



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

# The First 1,000 Days

Create a Circle of Protection around International Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Programs

## Why are the first 1,000 days of a child's life so critical?

- The 1,000-day window from pregnancy to age 2 is a critical time in a child's life.
- Malnutrition during this period can cause irreversible damage to children, resulting in:
  - diminished intellectual capacity
  - impaired immune function
  - shorter height and impaired vision
- This damage reduces a child's ability to achieve in school and be productive throughout his or her life. Studies show that compared to a well-nourished child, a malnourished child's earning potential is reduced by 10 percent over the course of his or her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> But this damage is preventable.
- Rising food prices and the global financial crisis have led to increases in hunger and malnutrition. Right now, 925 million people suffer from chronic hunger worldwide and 24,000 children die every day from poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases—one child every 3.6 seconds.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

## What would budget cuts mean for women and children and this critical 1,000-day window?

- Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and Scaling Up Nutrition, as well as food aid programs, are critical ways in which the U.S. government assists countries that are trying to reduce the scourge of malnutrition.
- Poverty-focused development assistance accounts for 0.6 percent of the entire U.S. budget. Cutting funding for these programs will not significantly reduce the deficit, will cost us more in the long run, and would undermine the progress already made in reducing maternal and child deaths and severe malnutrition.
- Simple, low-cost programs can make a huge difference. Breast-feeding, therapeutic feeding, and vitamin supplements can save millions of lives and could increase a country's GDP by at least 2-3 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- By protecting programs that prevent hunger and malnutrition in this 1,000-day window, children are given a fighting chance, a population becomes healthier, and communities can lift themselves out of poverty.

Congress must form a **Circle of Protection** around international anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs that support the 1,000-days window of opportunity.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Raj Shah, "The True Yields of Food Security." Chicago Council on Global Affairs' Symposium on Global Agriculture and Food Security. Washington, DC. May 24, 2011. <http://www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2011/sp110524.html>

<sup>2</sup> Scaling Up Nutrition Road Map, 2010: [http://un-foodsecurity.org/sites/default/files/SUNRoadMap\\_English.pdf](http://un-foodsecurity.org/sites/default/files/SUNRoadMap_English.pdf)