



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Enhancing nutrition in emergency and resilience agriculture responses to prevent child wasting

FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024)



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Foreword

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, and now the price hike of food, feed, fertilizer and fuel, are deepening poverty and worsening food insecurity and malnutrition for millions of people. The 15 worst-affected countries host 27 million children in acute food insecurity and at high risk of becoming wasted, a condition that puts them at risk of mortality and also affects their growth and development. Eight million children are estimated to be severely wasted now, with lasting impacts throughout their lives.

Life-saving interventions exist, but unless the underlying poverty and food insecurity issues that cause child wasting are simultaneously addressed, the potential for relapse and lasting effects are very real. The international community is responding with a surge of humanitarian and development assistance, which includes prevention focused actions against child wasting as part of this response – something that has not always been the case in the past.

With the **Global Action Plan on Child Wasting**, commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2019, five United Nations agencies – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) – have come together to jointly respond through a multisystem approach that includes but goes beyond the immediate treatment focus. They have committed to coordinate and concert their actions to ensure that households with children in situations of vulnerability are enabled to access safe and nutritious food and the services needed to prevent wasting and ensure that recovered children do not fall back into wasting. This includes enhancing access and quality of health services, clean drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene all-year-around and timely social protection to fill gaps in access to nutritious food and services.

FAO has a key role to play in supporting households with at-risk children and pregnant and lactating women and girls to prevent child wasting or to ensure that there are no relapses for children undergoing treatment. By including nutrition in emergency agriculture responses, FAO will support countries to build the resilience of the most vulnerable individuals and foster household livelihoods, thus breaking the cycle of distress that underlies child wasting.

We urgently need to complement life-saving interventions with a prevention strategy that will keep those recovered children out of wasting and prevent future cases in communities and households most at risk. The time is urgent to enable communities themselves to bridge the divide between short-term humanitarian assistance, and the prevention-focused development activities. It is only by sustainably decreasing acute food insecurity that we can prevent the scourge of child wasting in the longer term.



Qu Dongyu
FAO Director-General





Global food and nutrition crisis

Acute food insecurity is reaching alarming levels globally. As of September 2022, 222 million people were estimated to be facing acute food insecurity and require urgent humanitarian assistance in 53 countries/territories.¹ Never has there been a greater need to act together to tackle the urgency of the ongoing food and nutrition crises.

Our response must be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the impact that disasters have on agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, which is detrimental to livelihoods and food security of small-scale farmers worldwide.

Children living in acute food insecurity contexts are particularly vulnerable to wasting – the most life-threatening form of undernutrition in early childhood, which increases children’s risk of death by up to 12 times.² Before the crisis, there were an estimated 47 million children suffering from wasting globally.² In the 15 worst-affected countries, the number of children suffering from severe wasting continues to increase at an unprecedented speed – one additional child with severe wasting every minute.²

Determinants of child wasting are multifactorial. As such, a range of systems including health, agrifood, social protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), needs to be leveraged in the design and implementation of effective strategies for the prevention, early detection and treatment of child wasting. These actions must be coordinated and concerted to ensure that households with children in situations of vulnerability are enabled to access safe and nutritious food – beyond the immediate treatment focus – and the services needed to prevent wasting, and ensure that recovered children do not fall back into wasting.

Agrifood systems play a critical role in ensuring the availability, access and affordability of healthy diets for the prevention of child wasting and other forms of malnutrition. Good nutrition is our first defence against disease and our source of energy to grow, thrive and be active.

“

Preventing wasting in early childhood can protect the child from other forms of malnutrition in the long term, including stunted growth but also increased risks for overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases later in life. Preventive actions that aim to enable healthy diets for the prevention of child wasting in resource-limited settings act on the same determinants and factors that cause other forms of malnutrition.³

”



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FAO and the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting

A total of 6.7 percent of children under 5 years of age are suffering from wasting globally.²

The United Nations agencies working on the prevention of child wasting – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) – have developed a Global Action Plan (GAP) on Child Wasting.⁴ Its framework identifies critical outcomes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets on child wasting, establishing proven pathways to accelerate the delivery of essential actions and create a more enabling environment for their success. The goal is to provide a common focus to guide individual and collective action to accelerate progress towards the SDGs on child wasting.

FAO has a leadership role in supporting countries to accelerate policies and actions to enable healthy diets for all and is strategically positioned to support a rapid scale-up of emergency and resilience assistance to assist the most vulnerable people in the immediate term while helping them to sustainably exit acute food insecurity. As the United Nations specialized agency for food and agriculture, FAO is contributing to global reductions in all forms of malnutrition through integrated agrifood system approaches to enable healthy diets.

To effectively prevent wasting, FAO is strategically positioned to support countries transform agrifood systems to deliver sustainable and healthy diets for all, especially for young children and women of reproductive age. While

The GAP on Child Wasting is an integrated multisystem approach to achieve the SDG targets on child wasting, where food and food systems were recognized as central along with health, social protection and WASH.

other United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and WFP are responding with life-saving treatment interventions, FAO complements this focus with a prevention strategy that will keep recovered children out of wasting and prevent future cases in households and communities most at risk.

By focusing on the distinctive relationship between agriculture and nutrition, FAO aims to reach vulnerable households with at-risk children, pregnant and lactating women and girls to prevent child wasting or to ensure that there are no relapses for children graduating from treatment of acute malnutrition. This will be achieved through the provision of a context-specific resilience package that includes support for small-farming and/or animal husbandry households, cash and voucher assistance, food and nutrition education and food safety measures including food handling, storage and minimal processing.

Theory of change

Producer households with children and pregnant and lactating women and girls at risk or recovering from wasting are not enabled to sustainably build their own resilience to acute food insecurity and thus prevent the curse of wasting and malnutrition in the longer term.

We can help change that.

1 Current constraints, including...

Life-saving interventions focus on the immediate causes of child wasting and are not responsive to underlying causes (e.g. livelihood needs, seasonality, environment, conflicts, etc.)

Lack of a complementary approach to life-saving interventions to foster household livelihoods and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable

Rural adolescent girls, women and young children are worst affected by insecurity and forced displacement

Rural adolescent girls, women and youth have untapped potential to actively contribute to decision-making on the design and operationalization of context-specific solutions

There is limited operational evidence on how agrifood systems interventions contribute to the prevention of child wasting

2 can be mitigated by...

Enhanced analysis of the determinants of child wasting based on information from surveys and surveillance systems

United Nations-joint targeting in prioritized geographic areas aiming at reaching the same communities and same households with a multisystem approach*

Producer households with at-risk children and pregnant and lactating women and girls receive support for nutrition-focused microgardening and/or productive assets (through direct inputs and/or cash)

Producer households and key food systems actors receive technical support consisting of food and nutrition education and food safety measures including food storage, handling and minimal processing

Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) system to generate evidence

3 which will result in...

Producer households with children and pregnant and lactating women and girls at risk or recovering from wasting are adequately identified and engaged through gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches*

Agri-food systems interventions for the prevention of child wasting are scaled up and tailored to enable targeted producer households to foster their livelihoods

Skills and knowledge of targeted producer households and key agrifood systems actors are enhanced

Evidence is generated on the cost-benefit of agrifood systems interventions for the prevention of child wasting

4 leading to...

Enhanced access to safe and nutritious food for children and pregnant and lactating women and girls at risk or recovering from wasting

Children recovering from wasting are not relapsing and future cases in households most at risk are prevented from becoming wasted

***Assumption:** joint targeting ensures that children at risk and pregnant and lactating women and girls benefit from other essential services



Ongoing preventive actions for child wasting and priorities going forward

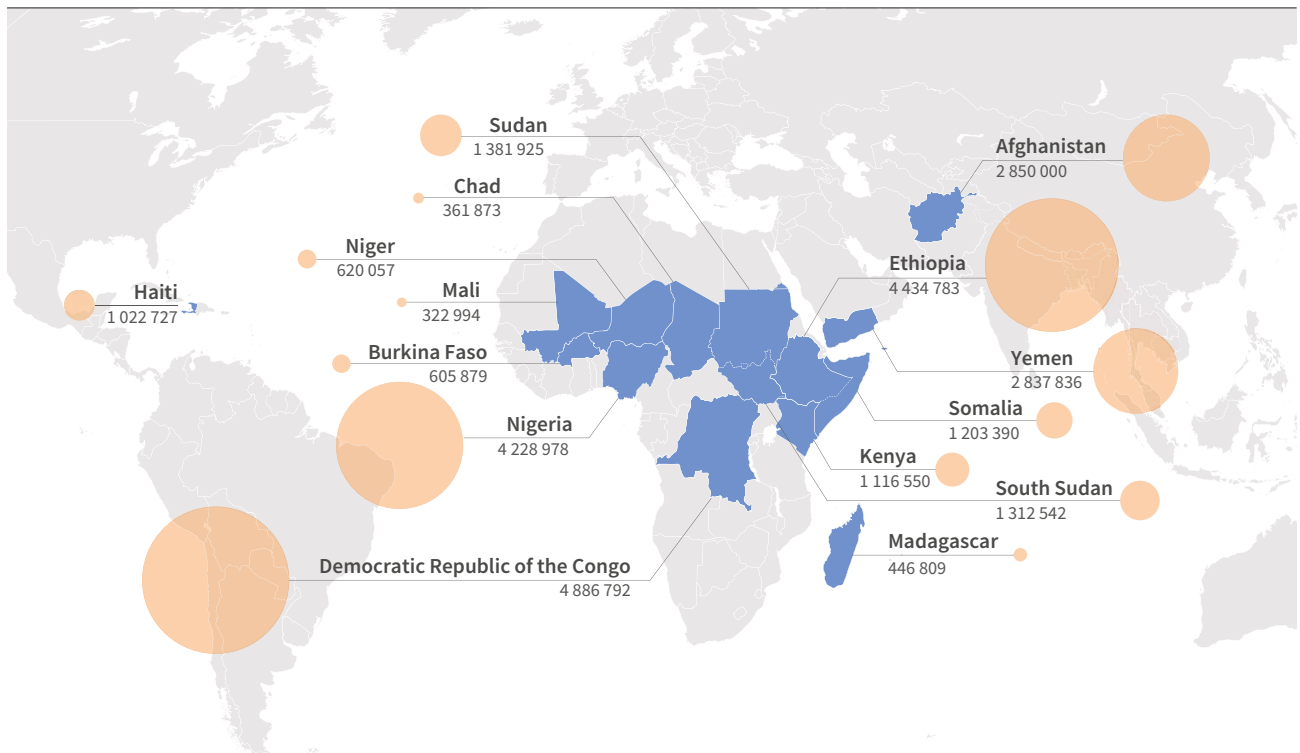
FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024) builds on the priorities highlighted by the FAO Country Offices through an online survey conducted during August–September 2022, which aimed to get an overview on which preventive actions are currently being implemented and which one are given precedence going forward. Home-gardening for own consumption and cash transfers accounted for the highest reported ongoing actions followed by food and nutrition education and targeted emergency and resilience responses.

Community-based organizations were the most commonly cited delivery platforms followed by farmer field schools and agriculture extension services. In terms of immediate priorities, food and nutrition education, household-level food handling, storage and processing and home-gardening support ranked the highest three. Other indicated priorities included small-animal husbandry, social transfers and targeted emergency and resilience responses. These priorities have been captured in the design of the FAO resilience package targeted to the households with at-risk children, pregnant and lactating women and girls.

Specific nutritious food value chains (e.g. pulses, fruits and vegetables, animal source foods) were also reported by countries but none of them emerged as a strong priority. Measures to support selected nutritious food value chain could be further analysed as part of FAO's child wasting prevention action plan depending on those that are most promising in a given context.

Preventing and reducing wasting generally requires that children are born to healthy, well-nourished mothers who receive appropriate antenatal care, and live in households with access to adequate food and care practices as well as to functional quality primary health care services, potable water, safe sanitation and good hygiene.

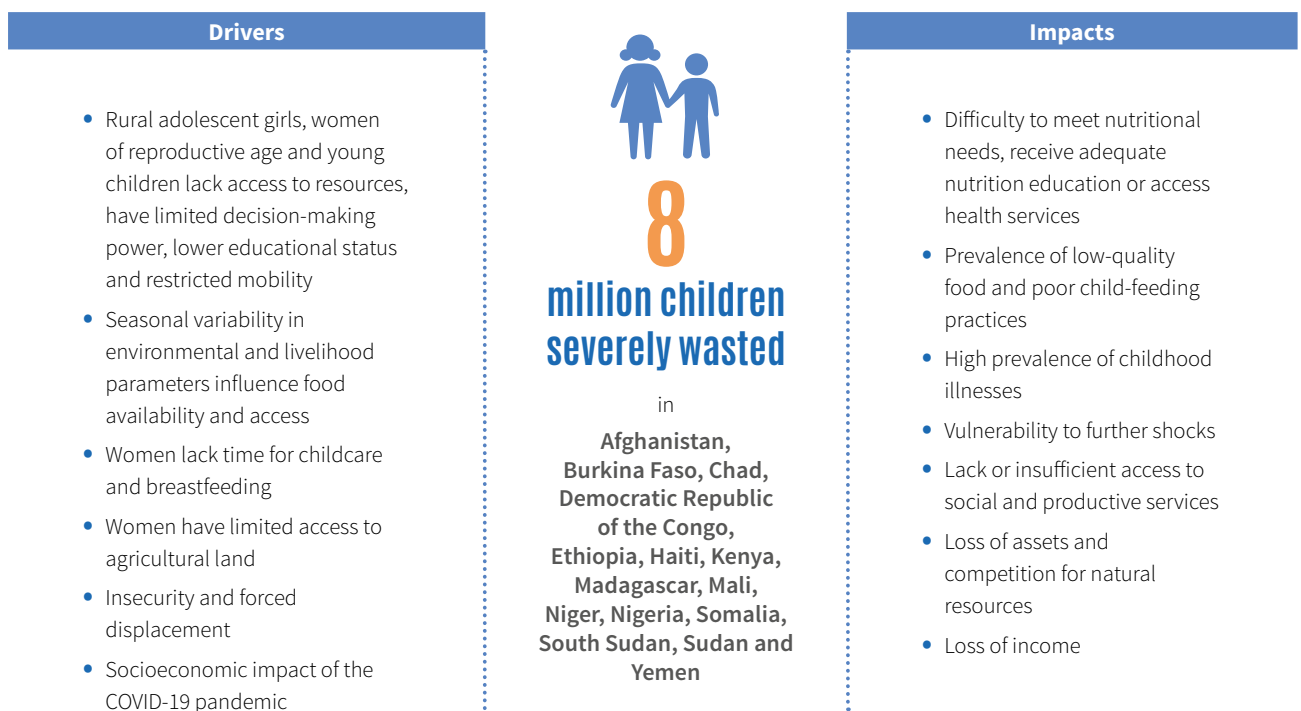
Figure 1. Countries with the highest number of households in acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above)



Note: The number of people facing acute food security (Crisis or worse, IPC/CH Phase 3 and above) were converted in number of households because the interventions will target households and not individuals. **Source:** GNAFC and FSIN. 2022. *Global Report on Food Crises 2022 Mid-Year Update*. Rome. fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202022%20MYU%20Final.pdf

Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

Figure 2. Drivers and structural factors contributing to child wasting



Source: UNICEF. 2022. *Early prevention, detection and treatment of child wasting in the most vulnerable countries to the global food and nutrition crisis: UNICEF's acceleration plan 2022–2023*. New York. [unicef.org/reports/no-time-waste](https://www.unicef.org/reports/no-time-waste). FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0639en>





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Strategic approach

Wasting persists at alarming rates. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 47 million children were already wasted in 2019. Compared to pre-pandemic estimates, COVID-19 was expected to result in an additional 6.7 million children with wasting in 2020.⁵

Child wasting is a major health problem and, owing to its associated risks for morbidity and mortality, requires urgent attention. It will be difficult to continue improving rates of child survival without increasing the proportion of children wasted receiving timely and appropriate life-saving treatment. However, for the child to thrive, it is fundamental to prevent the child from becoming wasted in the first place. Childhood wasting has life-long consequences not just for health, but also for human capital and economic development, prosperity and social equity.

There is an urgent need to develop and scale up solutions addressing the fundamental drivers of malnutrition, and the provision of multisectoral development and humanitarian assistance plays a pivotal role in this context. FAO's commitment to the GAP on Child Wasting is to ensure that children have access to an adequate and diverse diet in the first years of life by supporting agrifood systems that provide healthy and nutritious

Children suffering from **severe wasting** are those with a weight-for-height below minus three standard deviations and/or a mid-upper arm circumference below 115 mm and/or with bilateral edema; children suffering from **acute food insecurity** are those living in areas classified in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above).

food to meet the needs of children, women and girls. This strategic approach, implemented in close collaboration with national governments and partners, aims to enable households and communities themselves to bridge the divide between short-term humanitarian assistance and prevention-focused development activities by building more resilient livelihoods.

People must be placed at the centre. Understanding people's lives and needs is the starting point for identifying how actions in agrifood systems can have most impact on making healthy diets, available, affordable, accessible, culturally acceptable and appealing to people in the environments and territories in which they live. Given the importance of agriculture for the livelihoods of the rural poor, agricultural growth has the potential to reduce poverty – a key contributor to poor health and undernutrition.

The nature of nutrition is that it spans many sectors and relationships are key to reaching multiple global targets. Given the many actors involved in changing agrifood systems, it is essential to harness existing experience and knowledge to implement this strategy and have impact at scale. Fully tackling malnutrition in all its forms requires a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders working in partnership with shared responsibilities. In pursuing its goals, FAO will work in partnership with other United Nations agencies and with an array of other partners including local governments, civil society, small-scale producers and fisherfolk, and women and youth, involved in the production, processing, distribution, consumption, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, in support of healthy diets. Joint targeting and prioritized geographic coverage will contribute to accelerate actions for the prevention and management of child wasting, aligned with provision of nutritious food baskets with small animal husbandry and vegetable seeds provision to promote healthy and diverse diets, training and capacity building of caregivers, farmers, processors and agriculture extension workers on good agricultural practices, processing, and preservation techniques for food safety along the value chain.

The ongoing food and nutrition crisis requires urgent attention. Strengthening community resilience must be firmly grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the impact disasters and poverty have on agriculture, including subsectoral breakdowns of impacts on crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture which are detrimental to livelihoods of small-scale farmers.

FAO advocates for improvements in all areas of nutrition through integrated and food-based approaches, agrifood systems and healthy diets, such as:

Gender equality and social inclusion

Rural women's contribution to food security often remains invisible. Food-insecure households are at risk of undernutrition, with adolescent girls, women of reproductive age and young children being most susceptible. Lack of access to resources, limited decision-making power, lower educational status and restricted mobility of many rural women and girls make it difficult for them to meet their nutritional needs, receive adequate nutrition education or access health services. In addition, in many instances when women lack time for childcare and breastfeeding which can be a key cause of child undernutrition. Gender equality is critical and must be achieved throughout agrifood systems. Women are not only caregivers but also workers across the agrifood system including being fishers, farmers and traders, among other roles. Women should be supported as leaders of change. Globally, and in every region, the prevalence of food insecurity is higher among women than men and this gap is growing.⁶



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Agriculture to increase resilience

The poor and most nutritionally vulnerable individuals depend largely upon agriculture for their livelihoods. Notwithstanding the importance of the role of agriculture in producing food, the agrifood system, including the postproduction sector beyond agriculture with processing, storage, trade and marketing, has a key role to play to eradicate malnutrition. Agriculture contributes to various downstream actions such as ensuring food security, food safety, protecting nutritional security and reducing poverty.

Investing in agriculture for household production and improving its food systems to enhance prevention of child wasting contributes to strengthen the overall resilience of communities against malnutrition. This can be done by advising communities on the adoption of nutrient-rich and short reproduction cycle varieties of vegetables, crops and animal species, diversification of agricultural practices, better irrigation and rural infrastructure or storage facilities, as well as dedicated support to women.

This approach has been implemented in the Sahel and Horn of Africa countries and evidence shows that it has significantly improved households' incomes, assets and productivity potential, as well as dietary diversity and food security.



Livestock support

Livestock plays an important role in smallholder farming systems. Animal-source food consumption is vital to the income, nutrition, food security, livelihoods and resilience of communities especially in arid and semi-arid lands.

An operational research programme, implemented by FAO together with Washington University and UNICEF in the north of Kenya, has shown that supporting households at risk with milking animals has significantly improved access to milk for young children and contributed to the prevention of child wasting.⁷ Livestock support is particularly important in places such as arid and semi-arid lands where milk contributes significantly to the local diets, in particular to safeguard the health, nutrition and well-being of children and women.

Cash programming

FAO field work and research show that cash-based interventions, including cash+, can provide an important safety net against shocks and stresses for poor and vulnerable rural households, thus providing a great transformative potential to address child malnutrition. Providing a combination of cash and inputs (nutrient-rich and short-cycle seeds varieties); small livestock (poultry, small ruminants, guinea fowl, etc.); energy and protection kits (fuel, stoves and solar lanterns); and livelihood diversification facilities (processing or stocking facilities, beekeeping kits, tree seedlings, etc.), enhances or restores livelihoods and improves dietary and nutrition decisions to benefit infants and children, helping affected communities build back better.



Action plan

Objective: Enhance access to safe and nutritious food for the most vulnerable individuals through well targeted agrifood system interventions within countries severely affected by child wasting.

As part of the United Nations GAP on Child Wasting,⁴ FAO requires USD 500 million to implement its action plan to prevent child wasting (2023–2024) in the 15 most-affected countries. FAO's response complements the combined efforts of UNICEF and WFP to support early detection, prevention and treatment services into primary health care.²

Eight million children are affected by severe wasting in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen.²

FAO aims to reach vulnerable households with at-risk children, pregnant and lactating women and girls to prevent child wasting or to ensure that there are no relapses for children graduating from treatment of acute malnutrition.

FAO will scale up, improve, and coordinate preventive and/or crisis responses to child malnutrition households by facilitating access to monitoring tools of the nutritional status of affected populations and enable evidence-based decisions on the most efficient set of context-specific indicators.



To assist

**1 million households
(5.7 million people),**



FAO requires

USD 500 million.



Period

2023–2024



Key partners:

United Nations agencies, ministries of agriculture, livestock and fisheries and their decentralized services, Food Security Sector partners, and national and international NGOs.



UN joint targeting:

- same geographic areas;
- same communities in situation of vulnerability;
- same households with children, pregnant and lactating women and girls at risk or already affected by wasting.

Outputs

FAO's action plan will deliver three key outputs:

- **Output 1.** Agrifood system interventions to prevent child wasting are scaled up.
- **Output 2.** Skills and knowledge on gender-sensitive and nutritious production are enhanced.
- **Output 3.** Food security analysis, coordination and information management are ensured.

Output 1. Agrifood system interventions to prevent child wasting are scaled up

FAO will scale up agrifood system interventions to prevent child wasting in the 15 countries most affected by acute food insecurity and provide support tailored to local needs and context.

FAO will focus on small-scale farming and home gardening, small animal husbandry, food and nutrition education, and food safety measures. Contributions will be measured in terms of improved dietary outcomes among the beneficiary households and especially young children and pregnant and lactating women and girls looking at the types of food that are promoted through well-targeted agrifood system interventions.

FAO will primarily aim to increase food production and restore livelihoods with tailored resilience support consisting of small-scale farming and home gardening (primarily for consumption); small animal husbandry; food and nutrition education, one health and food safety measures (including animal treatment, food handling, storage and minimal processing) and cash-based interventions such as cash+.

FAO's will support households with the following activities:

- Provision of nutrition-focused microgardening support with quality short-cycle, drought-resistant and nutritional seeds, tools and environmentally friendly fertilizers to support the planting seasons.
- Provision of productive assets, such as livestock and emergency animal feed, accompanied by improved practices in family poultry and small-ruminant production to reduce the risk of economic losses.
- Cash and voucher assistance (type, amount and frequency to be defined according to each specific context).
- Technical training (food and nutrition education, infant and young child feeding, food safety measures including food handling, storage and minimal processing) to develop capacities among all food systems actors to achieve the required transformations to improve nutrition.

Output 2. Skills and knowledge on gender-sensitive and nutritious production are enhanced

To maximize the nutritional impact, FAO's response will promote production and consumption of crops and livestock products with high micronutrients (iron, vitamins A and C, zinc), energy and protein content. Particular attention will be given to support a combination of productive and income-generating microenterprise activities in order to diversify livelihoods and provide more regular sources of income to protect and develop productive assets in rural areas.

Specific activities will include the provision of training on nutrition education, food preparation and preservation and optimum utilization of food at the household level, such as:

- capacity building of community-based extension for improved nutrition-sensitive food production; and
- strengthened collaboration between health and agriculture sectors to maximize nutrition benefits.

Output 3. Food security analysis, coordination and information management are ensured

The constant monitoring of the food security situation is key to ensuring the evaluation of the strategy's results. The coordination of food security actions with other actors will ensure better impact and avoid duplication towards a more efficient use of resources.

Activities to be implemented include:

- Build on country child wasting risk analysis mechanisms, including dietary and gender sensitive indicators, making them publicly available in a standardized format (IPC Acute Malnutrition Classification).⁸ Tracking nutrition information is essential for targeting vulnerable households with at-risk children, pregnant and lactating women and girls.
- Monitor and measure the impact on households, such as improvements in income, dietary diversity scores and household food insecurity access scale.
- Coordinate with sister agencies the implementation of food security interventions in order to identify gaps in geographic/target group coverage and avoid duplication.
- Manage food security information on current and planned activities and sharing among partners to inform decisions, including through the production of coordination maps.



Cross-cutting priorities

An integrated way to put our best work adapted to a range of contexts, is framing it through common settings and building on synergies to address critical gaps. Challenges often coexist within the same country or region and require tailored solutions to adequately address deficits and overcome barriers. Underpinning those challenges, including gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, climate change adaptability and resilience, and accountability to affected populations, requires addressing interconnected socioeconomic, environmental and governance challenges to advance on achieving better results.

Climate change resilience

Contributing to climate resilience and working with communities to improve the social, economic and environmental systems capacity to cope with climate variability, and respond or reorganize in ways that allow adaptation, learning and transformation. The impact of extreme events such as drought or floods is borne almost exclusively by agriculture; in particular, they affect the crops and livestock sectors disproportionately relative to all other sectors of the economy. Drought and extreme heat cause immediate stress on livestock and crops (including fodder), which can be detrimental to yields, while the longer-term impacts can transpire land subsidence, seawater intrusion along river systems with reduced water flow and ecosystems damage. Floods are still the second gravest disaster for the agriculture sector. When combined with conflict,

environmental degradation and the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, extreme weather events and lack of safe water and sanitation increase the likelihood of disease outbreaks, another direct determinant of nutritional status.

FAO climate actions support small-scale farmers and the efforts to ensure better management of valuable natural resources, plan for better water resources management and invest in disaster risk reduction, namely by providing guidance to strengthen the capacity to plan or cope with climate risks, promote climate resilient agricultural production and diversification practices to improve food security and income generation, improve access to markets, and foster the commercialization of climate-resilient agricultural commodities.

Accountability to affected populations

FAO defines accountability to affected populations from a human rights perspective as “an active commitment and enforcement by actors and organizations to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people they seek to assist”. FAO’s work in accountability to affected populations is underpinned by seven core commitments that provide the framework for ensuring that its work is appropriate, relevant, responsive to needs and respectful of the dignity and capacities of affected populations.

1. Strengthening leadership and governance to embed good practice within the Organization’s management structures and to ensure that FAO’s staff and implementing partners deliver on its commitments.
2. Ensuring greater and more routine transparency, two-way communication and information provision for affected communities.
3. Offering means for communities to provide feedback on programmes and to submit complaints, and to ensure that they receive a timely response.
4. Enabling fair and representative participation of all sections of affected populations, including the most vulnerable and marginalized.
5. Mainstreaming accountability to affected populations into needs assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation activities, ensuring an appropriate focus on accountability to affected populations, participation in processes and continuous learning and improvement.
6. Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by FAO personnel and implementing partners, and putting in place adequate response mechanisms.
7. Collaborating with peers and partners to deliver on accountability to affected populations commitments in a coordinated and coherent way.

In implementing its child wasting prevention action plan, FAO will ensure that these seven commitments will be mainstreamed in the various phases of the project cycle. Special attention will be paid to opportunities to collaborate at the interagency level to ensure complementarities and coherence when engaging with communities.



Operational approach

Flexible funding

To ensure maximum impact in a rapidly evolving situation, FAO is advocating that resource partners contribute to a Preventing Child Wasting Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA). This mechanism provides FAO with the financial means to react quickly to the crisis, reducing the time between funding decisions and actions on the ground. SFERA's pooled funding approach provides the flexibility to adjust activities and support the geographical and thematic areas of greatest need. Likewise, the programme approach enables operations to adapt as the situation changes, streamlining activities to ensure the most appropriate assistance reaches affected populations sooner.

Partnering with national governments and key stakeholders

Having concrete collaboration opportunities at the country level to better articulate bilateral initiatives with existing multilateral programmes, such as the GAP on Child Wasting, means working with partners, but also with the government, civil society and policy advocacy, to bring together our substantial expertise. These valuable assets combined will improve our work in accelerating the SDG goals on child wasting and leaving no one behind. FAO is determined to mobilize the means required to revitalize partnerships based on technical knowledge, long-lasting expertise and spirit of coordination for improved food security focusing in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable children and pregnant and lactating women and girls.

To support country capacities that risk being overwhelmed by the scale of other crises, FAO is providing technical and operational assistance to address child wasting through resilient agrifood system approaches. Furthermore, coordination is ongoing with UNICEF and WFP regarding targeting. The GAP roadmaps established with local governments will be instrumental to promote dialogue, harmonized advocacy, monitoring and impact assessments.

Corporate priority

FAO Director-General recognized the urge to address nutrition and health care as fundamental to save children's lives, especially in the most vulnerable countries. As part of the GAP on Child Wasting, FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024) is fully in line with the Organization's commitments to support countries to transform their agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable – for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

FAO stands with governments, partners and relevant stakeholders to achieve the transformation for a better future of millions of children in rural areas. No matter how it is defined, nutrition starts with what we eat. By working on our food systems, on the way we produce, collect, store, transport, transform and distribute foods, we can improve our diets, our health and our impact on natural resources.



FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024) is in line with UNICEF's acceleration plan 2022–2023, No time to waste, early prevention, detection and treatment of child wasting in the most vulnerable countries to the global food and nutrition crisis.²

Targets and estimated budget

FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024) intends to prevent malnutrition and build resilience of vulnerable households. In partnership and coordination with United Nations agencies and partners, FAO will target specifically households in rural areas facing acute food insecurity (Crisis or worse, IPC/CH Phase 3 and above) which have at least one child under 5 years of age – which represents 92 percent of them. While these households will be supported by UNICEF and/or WFP for therapeutic treatment and food assistance, FAO will support households with production capacity – families with access to land.

FAO will support each beneficiary household with a package of interventions including training and cashed-based interventions (cash+, inputs and/or cash). Due to the nature of agriculture interventions including seasonality variation, FAO's child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024) is appealing for 24-month interventions with emphasis to start immediate action within the first year. The packages include country and global coordination, technical, operation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting support. The programme will be supported with a global, standardized, digitalized monitoring system (Project Activity Information database).

Figure 3. FAO child wasting prevention action plan (2023–2024): target countries, number of households and budget

	Target number of households	Budget (USD)
Afghanistan	120 506	60 253 199
Burkina Faso	23 991	11 995 621
Chad	15 715	7 857 290
Democratic Republic of the Congo	150 783	75 391 292
Ethiopia	197 652	98 825 830
Haiti	25128	12 564 113
Kenya	45 935	22 967 525
Madagascar	15 573	7 786 724
Mali	10 335	5 167 569
Niger	29 407	14 703 251
Nigeria	115 987	57 993 620
Somalia	37 131	18 565 371
South Sudan	59 998	29 999 005
Sudan	51 325	25 662 645
Yemen	100 534	50 266 944
TOTAL	1 000 000	500 000 000



Notes

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