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Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021 (S. 2956/H.R. 4693)

Malnutrition Costs Children's Lives ...

- Malnutrition is responsible for nearly half of all preventable deaths among children under 5. Every year, the world loses hundreds of thousands of young children and babies to hunger-related causes.
- By next year, nearly 14 million more children are likely to be severely malnourished because of the pandemic's impacts.¹ This means that 58.9 million young children—or almost the whole population of South Africa—will likely face life-threatening malnutrition if the global community doesn't act.
- Nutrition has historically been a relatively low priority for country governments and donors.
- Despite growing global recognition of the importance of maternal and child nutrition, investments in nutrition have only gone up by 7 percent in recent years (since 2015)²—not nearly enough to address the problem.

... But There Are Solutions

- Malnutrition has proven solutions. For example, fortifying foods with essential nutrients (like Vitamin D, iron, and iodine), providing young children and pregnant women with nutritional supplements, and supporting new mothers to breastfeed all help prevent malnutrition.
- However, countries with high rates of malnutrition do not have enough resources to reach their whole population with these solutions.
- The United States must act to support low-income countries to protect the nutrition of women and children in the 1,000 day window—the critical period between pregnancy and age 2. Getting the right nutrition during this window is essential for women and children to thrive.

It costs \$100 to treat a severely malnourished child and prevent a needless death.

Source: World Bank (2016). *An Investment Framework for Nutrition: Reaching the Global Targets for Stunting, Anemia, Breastfeeding, and Wasting*.

How This Bill Will Help

- The Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021 builds on Bread for the World's years-long focus on improving global nutrition, most recently Bread's leadership on the passage of the Global Nutrition Resolution (H.Res. 189/S.Res. 260).

- In 2019, the U.S. government reached more than 27 million children with nutrition programs.³ With this bill, we can significantly increase the effectiveness of U.S. government nutrition programs by making them more integrated, coordinated, and effective. This bill will impact the nutrition of tens of millions of women and young children.
- The bill makes nutrition an even higher priority for the U.S. government, led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It establishes a five-year strategy to support countries in implementing their plans to prevent and treat malnutrition.
- The bill requires the strategy to include elements that have proven essential to lasting progress, such as setting goals, identifying targets that will help measure progress, ensuring coordination with countries' own plans, and collecting data to learn from and use to continually improve.
- Resources will be invested in high-impact nutrition programs during the 1,000 days. These include prenatal vitamins, support to breastfeed, vitamin A supplementation, and life-saving treatment for severely malnourished children.
- According to the legislation, USAID will report to Congress annually on progress made toward preventing and treating malnutrition globally. This will ensure improved accountability and transparency on the use of taxpayer dollars and the impact of U.S. government global nutrition investments.
- The bill also establishes a Nutrition Leadership Council at USAID with high-level representatives from various parts of the Agency. The Council will be responsible for ensuring that the strategy is implemented effectively and cohesively. This Leadership Council will make sure that nutrition remains a high priority at USAID.

Every \$1 invested in global nutrition creates \$16 in economic returns due to decreased healthcare costs and increased economic productivity.

Source: IFPRI (2016). *Global Nutrition Report 2016: From Promise to Impact: Ending Malnutrition by 2030*.

“This bill will impact the nutrition of tens of millions of women and young children.”

Child malnutrition is preventable, and this legislation will deepen U.S. leadership and strengthen strategic focus.

Endnotes

1 Osendarp, S., et al. (2021). The COVID-19 crisis will exacerbate maternal and child undernutrition and child mortality in low- and middle-income countries. *Nature Food* 2, 476-484. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00319-4>

2 Results for Development (2021). Tracking aid for the WHO nutrition targets: progress toward the global nutrition goals between 2015-2019. <https://r4d.org/resources/tracking-aid-who-nutrition-targets-global-spending-roadmap-better-data/>

3 Feed the Future (2020). Feed the Future Progress Snapshot: Cultivating Hope. https://cg-281711fb-71ea-422c-b02c-ef79f539e9d2.s3.us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/uploads/2020/09/2020-9-18_FTF-Snapshot-Report_508C.pdf