimates indicate that an additional \$13 billion annually is necessary to adequately expand nutrition interventions and address undernutrition worldwide over the next decade.

The World Bank also pledged to increase the number of individuals benefiting from social protection programs aimed at alleviating hunger, [targeting 500 million people](#). This commitment represents an 80% increase from the levels reported in the last World Bank Corporate Scorecard. Over the past three fiscal years, the Bank has approved \$4.3 billion for social protection initiatives that included nutrition components, averaging \$1.45 billion per year to combat food insecurity and malnutrition. To align with the 80% target increase, the annual funding amount should also rise to at least \$2.5 billion per year.

Furthermore, the [recent changes to the equity/loan ratio](#) as of October 15, 2024, are projected to generate \$45 billion in additional lending over the next three years. Given that food and nutrition security is now classified as a Global Challenge Program and an IDA21 policy priority—an elevation not seen in the previous three years—there is a reasonable expectation of an annual increase of at least \$1.5 billion per year. **Collectively, these commitments, target increases, and anticipated additional lending create a robust framework that not only renders the \$4 billion annual commitment feasible but also positions it as a critical and ambitious step toward significantly enhancing global nutrition outcomes.**

Signatories

ACTION Global Health Advocacy Partnership
 Global Health Advocates
 Results Canada
 SDG2 Advocacy Hub
 World Vision International