



African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)

Towards a Coordinated and Accelerated Action for the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition in Africa

Nutrition and Food Systems Implementation Plan

2019 - 2025

AUDA-NEPAD

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Executive Summary

Malnutrition in all its forms- undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and increasing overweight and obesity fuelling the rise of non-communicable disease (NCDs) – has become a significant African challenge. This triple burden is the greatest threat facing the continent’s development trajectory as the current and next generation of Africans are deprived of reaching their full human development potential. African Leaders have begun to respond.

Africa is unlikely to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), partly due to the pervasive effects of hunger and malnutrition. As indicated by the Global Nutrition Report (2017) and the AUDA-NEPAD Africa Nutrition Scorecard (2015), a more intentional focus on nutrition can have a powerful multiplier effect across the SDGs, such as: 1) promoting sustainable food production, 2) increasing socio-economic development 3) decreasing the burden on health systems, 4) fostering equity and inclusion since nutrition acts as a platform for better outcomes in education, employment, female empowerment and poverty reduction, and 5) promoting stability, ensuring peace and security.

The rollout of Agenda 2063 stipulates the bold vision to completely eliminate hunger and food insecurity. However, current interventions are often implemented in isolation and are thus not working well. A new focus is required to address malnutrition in all its complexity, which requires an array of actions, taking different forms in different countries.

Three things need to change. First, the political environment should be made conducive to reducing malnutrition. Second, malnutrition cannot be addressed in isolation; policies and practices in the many sectors that intersect with nutrition – from education to agriculture to climate and the environment – should address it. Finally, high-impact, targeted nutrition interventions must reach the people that need them. At present the gap between delivery and need are large.

The AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Implementation Plan aims to catalyse and support this agenda and enable Member States to address malnutrition more effectively. This explicitly builds on a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach involving an array of actions by several sectors in different forms in different countries. This implementation plan proposes a way to address these challenges. With this implementation plan, AUDA-NEPAD’s vision is to reduce hunger and malnutrition by 25 percent by 2025. The mission of the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme is to catalyse food and nutrition security actions for greater impact on the African continent.

These align to the new AUDA mandate as well as the broader AUDA-NEPAD vision and mission. The AUDA-NEPAD mandate is to;

- Coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards accelerated realization of Agenda 2063
- Strengthen capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies
- Advance knowledge based advisory support
- Undertake the full range of resource mobilization
- Serve as the continent’s technical interface with all of Africa’s development stakeholders and development partners.

AUDA-NEPAD’s vision is to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Its mission is to work with African countries, both individually and collectively towards sustainable growth and development.

In line with the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme vision and mission, the following overarching goals have been identified:

1. To be a strategic programme for the AUDA-NEPAD Agency to foster alignment and harmonisation of agriculture, food systems and nutrition programmes in Africa at different levels towards achieving the Africa food security and nutrition vision, goals and targets.
2. To use agriculture as an entry point to promote coordination, complementarity and synergies, between and across the different initiatives that seek to address the burden of malnutrition in Africa.
3. To promote development of human resource, research capacity and evidence to support nutrition actions at national and AU level.

In order to achieve these goals, AUDA-NEPAD commits to adopting a multisectoral and food systems approach by:

- Accelerating agriculture impact on nutrition through increased dietary diversity and related improvements in nutrient adequacy and quality of diets.
- Promoting maternal and young child nutrition through advocacy of essential nutrition interventions. These include AUDA-NEPAD's support to Scaling up Nutrition action on the continent and, including expanding work on the Cost of Hunger and Cost of Interventions to all African countries.
- Supporting better school feeding programmes promoted as a social protection mechanism through programmes that support the production and market creation for smallholder farmers.
- Developing nutrition and food systems professional capacity for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of nutrition action on the African continent promoted.
- Generating and sharing strategic knowledge including management lessons on best practices to support nutrition progress in Africa.

AUDA-NEPAD will focus implementation on high impact actions across health, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation, through the facilitation and promotion of a number of nutrition flagship areas; These are to:

1. Promote improved maternal and young child nutrition through essential actions
2. Promote food fortification, Biofortification and supplementation to prevent and reduce micronutrient deficiencies
3. Promote dietary diversity (adopting a better value chain approach from farm to plate)
4. Promote home grown school feeding programmes and go to scale
5. Promote food safety, regulatory and quality management frameworks
6. Promote better governance of food environments to address overweight and obesity
7. Promote initiatives to address the interlinkages between communicable diseases, NCDs, maternal and child health, and socio-economic development.

Given AUDA-NEPAD's commitment to learning, the document will have the flexibility to evolve as needed based on the growing body of research that documents the impact and cost-effectiveness of food security and nutrition interventions.

The role of AUDA-NEPAD: To achieve these objectives, the unique role of AUDA-NEPAD can be defined and recognized as:

- Galvanising African leaders to respond to malnutrition through such initiatives such as the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN), and the Pan African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (PAPA-FSN).
- Convening stakeholders from across all sectors in the food system at various scales to promote a multi-sectoral approach to address malnutrition and to build political will and commitment.
- Creating a conducive enabling environment through supporting the establishment of coordination mechanisms, as well as the alignment and policy coherence.

- Advocating for nutrition in appropriate fora with a particular emphasis on changing the “political currency” of nutrition across the continent.
- Building the surveillance of nutrition, particularly to support on-going learning and adaptation of policies and programmes through garnering evidence and analysis and communicating findings.
- Providing technical backstopping particularly for ensuring policies and programmes become nutrition-sensitive and are fully implemented
- Galvanising community and grassroots engagement to drive demand for nutrition.
- Promoting accountability and reporting to underpin a “social compact” on nutrition between states and citizens across the continent.
- Strengthening capacity in the range of activities required to implement this agenda.
- In all of this, adopting a system approach that ensures sustainable diets with co-benefits on climate, nutrition, human capital, the environment plus overall economic development.

Foreword by Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO - AUDA-NEPAD



Of all the multitudes of problems plaguing Africa and the world over, malnutrition constantly rears its head as one of the most complex to understand, address and eradicate. In its complexity, the various forms of malnutrition; i). Underweight, stunting and wasting, ii). Micronutrient deficiencies, and iii). Overweight and obesity have been recognized the leading causes of morbidity and mortality.

Africa continues to record some of the highest levels of maternal and child malnutrition while at the same time, lately, we see rising levels of overweight and obesity amongst both adults and children leading to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) with a resultant increase in health care costs.

Given the multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary nature of nutrition, there cannot be a “one size fits all” approach to tackle the challenges of both hunger and malnutrition as each country has unique combinations of the triple burden, as well as varying resources and capacities to plan, implement and track change.

Addressing malnutrition in all its forms is at the heart of the Agenda 2063 and the bold targets of the Malabo Declaration to reduce malnutrition by 25 percent by 2025 underpin the actions contained in the current revised strategy. To effectively move forward on this, AUDA-NEPAD in its new transformation and transition to the African Union Development Agency (AUDA), builds on the global momentum and thinking of a holistic food systems approach for improving dietary diversity and delivering safer and healthier food environments and diets to all.

The AUDA-NEPAD Strategy also picks a leaf from the other continental instruments for accelerated socio-economic development and is meant to provide direction and guidance for effective planning and delivery of the identified food security and nutrition priorities. To this end the strategy addresses itself to focus on seven flagship areas for action, namely 1. Improved maternal and young child nutrition 2. Prevention and reduction of micronutrient deficiencies 3. Enhanced dietary diversity 4. Scaled up home grown school feeding programmes 5. Improved food safety, regulatory and quality 6. Better governance of food environments to address overweight and obesity and 7. Addressing the interlinkages between communicable diseases and nutrition for better socio-economic development.

As a continent, and together with our partners, we must all work towards a hunger and malnutrition free Africa for an improved human, social and economic development trajectory.

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki
Chief Executive Officer
AUDA-NEPAD

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALN	African Leaders for Nutrition
ARNS	Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy
AU	African Union
AUDA	African Union Development Agency
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAN	Compendium of Actions for Nutrition
COHA	Cost of Hunger in Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project
FBDGs	Food-based dietary guidelines
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPAFSN	Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MYCN	Maternal and Young Child Nutrition
NACS	Nutrition Assessment, Counselling and Support
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NDPs	National Development Plans
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
PAPA-FSN	Pan African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition
PEM	Protein-Energy Malnutrition
REACH	Renewed Efforts Against child Hunger
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
ReSAKSS	Regional Strategic Analysis Knowledge and Support System
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling up Nutrition
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VMDs	Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies
WFP	World Food Programme
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. Purpose of the Strategic Programme

Malnutrition in all its forms- under-nutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies, increasing overweight and obesity fuelling the rise of non-communicable disease (NCDs) – has become a significant African challenge. This triple burden is the greatest threat facing the continent’s development trajectory as the current and next generation of Africans are deprived of reaching their full human development potential. African Leaders have begun to respond. The roll-out of Agenda 2063 stipulates the bold vision to completely eliminate hunger and food insecurity.

However, current interventions are often implemented in isolation and are thus not working well. A new focus is required to address malnutrition in all its complexity, which requires an array of actions, taking different forms in different countries. Three things need to change. First, the political environment should be made conducive to reducing malnutrition. Second, malnutrition cannot be addressed in isolation; policies and practices in the many sectors that intersect with nutrition – from education to agriculture to climate and the environment – should address it. Finally, high-impact, targeted nutrition interventions must reach the people that need them. At present the gap between delivery and need are large.

The AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme aims to catalyse and support this agenda and enable Member States to address malnutrition more effectively. This explicitly builds on a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach involving an array of actions in different forms in different countries. This strategic programme proposes a way to address these challenges.

2. Introduction: Context and rationale for action

Africa’s sustained economic growth since the early 2000s has been underpinned, in part, by globalisation through increased investments, including capital inflows, and by favourable commodity prices that enabled strong export growth (IFPRI, 2018). This improved growth performance contributed to declines in poverty, hunger, and malnutrition and it enabled a middle class to flourish. Africa, however,

particularly south of the Sahara, still has a higher poverty rate compared to the other regions of the world (IFPRI, 2018). An often-neglected issue is that chronic hunger and malnutrition are widespread and remain a critical hindrance to human development, as well as socio-economic growth and development. Indeed, the Cost of Hunger Studies undertaken by the African Union (AU), the AUDA-NEPAD, the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa and the World Food Programme (WFP) have clearly demonstrated the economic value of addressing malnutrition (AU, 2014).

2.1 The social and economic value of addressing malnutrition

While the number of people affected by malnutrition is difficult to calculate – because a person can suffer from more than one type of malnutrition simultaneously – the scale in Africa is staggering as indicated by the AUDA-NEPAD Africa Nutrition Scorecard of 2015:

- 58 million children under age five are stunted (short for age), an increase from the 45 million estimated in 1990 (AU, 2015a), 13.9 million are wasted, and 10.3 million are overweight. None of these children are growing healthily (UNICEF-WHO-World Bank, 2015);
- 164 million children and women of reproductive age are anaemic (UNICEF-WHO-World Bank, 2015);
- 220 million people are estimated to be calorie deficient (FAO, 2015);
- Eight percent of adults over 20 are obese (UNICEF-WHO-World Bank, 2015);
- Adult obesity is on the rise in all 54 African countries (2010–2014) (NEPAD, 2015); and
- 13 countries in Africa are having to manage serious levels of stunting in children under five or anaemia in women of reproductive age and adult overweight (NEPAD, 2015).

Taken together, these have severe implications for the long-term educational attainment and health, undermining the economic ability of future African generations. A cornerstone of Agenda 2063, a set of aspirations for Africa, is that the continent’s future economic success lies in increasing human capital - schooling, knowledge and skills that will allow Africans to compete and thrive in a global

economy. This is based on a belief that increasing human capital comes about through investments in the formal education system. This is, however, only partially true: investments in nutrition, particularly in the nutrition of very young children, are equally important (Hoddinott, 2016).

Malnutrition in all its forms - under-nutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity – are one of the main barriers that prevent African children and societies from realising their full potential. In particular, ensuring good nutrition for women and adolescent girls is critical to laying a strong foundation for healthy and productive societies. Furthermore, chronic under-nutrition in the period from the start of a woman’s pregnancy to her child’s second birthday- the first 1,000 days of a child’s life- has long term adverse consequences including reduced stature in adulthood (Hoddinott, Alderman, Behrman, Haddad & Horton, 2013a; Hoddinott, Maluccio, Behrman, Martorell, Melgar, Quisumbing, Ramirez-Zea, Stein & Young, 2013b).

The Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) studies undertaken by the AU, AUDA-NEPAD, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the WFP, argues that malnutrition imposes high social and economic costs: the report calculates that child

undernutrition alone is responsible for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) losses as high as 19 percent (AU, 2014). Overall, African economies lose between 2-17% of GDP annually (Hoddinott, 2016). The economic consequences are demonstrated by associations between height and outcomes in the market. In Senegal for example, men who were stunted when they were two years old were 9.0 cm shorter in adulthood compared to men who were not stunted (Coly, Milet, Diallo, Ndiaye, Bénéfice, Simondon, Wade & Simondon, 2006; Stein, Wang, Martorell, Norris, Adair, Bas, Sachdev, Bhargava, Fall, Gigante & Victora, 2010; Alderman, Hoddinott & Kinsey, 2006). A useful rule of thumb is that every loss of one percent height attained in adulthood reduces adult earnings by 2.4 percent (Hoddinott, 2016).

Chronic under-nutrition has neurological consequences that lead to cognitive impairments, which result in children starting school later, dropping out earlier and performing badly (Alderman et al., 2006). The economic consequences of cognitive impairments arise because of the well-documented links between schooling, cognitive skills and earnings and income in adulthood (Hoddinott, 2016). In turn, micro-nutrient deficiencies result in economic losses. Both iodine deficiency and iron

 **Only one in five** children suffering from undernutrition receive adequate medical attention

 **8 to 44%** of all child mortality is associated with undernutrition

 Stunted children achieve **0.2 to 2 years** less in school education

 Africa’s share in the world’s undernourished population has increased from **18 to 28%**

 **40 to 67%** of current working-age population suffered from stunting as children

 The annual costs associated with child undernutrition are estimated at **1.9 to 16.5%** of the equivalent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

 Most health costs associated with undernutrition occur before the child reaches the age of **one year**

 Child mortality associated with undernutrition has reduced national workforces by **1 to 13.7%**

 Between **1 to 18%** of repetitions in school are associated with stunting

 Improving the nutritional status of children is a priority that needs urgent policy attention to accelerate socio-economic progress and **development in Africa**



Source: THE COST OF HUNGER IN AFRICA SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CHILD UNDERNUTRITION

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Key Findings from the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study

NEPAD TRANSFORMING AFRICA

deficient anaemia lead to cognitive damage. In particular, iodine deficiency in childhood adversely affects psycho-motor skill development including movement, balance and fine motor skills, and there is some evidence linking it to slowed physical growth (Horton & Ross, 2003). One study estimate that iron deficiencies cost African economies between 2.7 and 4.2 percent of GDP annually (Horton & Ross, 2003).

Recognising the societal and economic costs of malnutrition, it becomes clear that the issue is much more complex than simply the lack of food; it extends to deficiencies in essential nutrients, inadequate knowledge about proper nutrition, inadequate health and care, and a lack of effective and adequate delivery channels (Ruel, Quisumbing & Balagamwala, 2018). Malnutrition exists in many forms manifesting itself in the form of protein and energy deficiencies leading to hunger, underweight, and stunting; excessive consumption of energy and nutrients leading to overweight, obesity, and diseases of excess; and micro-nutrient deficiencies, which cause a range of problems, including iron deficiency anaemia, birth defects, and osteoporosis, amongst others.

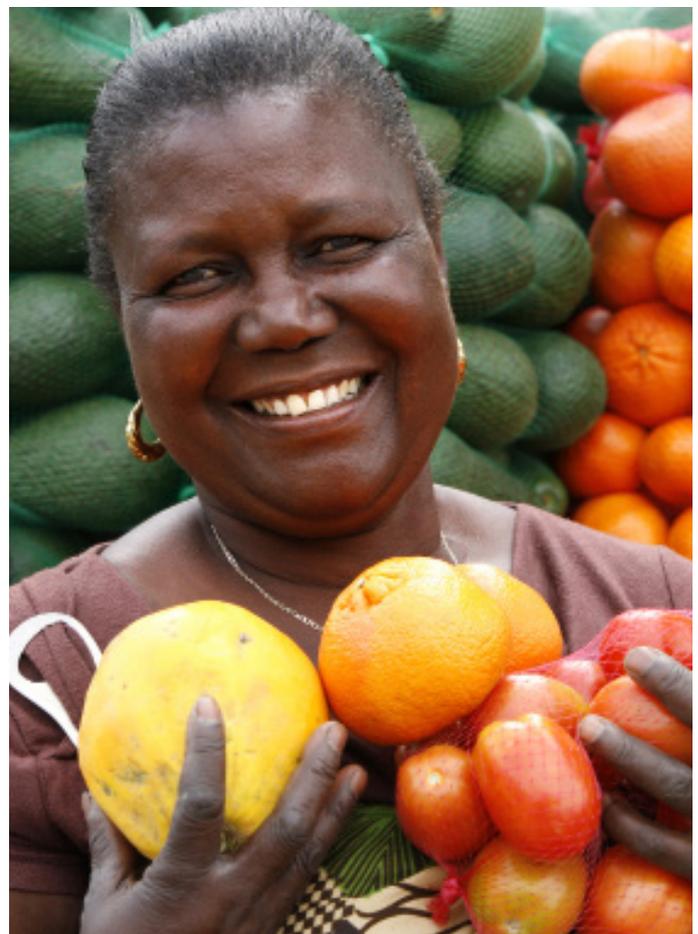
2.2 The Nutrition transition

To date, many developing countries are facing a rapid nutrition transition. Nutrition transition is the shift in dietary consumption and energy expenditure that coincides with economic, demographic, and epidemiological changes. Populations are moving away from indigenous and traditional diets high in cereal and fiber to more to western diets comprising processed foods high in sugars, fat, and animal-source food.

Indeed, Africa has widespread micro-nutrient deficiencies whilst facing a nutrition transition associated with economic development and urbanisation (Steyn & Mchiza, 2014). The nutrition transition as a result of unhealthy diets, is bringing about increases in over-nutrition and related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). High body mass increases the likelihood of incurring various NCDs such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders, hypertension, coronary heart disease, various cancers and osteoarthritis (WHO

in FAO, 2017a). These represent a high burden for healthcare systems and result in lower productivity, lower incomes and premature death. As a result, NCDs are recognised as the number one driver of the global burden of diseases, affecting one in three people, with an economic loss of 11 per cent in Africa and Asia (TEEB, 2018). Nutrition-related NCDs account for half of all deaths and disability in low- and middle-income countries (IFPRI, 2015).

Africa is unlikely to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), partly due to the pervasive effects of hunger and malnutrition. As indicated by the Global Nutrition Report (2017) and the AUDA-NEPAD Africa Nutrition Scorecard (AUDA-NEPAD, 2015), a more intentional focus on nutrition can have a powerful multiplier effect across the SDGs, such as: 1) promoting sustainable food production, 2) increasing economic development including brain development, 3) decreasing the burden on health systems, 4) fostering equity and inclusion since nutrition acts as a platform for better outcomes in health and education, employment, female empowerment and poverty reduction, and 5) promoting stability, ensuring peace and security.



2.3 Addressing malnutrition in all its forms

This triple burden of malnutrition will rob the continent of its promised future. Each of these three problem areas must be addressed by making Africa's food system deliver healthier, more nutritious foods and making these foods more available and affordable to all people.

Investing in nutrition interventions, along with policy actions to address the underlying causes of malnutrition, would help millions of children to develop into healthy and productive members of society. Interventions that reduce chronic under-nutrition are excellent investments; for a typical African country, every United States Dollar invested in reducing chronic under-nutrition in children yields a 16 Dollar return (Hoddinott, 2016). This is further supported by benefit cost ratios of up to 21.6. Indeed, for 15 African countries, meeting the 2025 World Health Assembly (WHA) target for stunting will add 83 billion United States Dollars to national incomes (Hoddinott, 2016).

Agenda 2063 stipulates the bold vision to completely eliminate hunger and food insecurity and includes a call to action to consolidate the modernisation of African agriculture and agribusinesses. The priority areas for the first ten years of Agenda 2063 are underpinned by food and nutrition security, specifically, "aspiration one" which works towards "a prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" (AU, 2015b). The first ten-year priority commits must, however, address all forms of malnutrition, maternal, child and neonatal mortalities; and these need to be reduced by at least 50 percent against the background of an expanded access to quality health care and services (AU, 2015b).

In 2014, through the Malabo Declaration, specifically the Declaration on Nutrition Security for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa, and its implementation strategy and roadmap, African leaders committed themselves to upholding key Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) goals. Ambitious targets included halving poverty, ending hunger, and reducing stunting to 10 percent

and underweight to 5 percent by 2025. The Malabo Declaration include two explicit declarations: 1) to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods, and 2) to ensure nutrition security for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in Africa (AU, 2014). The first, focused on agriculture, declares a re-commitment to CAADP, with a specific focus on CAADP Pillar III: Increasing food supply and reducing hunger across the region by increasing smallholder productivity and improving responses to food emergencies. The second, emphasised by the inclusion of the WHA six global nutrition targets, which is now also incorporated into other key documents such as the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2015 – 2025 (AU, 2015a).

A review of the strategic plans of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs), recognised by the AU, reveal their development priorities are underpinned by reaching the food and nutrition goals outlined above. The priorities of these entities are aligned to the 50-year framework document and, as such, require an explicit recognition of the role that food and nutrition security play in development processes. This will not only serve as an incentive for full national and regional commitment, but also ensure that both the processes and the outcomes of Agenda 2063 are owned by the people who provided inputs into their national and RECs plans.

3. Defining the Strategy

In bringing together different aspects of food and nutrition security including the ecological basis of food, the production of food, the livelihoods beyond the farm in the value chain, consumption, diets and health, this strategy takes a food systems perspective. The African food system is multifaceted, therefore making it imperative to reorient the dominant focus on production towards a more holistic approach encompassing access, distribution and governance, consumption and waste, markets and livelihoods. A food systems approach highlights the connections between all of these different elements, breaking down silos in the process.

The 7 Dakar Principles

Multisectoral Coordination for Effective Delivery on Nutrition

- 1 Basic Structural issues are addressed including the creation and setting up a “Nutrition (management)Office” at the highest government office such as the Prime Minister, President or the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (e.g. Senegal, Mozambique, etc.).
- 2 Process issues such as joint planning and joint implementation are instituted and enforced with the right skills sets and capacities (e.g. Madagascar etc.).
- 3 Territorial issues are prioritized – Deliberate targeting to geographic areas and populations most in need or marginalized to ensure community based solution seeking and actions (e.g. Kenya etc.).
- 4 Adequate Resources are allocated and managed for the right problem, at the right time, right place and for the intended and right outcome. The actions/activities to implement should be evidence based, with adequate cost analysis and future projections for both Nutrition Sensitive and Nutrition Specific coverage at a desired scale.
- 5 Synchronization of actions on the ground is present. Actions must be planned to occur at the same place, same time, with a common goal, target and outcomes. This ensures value addition while leveraging complimentary inputs by the different actors and sectors (e.g. Burkina Faso, etc.).
- 6 Strong legal framework and backing is evident in order to monitor adherence to laws, regulations and standards. Enshrining the right to food and nutrition as a national constitutional issue creates an enabling environment for policy and programme action with sustainability (e.g. Kenya).
- 7 Feedback based on evidence is regular. Creating and strengthening National Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems and knowledge management platforms to share and scale up good practices while being responsive to the immediate needs by all sectors.

3.1 Vision and mission

The vision of the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme is to reduce hunger and malnutrition by 25 percent by 2025. The mission of the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme is to catalyse food and nutrition security actions for positive and greater impact on the African continent.

These align to the broader AUDA-NEPAD vision and mission. AUDA-NEPAD’s vision is to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Its mission is to work with African countries, both individually and collectively towards sustainable growth and development.

3.2 Goals

In line with the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme vision and mission, the following overarching goals have been identified:

- To be a strategic programme for the AUDA-NEPAD to foster alignment and harmonisation of food security and nutrition programmes in Africa at different levels towards achieving the Africa food security and nutrition vision and goals.
- To use agriculture as an entry point to promote coordination, complementarity and synergies, as highlighted in the 7 Dakar Principles between and across the different initiatives that seek to address the burden of malnutrition in Africa
- To promote development of human resource

and research capacity to support nutrition action at national and continental level.

In order to measure the achievement of these overarching goals, the following results areas have been identified:

- Accelerated agriculture impact on nutrition through increased dietary diversity and related improvements in nutrient adequacy of diets.
- Promoting maternal and young child nutrition (MYCN) through advocacy on essential nutrition interventions. These include AUDA-NEPAD's support to Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) on the continent and, including expanding work on the cost of hunger to additional African countries. Introducing the cost of interventions and solutions.
- Better school feeding programmes promoted as a social protection mechanism through programmes that support market creation for smallholder farmers
- Nutrition professional capacity development for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of nutrition actions on the African continent promoted.
- AUDA-NEPAD strategic knowledge generated and shared. This includes management of lessons and sharing best practices to support implementation and scaling up.

3.3 Strategic objectives

To inform the practical roll-out of the broader identified goals and to ensure the successful achievement of the specified result areas (in 3.2.) The following strategic objectives have been identified:

1. Aligning and coordinating policies and programmes
2. Developing nutrition sensitive programming
3. Building on proven best practice through flagship projects to enhance capacity to address malnutrition
4. Generating knowledge, advocating and tracking implementation

The strategic actions will include the following:

- To mobilise leadership
- To improve awareness of nutrition on the continent
- To promote strategic (and relevant) partnerships

- To promote effective coordination mechanisms at different scales
- To align and improve M&E platform(s)
- To align and improve FNS policy across the continent
- To enable learning around best practice
- To improve continent wide nutrition research and evidence building.

In line with the ARNS strategies, the following targets are set, alongside the overarching vision, for nutrition impact by 2025:

- Reduction of chronic under-nutrition in children under 5 years by 40 percent
- Reduction of anaemia in women of childbearing age by 50 percent
- Reduction of low birth weights by 30 percent
- No increase of overweight in children under 5 years of age and women
- Increase exclusive breast feeding during the first six months by 50 percent
- Reduction of undernourishment (percentage individuals below a calorie cut off) by 50 percent
- Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5 percent

Five major outputs will contribute to the outcome of “improved food and nutrition impact” across the continent and so help reach the vision of “reducing hunger and malnutrition by 25 percent by 2025”. The five major outputs include:

1. Improved institutional arrangements to ensure the development, alignment and coordination of food and nutrition security policies and programmes;
2. Improved policies that align nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive dimensions;
3. Improved programmes emanating from these policies;
4. Improved implementation of these programmes including effective alignment with related programmes; and
5. Improved surveillance to ensure ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning such there is continuous adaptation of programmes to ensure impact.

These outputs will be underpinned by a number of inputs facilitated through AUDA-NEPAD working with the AUC, RECs and Member States. These inputs have been described above as strategic objectives. In terms of inputs they include:

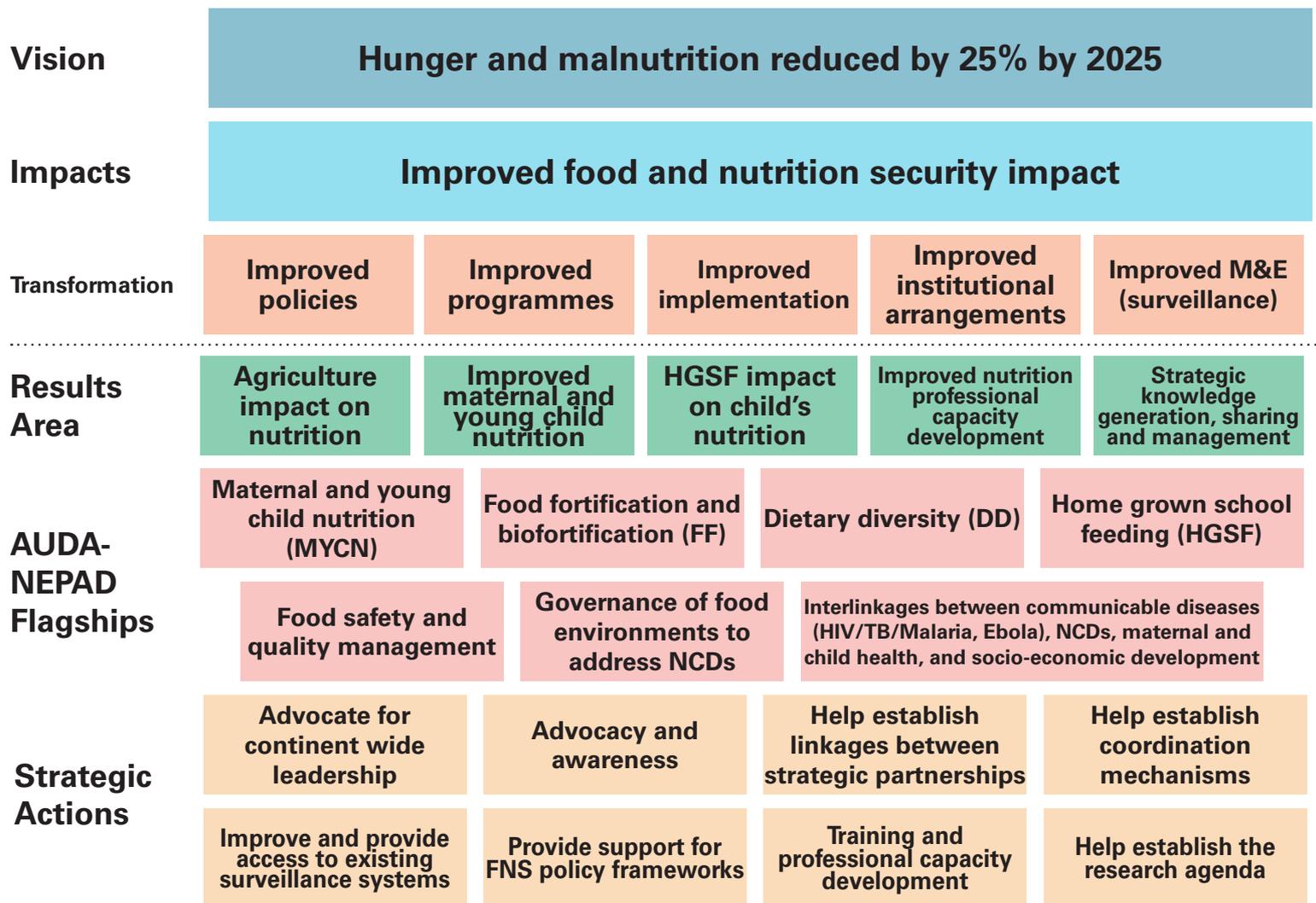


Figure 1: Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme Theory of Change

- Advocacy to mobilise continent-wide leadership;
- Advocacy and awareness about nutrition and food systems;
- Establishment of strategic (and relevant) partnership and linkages;
- Establishment of effective coordination mechanisms at different scales;
- Improvement of and access to M&E platform(s) for surveillance;
- Support for aligned and improved FNS policy across the continent;
- Training and professional capacity development to enable learning around best practice; and
- Improved continent-wide nutrition research and evidence base.

Based on research evidence for the effective promotion of nutrition and food security, and the theory of change, the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme shall facilitate and promote a number of nutrition flagship areas:

1. Promote improved maternal and young child nutrition
2. Promote food fortification, biofortification and supplementation
3. Promote dietary diversity
4. Promote home grown school feeding programmes
5. Promote food safety and quality management frameworks
6. Promote better governance of food environments to address NCDs
7. Promote initiatives to address the interlinkages between communicable diseases, NCDs, maternal and child health, and socio-economic development.

The components of the Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme are provided in the subsequent section.

3.4 The Role of AUDA-NEPAD

In order to achieve these objectives, the unique role of AUDA-NEPAD can be defined as:

- Galvanising African leaders to respond to malnutrition through such initiatives such as the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN).
- Convening stakeholders from across all sectors in the food system at various scales to promote a multi-sectoral approach to addressing malnutrition and to build political will and commitment.
- Creating a conducive enabling environment through supporting the establishment of coordination mechanisms, as well as the alignment and coordination of policy.
- Advocating for nutrition in appropriate fora with a particular emphasis on changing the “political currency” of nutrition across the continent.
- Building the surveillance of nutrition, particularly to support on-going learning and adaptation of policies and programmes through garnering evidence and analysis and communicating findings.
- Providing technical backstopping particularly for ensuring policies and programmes become nutrition-sensitive.
- Galvanising community and grassroots engagement with nutrition to drive demand for nutrition foods and healthier diets.
- Promoting accountability and reporting to underpin a “social compact” on nutrition between states and citizens across the continent.
- Strengthening capacity at all levels and in the range of activities required to implement this agenda.
- In all of this, adopting a systems approach that ensures sustainable diets with co-benefits on climate, nutrition, human health, the environment and overall development.



4. Programme Strategic Components

The Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme identifies four broad programme components at continental and regional level. These are detailed below.

4.1 Component 1: Creating an enabling environment - Aligning and coordinating policies and programmes

Table 1: Programme component 1

Objective: To help create an “enabling environment” in the form of a coherent and comprehensive set of policies, programmes, investments and legislation to promote food and nutrition security, and the allocation of financial and human resources for turning commitment into action and results.

<p>Core intervention areas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AUDA-NEPAD will support countries through technical backstopping to review national development plans (NDPs) to ensure the inclusion of nutrition and that the layout of related policies, legislation and investment are consistent with pathways towards addressing malnutrition. 2. Based on NDPs, AUDA-NEPAD will help countries strengthen systems capacity to align and coordinate the numerous initiatives required for addressing malnutrition. 3. Working with RECs and Member States, AUDA-NEPAD will promote political commitment by decision makers and others involved in sectoral policy making. 4. To realise policy coherence across different ministerial mandates, from food production through to consumption, health and care, AUDA-NEPAD will promote a cross-sectoral approach and a coherent cross-sectoral policy framework to guide programming and investment planning. 5. AUDA-NEPAD will support horizontal coherence across sectors especially public and private sector interests; as well as vertical coherence between national and regional policies. 6. AUDA-NEPAD will help establish effective coordination mechanisms at regional and country level that align and coordinate different responses across sectors and between actors; both state and non-state.
<p>Strategic programme actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and strengthen NDPs to be consistent with impact pathways to address malnutrition. 2. Increase institutional and systems capacity to coordinate policies, programmes, investments and legislation. 3. Strengthen and advocate for political commitment, and delivery. 4. Backstop RECs and Member States to develop coherent and comprehensive sets of policies, programmes, investments and legislation responses. 5. Promote horizontal and vertical coherence and commitment across sectors. 6. Establish coordination mechanisms at different scales to enhance multi stakeholder engagement.

4.2 Component 2: Developing nutrition-sensitive programming

Table 2: Programme component 2

Objective: To support Member States and RECs to develop nutrition-sensitive programmes across multiple sectors. Recognising that nutrition is complex and cannot be addressed in isolation, sectors such as agriculture, trade, social protection, gender, education and climate change must be galvanised to address malnutrition.

<p>Core intervention areas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the first instance, AUDA-NEPAD will ensure that its own programmes across the continent are nutrition-sensitive, partly by applying a nutrition lens and accounting for nutrition outcomes. 2. AUDA-NEPAD will provide guidance on scaling up focused, proven and feasible nutrition interventions through partnerships and support particularly through the SUN movement. 3. AUDA-NEPAD will undertake a continent-wide awareness campaign on the importance and impact of nutrition-sensitive approaches. 4. Member States will be supported by AUDA-NEPAD in integrating nutrition interventions into agricultural investment, as illustrated by the CAADP investment plans. 5. AUDA-NEPAD will work with Member States and RECs to incorporate explicit nutrition objectives and indicators into the design of programmes and investments for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
<p>Strategic programme actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop tools and analytical capacity for nutrition-sensitive programmes across sectors. 2. Support policy analysis, forecasting and foresight to map country-specific options for nutrition-sensitive programmes. 3. Provide strategic information support for surveillance of programmes over time for learning and adapting. 4. Increase systems capacity to align and implement relevant nutrition-sensitive policies and programmes.

4.3 Component 3: Building on proven best practice through flagship projects to enhance capacity to address malnutrition

Table 3: Programme component 3

Objective: To enhance capacity and impact through the roll-out and replication of AUDA-NEPAD nutrition flagship programmes identified as best practice for addressing malnutrition.

<p>Core intervention areas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AUDA-NEPAD will build knowledge and capacity to promote maternal and young child nutrition through advocacy on essential nutrition interventions and support of SUN actions on the continent, including expanding work on the Cost of Hunger and Cost of Interventions to additional African countries. 2. AUDA-NEPAD will work with Member States to build knowledge and capacity to implement home grown school feeding programmes as a social protection mechanism that support market creation for smallholder farmers. 3. AUDA-NEPAD will address micronutrient deficiencies through food fortification, biofortification and supplementation through building knowledge and capacity to provide leadership, guidance and awareness. 4. AUDA-NEPAD will continue to prioritise knowledge and capacity strengthening to accelerate agriculture impact on nutrition through increased dietary diversity partly through promotion of indigenous foods, dietary guidelines and related improvements in nutrient adequacy of diets. 5. AUDA-NEPAD will support Member States to adopt food safety and quality management frameworks that combats pathogens, parasites and contaminants within the food system that cause adverse health outcomes. 6. AUDA-NEPAD will address unhealthy food environments in which NCDs emerge through private sector collaboration and engagement and support for appropriate legislation, regulation and standards to effectively govern this environment. 7. AUDA-NEPAD will build on existing resources and experience to capitalise on the inter-linkages between communicable diseases (including HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria), NCDs, maternal and child health, and socio-economic development.
<p>Strategic programme actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through implementation of the flagship programmes across countries, strengthen capacity to address the rising challenge of the triple burden of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency and overweight and obesity. 2. Promote nutrition professional capacity development for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of nutrition action on the African continent.

**Strategic
programme
actions**

3. Strengthen advocacy efforts across the continent related to these flagship programmes.
4. Coordinate advocacy activities to create awareness and promote fortification, biofortification, supplementation and agricultural production that promote dietary diversity.
5. Enable the development of sustainable business models for the production, distribution, and marketing of nutrient–dense foods for vulnerable groups as part of agricultural development including local agricultural-industry and value addition at country level.
6. Promote of the diversification of the food basket at household, national, regional and continental scale to support the availability of a variety of nutritious foods.
7. Address food safety issues through promoting better standards and build capacity including legislation to generate, monitor and enforce legal frameworks.
8. Support the food industry to help attain nutrition objectives through collaboration and monitoring, recognising that increasing numbers of people utilise the private sector, both formal and informal, to access food.
9. Extend the home-grown school feeding (HGSF) programme to more countries with a component to generate evidence on nutrition status of the beneficiary school children, and the challenges and benefits for smallholder farmers.
10. Coordinate advocacy to create awareness and promote action to address maternal and child nutrition challenges at a national and continental level.
11. Convene and participate in regional platforms for information sharing to support nutrition programme delivery for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), CAADP and Regional Strategic Analysis Knowledge and Support System (ReSAKSS) including at Africa-wide nutrition conferences, symposia and other discussion fora.
12. Adopt the Codex Alimentarius collection of internationally recognised standards as a reference points for adhering to food safety thresholds.
13. Partner with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and industry bodies such as consumer goods councils to build healthier food environments where the private sector has a strong influence.
14. Support policy development that addresses environmental factors and the conditions in which people live and make choices with emphasis on reducing the intake of unhealthy foods and making healthy foods more available, affordable and acceptable.

4.4 Component 4: Generating knowledge, advocating and tracking implementation

A number of cross-cutting issues are central to the success of the programme strategy:

- Promote technical and nutrition leadership capacity development to support nutrition programme, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at national and regional levels.
- Initiate and implement a combined knowledge management platform for information sharing that will help monitor SUN, CAADP, and other action and impact on nutrition progress (surveillance system). ReSAKSS annual conferences should be leveraged for this purpose.
- Strengthen Advocacy to generate strategic knowledge, sharing and management on African lessons and best practices to support nutrition progress. Utilize the dedicated annual events e.g. Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) and Africa Day for School Feeding (ADSF).
- Conduct and promote regional tracking of the nutrition situation in Africa using a food system approach especially in relation to key initiatives such as CAADP Nutrition Initiative, SUN, HGSF, and food fortification, biofortification, supplementation and food safety.
- Convene consultative and discussion fora, task forces, working groups and workshops for information sharing and dissemination in relation to results area. Engage Nutrition Ambassadors, Champions to increase visibility and buy in for investments and actions.
- Support regional and continental initiatives aimed at accelerating action on the ground, including the Initiative for Food and Nutrition in Africa and Regional Nutrition Strategies.

5. Opportunities to invest: AUDA-NEPAD Food and Nutrition Security flagship programmes

In response to malnutrition, the AUDA-NEPAD Agency has been driving a number of flagship projects, some in as early as 2005. These include HGSF and maternal and young child nutrition. Building on these and the nutrition-focused lens of aligning nutrition-sensitive work with those that are nutrition specific described above, the following seven flagship programmes have been identified as strategic focus areas for this programme strategy.

5.1 Flagship one: Maternal and young Child Nutrition

Malnutrition include deficiencies of vitamin A and zinc, which can result in death, and iodine and iron, together with stunting, contributes to children not reaching their developmental potential. Maternal under-nutrition curbs foetal growth, increasing the risk of neonatal deaths and, for survivors, stunting by the age of two. Sub-optimum breastfeeding is responsible for an increased risk of mortality in the first two years of life. These malnutrition challenges are estimated to be responsible for 3.1 million child deaths annually (Black, Victora, Walker, Bhutta, Christian, de Onis, Ezzati, Grantham-McGregor, Katz, Martorell, Uauy, & the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group, 2013).

Child nutrition cannot be divorced from the state of nutrition for women. The key global malnutrition threats identified are female obesity and anaemia in women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years). The shift in developing countries towards obesity invite misconceptions that diets are moving away from being constrained to the problems of excess. Although energy is increasingly available, especially in urban contexts, the sources, sugar and edible oils, are characteristically energy-dense and micronutrient-poor (Drenowski & Popkin, 1997), and so obesity coincides with micro-nutrient deficiencies (Eckhardt, Torheim, Monterrubio, Barquera & Ruel, 2007). The complexity of obesity, not simply concerned with over-eating, is evidenced in deficiencies coexisting in households - obese adults and stunted children often live under the

same roof. Access to suitable food is therefore a vital consideration for this strategy.

Other nutrition strategies, for children past breast-feeding age, include, providing nutritious meals through initiatives such as HGSF programmes. For both adults and children are improving the nutrition content of daily consumables through fortification or biofortification, and increasing dietary diversity are key. All three interventions are discussed in the sections to follow. The flagship will unfold through working with the AU, RECs and Member States to prioritise:

- Recommendations encapsulated in the Framework for Action produced by the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014 and the Compendium of Actions for Nutrition (CAN) developed jointly by FAO, WFP, UNICEF, WHO and IFAD for the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger (REACH) initiative in 2016.
- Ensuring AUDA-NEPAD programmes emphasise improvements to dietary quality through nutrition-sensitive actions in home production, education or purchasing power. For example, emphasising nutrition-sensitivity in CAADP to support post-harvest food systems to improve access to nutrient-dense foods.
- Encourage programmes incorporating the transfer of resources to alter the purchase or use of home-grown foods; changing food prices to alter purchasing behaviour; changing dietary preferences to alter the purchase or use of home-grown foods; and transfer of food items to increase intake.
- The promotion of breastfeeding through comprehensive communication strategies to provide relevant information, the creation of discussion platforms, and providing predictable, scheduled and ongoing support particularly for woman.
- Support to the SUN and the 1000 days movement and other partners in efforts to promote maternal and child nutrition.
- In a context of changing diets and NCDs, prioritise reducing obesity and anaemia.
- Prioritise specific monitoring of these activities on the African continent to inform policy direction over time as well as easy reference for lessons learnt between countries.

5.2 Flagship two: Addressing micronutrient deficiencies through food fortification, biofortification and supplementation

Strong evidence suggests that fortification and supplementation have been successful in countries with a high burden of vitamin and mineral deficiencies (VMDs) (Sanghvi, van Ameringen, Baker & Fiedler, 2007). Fortification, food modified through selective plant breeding and genetic modification, and biofortification, developing crops rich in bioavailable micronutrients, are methods of rapidly incorporating large scale, cost effective, vitamins and minerals into a population's diet (Bouis, Saltzman, Low, Ball & Covic, 2017; SUN, 2017; De Moura, Palmer, Finkelstein, Haas, Murray-Kolb, Wenger, Birol, Boy, & Peña-Rosas, 2015; Sanghvi et al., 2007). Nutrients regularly used in grain fortification for example prevent diseases, strengthen immune systems, and improve productivity and cognitive development (SUN, 2017); the economic benefit cost ratios are estimated up to 1:200 (Sanghvi et al., 2007). Fortification of foods can also provide a substantial amount of the required nutrients without changing people's food habits (AUDA-NEPAD, 2015).

Continued success of fortification and biofortification across the continent, however, requires understanding of the environmental, institutional and policy constraints at national levels (AUDA-NEPAD, 2009). In countries where value chains are informal or weak, capacity building is needed, and in some cases also marketing tools and market analysis (Bouis et al., 2017). Other success determinants include public education and social mobilisation, including continuous advocacy, even after the programmes are in place (Sanghvi et al., 2007). Funding is of course also always a limiting factor (Bouis et al., 2017). Despite these contextual complexities, fortification and biofortification interventions can be key contributors to reducing nutrition deficiencies across the continent. As such, AUDA-NEPAD will prioritise the support to RECs and Member States to:

- Develop strategic, coordinated fortification and biofortification interventions including through mandatory public-sector-led, and voluntary industry-led food fortification. This will emphasise the importance of the availability



of suitable food processing vehicles, adequate regulation, labelling and compliance, public awareness and demand, quality assurance, and strong public-private partnerships.

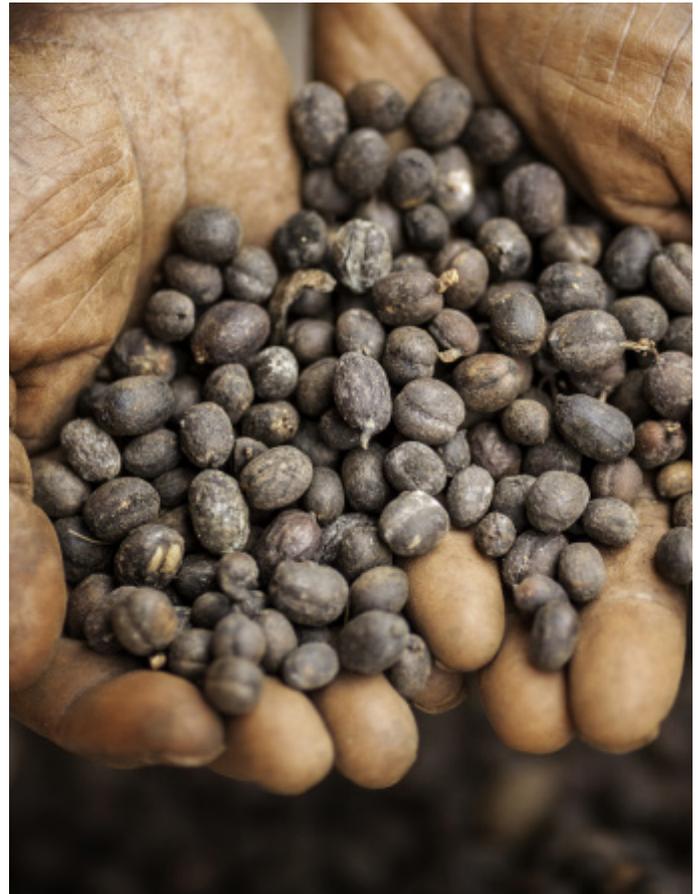
- Key to this will be developing an understanding of the environmental, institutional and policy constraints at national levels, and regional level.
- Alignment to other AUDA-NEPAD priorities such as carefully designed enhanced homestead food production programmes that had a strong gender component.
- Food fortification, biofortification and supplementation programmes will all be supported by public education and social mobilisation, including continuous advocacy, and behaviour change communication.
- Prioritise specific monitoring of these activities on the African continent to inform policy direction over time as well as easy reference for lessons learnt between countries, including trade facilitation.

5.3 Flagship three: Dietary Diversification-dietary guidelines, food baskets and indigenous foods

Increasing dietary diversity, a strong predictor of micro-nutrient adequacy and overall diet quality, is essential for healthy productive lives (Kennedy & Moursi, 2015). Alongside efforts to increase continent wide sustainable food production, nutrition related education should be incorporated to ensure improvements in diet quality through more diverse diets, specifically targeting malnutrition that result in obesity and NCDs (AUDA-NEPAD, 2015).

Getting people to consume more nutrient-rich foods and fewer staples are, however, very challenging, particularly in resource constrained context where access, availability, and affordability are limited. Purchasing decisions are also not purely driven by costs, but also by culture and personal preference. Changed eating behaviour is necessary to address the triple burden of nutrition-related public health problems across the continent.

Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) (also known as dietary guidelines) are an important opportunity as they are intended to establish a basis for public food and nutrition, health and agricultural policies



and nutrition education programmes to foster healthy eating habits and lifestyles. They provide advice on foods, food groups and dietary patterns to provide the required nutrients to the general public to promote overall health and prevent chronic diseases. These should be developed through multi-stakeholder processes that are country-driven and based on the best available evidence on the relationship between what people eat and their health, and development.

AUDA-NEPAD has prioritised a number of actions for fostering food diversity that would contribute to underpinning dietary diversity through fostering diversity on the farm and on the plate (Cook, 2018):

- Promote the diversification of the food basket at household, national, regional and continental scale to support the availability of a variety of nutritious food.
- Promote the diversification of the food basket at household, national, regional and continental scale to support the availability of a variety of nutritious food.
- Reorient food, nutrition and agricultural policies to encourage diversity, nutrition, sustainability and affordability, rather than only prioritising a

small number of staple crops; promoting food systems analysis and action can help.

- Use markets to support production and consumption diversity by allowing informal markets to thrive, using procurement, and investing in local innovative agri-food businesses that promote diversity.
- Promote and maintain local crop varieties, animal breeds, fisheries, and underutilised indigenous and traditional crops through developing markets for them, adjusting extension services and fostering synergies between knowledge forms.
- Nurture the biocultural heritage and traditional knowledge that underpin much of the world's remaining agricultural biodiversity, including by protecting the rights of women.
- Increase awareness and catalyse change through innovative multi-stakeholder approaches, and smart partnerships.
- Prioritise specific monitoring of these activities on the African continent to inform policy direction over time as well as easy reference for lessons learnt between countries.

5.4 Flagship four: Home grown school feeding

AUDA-NEPAD has been involved in a school feeding programmes since 2005 in several countries in support of African governments including school feeding programmes that source food locally from smallholders. Improving child nutrition therefore remains a priority and research suggests that school feeding is among the most effective interventions for child food and nutrition security (Lokosang and Njenga, 2016). Offering nutritionally balanced school meals with complementary nutrition education can improve school performance, nutrition literacy and potential employment and income later in life (GPAFSN, 2015; Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, & Robinson, 2007), contributing to the Agenda 2063 access to education commitments (AU, 2015b). Although 368 million children are fed daily in schools around the globe (GPAFSN, 2015), 66 million children attend primary school hungry and 23 million live in Africa alone (Mireles, Sanou, Sablah & Bendeck, 2016).

The transition from School Feeding to HGFSF

importance, shifting away from only transferring food to schools, to a more integrated, multi-sector approach such as linking school feeding to agricultural development (Lokosang & Njenga, 2016; Gelli, Neeser & Drake, 2010; Jukes, Drake & Bundy, 2007). The overall objective is to act as a vehicle for promoting local development, fighting food and nutrition insecurity and disease, and linking local small producers to markets (schools) which, stimulate agriculture production and development. HGFSF programmes increase enrolment, promote regular attendance, increase retention, improve children's learning capacity and learning outcomes, and it enhances gender equality (Baptista, 2016; Drake, 2013).



programmes place emphasis on a broader systemic importance, shifting away from only transferring food to schools, to a more integrated, multi-sector approach such as linking school feeding to agricultural development (Lokosang & Njenga, 2016; Gelli, Neeser & Drake, 2010; Jukes, Drake & Bundy, 2007). The overall objective is to act as a vehicle for promoting local development, fighting food and nutrition insecurity and disease, and linking local small producers to markets (schools) which, stimulate agriculture production and development. HGSF programmes increase enrolment, promote regular attendance, increase retention, improve children's learning capacity and learning outcomes, and it enhances gender equality (Baptista, 2016; Drake, 2013).

In January 2016, African heads of state declared that "Home Grown School Feeding is a strategy to improve education, boost local economies and smallholder agriculture, and advance the SDGs". In order to consolidate and build on this existing flagship programme, the AUDA-NEPAD will:

- Expand HGSF Programme across additional countries with a component to generate evidence on nutrition status of the recipient school children. This will include schools with biofortified food provision and without to

generate nutrition status impact evidence.

- Embed this expansion through promotion and use of the HGSF Resource Framework for the design, implementation and scale up of government-led HGSF programmes. This Resource Framework was developed by the WFP, the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger, the FAO, the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, the Partnership for Child Development, the AUDA-NEPAD, IFAD, (2016)..
- Emphasise the systematic linkage with small holder farmers to support local food economies and integrate indigenous, high quality foods into the feeding schemes. The incorporation of small holder farmers will be underpinned by the CAADP framework and the data generated will catalyse action.
- Develop and promote "Nutritious menu-planners" for HGSF Programme to include diverse, nutrient-rich combinations of food.
- Prioritise specific monitoring of these activities on the African continent to inform policy direction as well as easy reference for lessons learnt between countries, and going to scale.

5.5 Flagship five: Food safety and quality management

Within AU discussions, an increasingly difficult debate has emerged around the large amounts of food finding their way from across the continent, and the global food economy more generally, into African countries. This has led to questions about regulating the movement of food to not only support the development of local food economies but also underpin food safety and hygiene. These raise further questions about how to effectively control food safety along the food system including supply chains from production to processing, trade, preparation and consumption (FAO, 2017b).

Food contaminated with biological, chemical or physical hazards, including harmful pathogens, natural toxins and chemicals can contribute to under-nutrition and cause adverse health effects (FAO, 2016). Food quality, hygiene and safety standards are systematic preventive approaches to food safety that aim to protect public health and improve accessibility of nutritious and safe foods in ways that address modern food environments. These



particular interventions within the food system are best supported by a broader enabling environment (FAO, 2017b). As African countries have differences in terms of particular circumstances and needs, a national food control system encompasses five essential elements: 1) organisations with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for food control management, and mechanisms for communication and coordination among them; 2) an enabling policy, legal and regulatory framework for food safety; 3) functioning food inspection and certification systems; 4) access to capable diagnostic and analytical laboratories; and 5) working mechanisms for information, education and communication with stakeholders.

Key opportunities embraced by AUDA-NEPAD include:

- Addressing food safety issues through promoting better standards and build capacity including legislation to generate, monitor and enforce legal frameworks.
- While private food safety standards play an increasingly important role, national legal frameworks, which establish minimum safety and quality requirements, are the foundation for national food control. AUDA-NEPAD will support countries embark upon these building on well-established international codes and standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other allied food safety concepts.
- AUDA-NEPAD will prioritise the avoidance of unintended discrimination against small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the informal food economy, which constitute the backbone of African food systems.
- Supporting the food industry to help attain nutrition objectives through collaboration and monitoring, recognising that increasing numbers of people utilise the private sector, both formal and informal, to access food.
- Enabling countries to adopt food safety and quality management frameworks that combats pathogens, parasites and contaminants that cause adverse health outcomes.
- Engaging the informal food economy in African countries through combining capacity development with incentives to further motivate behaviour change, which has proven an effective approach to advancing food safety.



5.6 Flagship six: Food environments and non-communicable diseases

In a context of rapid urbanisation, the rise of the African middle class and increased industrialisation and globalisation, the food system is enabling people to access food in dramatically different ways than two decades ago. Supermarkets and fast food restaurants, for example, are rapidly spreading, particularly in urban areas, creating new market outlets that coexist, compete and sometimes cooperate with traditional retailers, caterers, and street food vendors (FAO, 2017b) This is often accompanied by the increased use of food advertising and promotional strategies to encourage people to buy more processed food products, including ultra-processed foods that are high in sugars, fats and salt (Gómez & Ricketts, 2013). To reiterate a key argument of this strategy, this results in increased exposure to obesogenic diets with implications for NCDs across the continent.

Thus, a key strategy for AUDA-NEPAD is to deepen understanding of this food environment across the continent. The vast majority of African NDPs have private sector engagement strategies largely because businesses provide goods and services, generate jobs, taxes and foreign exchange. Engaging with the private sector also offers many opportunities to accelerate the rate of reduction in malnutrition and particularly to slow down or reverse the negative trends in diet related NCDs by making nutritious food more available, affordable and desirable.

This flagship will focus particularly on creating an enabling environment in urban centres across the continent and will include supporting city governance structures to embrace food as a key development objective. Such an enabling environment, by its very nature, will have to include a range of factors. Investment in urban planning, as well as water, sanitation, sewage, waste removal and other services and infrastructure will be required to tackle the state of physical deterioration of wholesale and retail markets. Considerable effort will be required to enable traditional retailers and caterers to survive and compete on a level playing field with large players, to help create a more balanced retail environment where the healthy choice becomes the easy choice. A combination of incentives and regulations can be used to improve the nutrient value of products sold by retailers and caterers.

Thus, AUDA-NEPAD will drive this flagship programme through:

- Collaboration with partners, address unhealthy food environments in which NCDs emerge through private sector engagement and support for appropriate legislation, regulation and standards to effectively govern this environment.
- AUDA-NEPAD will enable the development of sustainable business models for the production, distribution, and marketing of nutrient-dense foods for vulnerable groups as part of agricultural development including local agricultural-industry and value addition at country level.
- A key focus will be on restricting the advertising and promotion of foods and beverages that are high in fats, salt and sugars to children and adolescents, which can help to limit their

exposure to, and curb the power of marketing. This will consider restrictions on the location of some food outlets such as schools and playgrounds and regulations on specific marketing techniques.

5.7 Flagship seven: Communicable diseases

Although a profound shift from communicable to NCDs is under way in many parts of the African continent, communicable diseases remain a priority issue. Infectious diseases are the major causes of death and morbidity in underdeveloped countries, particularly in children. Increasing evidence suggests that malnutrition - both Protein-Energy type Malnutrition (PEM) and essential micro-nutrient deficiencies (vitamins, trace minerals, essential amino acids, polyunsaturated fatty acids) – are the underlying reason for increased susceptibility to infections. On the other hand, certain infectious diseases also cause malnutrition, which results in a vicious cycle. Long recognised by the AU and AUDA-NEPAD, nutrition plays an important role in preventing illness and reducing morbidity and mortality in people living with HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and other infectious diseases. A healthy diet can therefore help people with these diseases to better manage symptoms, maximise the benefits of medications, and enhance their quality of life.

To prevent malnutrition and improve the nutritional status of people affected by infectious diseases, especially HIV and tuberculosis, AUDA-NEPAD supports the implementation of nutrition assessment, counselling, and support (FANTA, 2017), an approach that provides an effective means of increasing access to nutrition services and strengthening the health system. Nutrition Assessment, Counselling, and Support (NACS) is a client-centred programmatic approach to integrating priority interventions to prevent and manage malnutrition into health services along the continuum of care. As a basis for this flagship, AUDA-NEPAD will:

- Build on existing resources and experience to capitalise on the inter-linkages between communicable diseases (including HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria), NCDs, maternal and child health, and socio-economic development.

- In collaboration with national governments and organisations such as FANTA and FHI 360, focus on developing tools to support the implementation of nutrition assessment, counselling, and support, such as national guidelines, training guides, reference materials, job aids for social behaviour change, and monitoring and evaluation tools.
- Develop pre-service training on the integration of nutrition assessment, counselling, and support into HIV and tuberculosis care for medical and nursing education partnership initiatives.
- Integrate nutrition assessment, counselling, and support indicators into health management information systems and evaluate the implementation of NACS services to inform scale-up.



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