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Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative Global Framework for Action: Summary note**

Summary

The present report outlines the background of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative and contains a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board.

I. Background

1. Undernutrition is associated with over half of the more than 10 million deaths of children under five years of age that occur each year. The consequences of child hunger and undernutrition are extreme for the individuals and families affected and the communities and nations concerned. In 2000, 189 countries endorsed the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, including Goal 1 - to halve the proportion of the world's poor and hungry by 2015. Six years later, hunger and undernutrition remain among the most urgent challenges facing the international community. A determined global effort is needed for prevention among children at risk, and, where necessary, for remedial care. This is reinforced by the 2005 World Summit Outcome document adopted by the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, which stated that "we are convinced that the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, particularly as they affect children, is crucial for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" (A/60/L.1, para. 46).

* E/ICEF/2007/1.

** The present document was submitted late because of the need for internal consultation.

2. There is now less than a decade left to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals. Success in at least five of the seven other Goals depends on bringing an end to hunger and undernutrition: Goal 2, universal primary education; Goal 3, gender equality; Goal 4, reducing child mortality; Goal 5, improving maternal health; and Goal 6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

3. These Goals and the United Nations Millennium Declaration provide the background for the work of the World Food Programme (WFP) in fighting hunger and the work of UNICEF in combating undernutrition among children. Over the past year, WFP and UNICEF have been developing a Global Framework for Action for Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition that takes a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to preventing the problem.

4. This effort has been broad, consultative and inclusive. Consultations have been held with many United Nations agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, foundations and potential private sector partners. It has also benefited greatly from continuing dialogue, in both formal and informal sessions, with the members of the UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards.

5. The Global Framework for Action was initially drafted by inter-agency technical working groups led by WFP and UNICEF with inputs from the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), which includes all major United Nations partners, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and others. Regional and country perspectives were gained through consultations held in Southern Africa, Western Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Framework has continued to be developed in close dialogue with key partners, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and many others through the consultative process. It draws upon good practice in ongoing collaboration with Governments to address child hunger and undernutrition by the two initiating agencies and the wider United Nations country teams (UNCTs).

6. This paper summarizes the contents of the Global Framework for Action and is complemented by a detailed draft work plan for the Initiative for the period 2007-2008. The draft work plan is under discussion with partners and is being made available to members of the Executive Board.

II. Global Framework for Action — summary of main document

7. The failure to prevent hunger and undernutrition has an acute impact on national development by slowing economic growth and perpetuating the cycle of poverty through three principal routes: direct losses in productivity from poor physical status; indirect losses from poor cognitive function and deficits in schooling; and increased health care costs.

8. The geographical distribution of child undernutrition is highly uneven. More than 70 per cent of the world's 146 million underweight children under age five years live in just 10 countries, with more than 50 per cent located in South Asia alone. Meanwhile, a dozen countries, located in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and East Asia, register 40 per cent or more of their young children

underweight, according to the most recent data available (*Progress for Children: A Report Card on Nutrition* (No.4), UNICEF, May 2006).

9. The causes of child hunger and undernutrition are predictable and preventable, and can be addressed through affordable means. Dramatic improvements are possible even in the absence of economic growth. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI) is a global partnership that focuses attention on the problem, and its causes and effects. It aims to mobilize support for national actions and build awareness of the available solutions for addressing the problem on a global scale. Through the provision of evidence-based advocacy, information and communication, the Initiative aims to support national and local decision makers in analysing and designing responses tailored to the specific problems facing children. It seeks to galvanize efforts, including from the United Nations system, in support of nationally led, local and regional efforts for the reduction of hunger and undernutrition among children.

10. The operational focus of ECHUI is Millennium Development Goal 1, target 2 — “to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger” by 2015. The Initiative’s key impact indicator is the first measure of progress for Goal 1, target 2 — the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age, as established by WHO and UNICEF. During the last decade, the overall child undernutrition rate has decreased by approximately 1.7 per cent per year. This rate of decline needs to increase more than twofold to achieve the target. As a first step, ECHUI aims to mobilize the political, technical and other resources needed to support countries’ own efforts, through their national development frameworks, to double the average annual reduction rates for underweight children under five years of age.

11. The ECHUI partnership will promote global action to support national, regional and local efforts, built on four major pillars:

(a) Increased *awareness* of hunger and undernutrition and increased understanding of potential solutions among the public in industrialized and developing countries and among development and funding decision makers;

(b) Strengthened national *policies* and accelerated programmes affecting hunger and nutrition;

(c) Increased *capacities for action* in communities facing child hunger and undernutrition;

(d) Increased *efficiency and accountability* among all partners in their efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition.

12. The partners to the Initiative will promote a range of support measures to address hunger and undernutrition, including in the areas of health, nutrition and hygiene education; key commodity-based interventions; household food security, food production and livelihoods; basic education; maternal and child health; HIV/AIDS prevention; and social protection. Different groups of partners will take overall leadership in specific areas. Building on their existing work in the field and areas of mandate and expertise, UNICEF and WFP will take the lead in advocating for and promoting a set of practical measures to address both the immediate and underlying causes of child undernutrition at family and community levels.

13. These measures, to be determined on a country basis, will include *essential health, hygiene and nutrition education and promotion activities*, tailored to local needs and cultural conditions, and aimed at empowering parents, other family caregivers and local decision makers. The measures will aim for sustained increases in awareness among families and communities of child nutrition problems and their solutions, and the promotion of demand for nutrition-related basic services. Emphasis will be placed on the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and the use of appropriate home treatment for illness such as oral rehydration therapy. The measures which UNICEF and WFP will take the lead in promoting with national partners will also contain *key commodity-linked interventions* including micronutrient supplementation services, household water treatment, hand-washing with soap, parasite control measures – particularly deworming – and situation-specific household food security interventions. This overall set of measures will be adapted with national partners to respond to the needs of families and children in individual countries and geographic areas, based on available evidence and causal analysis, as an integral part of the national policy and programme development process.

14. The *partnership* approach of ECHUI aims to forge strong alliances among national Governments, international agencies, the private sector and other sectors of civil society, including technical, educational and community-oriented – including faith-based – organizations. It seeks to strengthen linkages across disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries, building solidarity, exchanging experience and mobilizing resources for the ultimate goal of ending child hunger and undernutrition. The roles of WFP and UNICEF as initiating partners in this process will be as catalysts to increase synergies among a broad range of allies, built around the four pillars – increased awareness of the problem, strengthened policies and programmes, greater capacities for community action and heightened efficiency of global partnership efforts – described above.

15. The *operational* approach of ECHUI is: to help to strengthen national capacity and policy design for integrating and scaling-up delivery of a well-designed and comprehensive set of anti-hunger interventions to the most vulnerable children and families through effective delivery channels, including community organizations; to adapt delivery and financing strategies to different settings; to promote awareness and sustained demand through approaches that empower families with information; and to support and facilitate large-scale coordination and logistics operations when needed to address the problems of countries and districts with the highest burdens of child hunger and undernutrition.

16. The *advocacy* approach of ECHUI is: to adopt an integrated, cross-sectoral policy and programme approach to hunger reduction (for example, helping to identify and draw attention to the close links between household food insecurity, illness and infections, water quality and undernutrition among children in countries with a high prevalence of HIV); to conduct a global campaign to increase understanding of the problem and awareness of available solutions; and to promote common advocacy and communication approaches to child hunger and undernutrition with and among existing initiatives and programmes. The SCN will provide major technical support and policy guidance on this and other aspects of the Initiative.

17. The Initiative will take forward a human rights-based approach as part of national and global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, based on the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments that Governments have adopted. Consistent with the principles of the Convention, the Initiative will promote, advocate for and support inclusive strategies: (a) give priority to reaching the poorest and most marginalized families and communities; (b) increase their participation in decision-making on issues related to hunger and nutrition; and (c) empower them in taking action for the survival, growth and development of their own children, supported by the provision of basic services. The promotion with partners of district-based planning and community-level monitoring will also support greater equity in achieving results for children.

18. Since the composition of the set of health, hygiene and nutrition measures which will be promoted as part of the broader Initiative will vary according to country and local circumstances, the estimation of incremental costs can only be illustrative at present. Work to refine cost estimates will be ongoing, based on country and international evidence. Initial costing efforts during the preparation of the Initiative suggest that additional spending in the range of \$79 per household per year may be required to address these elements of the child hunger and undernutrition problem, and thereby to make a direct impact on the targets for the Millennium Development Goal on poverty and hunger and several of the other Millennium Goals. For countries with underweight prevalence greater than 10 per cent, this would imply an immediate resource gap of approximately \$1 billion per year for investment in 85 million households. This estimate takes account of what countries could currently finance themselves and the immediate capacity constraints to expanding the coverage of key services. Over time, improvements in national capacities for service delivery and rising contributions by community organizations, NGOs and families themselves would all influence the resource gap. The Initiative would encourage contributions to meeting country needs for key investments in child nutrition through various means, including national expenditure reviews linked to poverty reduction strategies, consideration of allocation priorities among multilateral lending and bilateral aid organizations, and through appropriate prioritisation of child hunger and nutrition problems in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and new country programmes of United Nations agencies.

19. The investment costs associated with the focus set of measures would decrease and become sustainable over time as interventions become more integrated across sectors, linking synergistically with programmes in such areas as food production and livelihood promotion, basic education and HIV/AIDS, and matched by more effective behavioural practices and expenditures at family and community levels.

III. Strategic positioning of the Initiative

20. **The need for a renewed global effort.** Without urgent, focused and more strategic efforts, many developing countries will not reach the target of Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving hunger by 2015. Focusing on child hunger prevents irreversible damage to human development and is fundamental to achieving the other Goals. A focus on child hunger also brings cohesion to the various initiatives and efforts in favour of nutrition, food security education and health. A broad-based global campaign reinforces and multiplies the impact of these initiatives, and creates

the leverage needed to have a deep and lasting impact on hunger and undernutrition. Global efforts will be underpinned by periodic monitoring of indicators for the Goals and of related hunger and nutrition indicators through existing instruments, including United Nations reports on the Millennium Development Goals and the *Progress for Children* report card, as new international data become available.

21. **Harmonization among ongoing initiatives.** Among the existing international initiatives and partnerships most relevant to ECHUI are the International Alliance Against Hunger; Integrated Management of Childhood Illness; the Partnership for Child Development; Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH); the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative; the Global Public-Private Partnership for Hand-Washing with Soap; the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative; the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign; the International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage; GAIN; the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; the Education for All Fast Track Initiative; and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. ECHUI will work in a highly synergistic way with this wide spectrum of existing partnerships and related efforts and will promote strong and broad cohesion among them, based on the common challenge. The Initiative will add value by promoting a greater priority given to child hunger and nutrition challenges in national policies and programmes, through analysis, evidence-based advocacy, social mobilization and communication - and by promoting interventions that strengthen the capacities of families and local communities in particular. Success in these approaches would increase the effectiveness of the entire range of initiatives that bear upon child hunger and undernutrition.

22. **Harmonization with United Nations and national development planning processes.** ECHUI provides a range of collaborating United Nations agency partners with an important instrument to collectively advance more coherent and effective approaches to addressing child hunger, food insecurity and undernutrition, through the harmonized United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process in support of national goals. This process includes the Common Country Assessment, joint programmes and annual work plans supported by members of the UNCT. Collaboration of UNCT partners with the country operations of the World Bank and regional development banks and with non-governmental organizations will also be intensified in this area. ECHUI partners will encourage the alignment of United Nations country cooperation and joint programmes around key causal factors in the country context; and will encourage more cohesive national priority actions related to child hunger and nutrition, in particular those incorporated in poverty reduction strategies and other national development frameworks.

23. **Reform principles.** In light of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and related initiatives, the international community is committed to strengthening the capacity of national authorities to lead and coordinate efforts in all the Millennium Development Goal areas. This commitment aims to help countries to achieve efficient resource use, rapid action and results-based management.

24. Based on the widely adopted principles for reform, the periodic assessment of ECHUI at the country level will include its effectiveness in encouraging stakeholders to work towards the establishment and operation of: (a) one agreed country action framework for addressing child hunger and undernutrition, linked to the national development framework, as the basis for coordinating the work of all

partners; (b) one national coordinating authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; and (c) one agreed country-level and locally anchored monitoring and evaluation system. This will include, for example, assisting national authorities in the consolidation of information and evidence on child hunger and undernutrition to support the national process of planning, decision-making and budgetary allocation.

25. ECHUI will aim to stimulate, enable and help government partners to prioritize the aims of eliminating child hunger and reducing undernutrition and to reflect these in their policies, budgets, legal frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. It will support the efforts of national institutions to analyse the situation of children in the country, build consensus on priority interventions, and obtain information on policies and actions that have successfully reduced child hunger and undernutrition internationally.

26. Local analysis and evidence will inform priorities and actions at the subnational level. Wider consensus on child hunger and nutrition issues will promote intensified, better-targeted, adequately prioritized and budgeted interventions across sectors, including in municipal, provincial and district programmes. This consensus will also help to raise awareness and support informed action by civil society and community organizations working to address all aspects of the challenge.

IV. Operational implications

27. During the planning of ECHUI, WFP and UNICEF have sought to catalyse sustainable action by incorporating this work into the mainstream of their organizations and strategic plans at the headquarters, regional and country levels. Requests to be associated with planning and implementation of the Initiative have been received through WFP and UNICEF regional offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Joint actions have been initiated or interest expressed in more than 30 countries where WFP and UNICEF are present. The Initiative will be taken forward based on a wide range of existing cooperation activities that are already taking place through Executive Board-approved country programmes, and will strengthen, broaden and intensify these activities.

28. In the case of UNICEF, the Initiative will form a major part of organizational efforts to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve key targets of the 2006-2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), supported by the approved strategies in health and nutrition and in water, sanitation and hygiene. ECHUI will help to intensify efforts towards the MTSP targets dealing with child growth and nutrition, family care practices and the nutrition-related Core Commitments for Children in emergencies under the MTSP focus area on young child survival and development, as well as to increase the synergies with targets relating to basic education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS and policy advocacy and partnerships.

29. All three tiers of participation – country, regional and headquarters – are supported by improved programme and management efficiencies, including assessment and analysis of child and maternal undernutrition issues that are more closely linked to maternal and child health issues, and closer analysis of cross-sectoral inputs to, for example, basic education and gender equality.

30. As the Initiative moves into the implementation phase in 2007, a principal aim will be continued integration of tasks and identification of areas where efficiency and effectiveness are possible at all levels, based on existing resources. For example, it will be possible to integrate planning and review exercises for a range of child survival and development, maternal health, basic education and other programmes, thus reducing the need for separate consultations devoted to ECHUI alone. This integration has already been demonstrated in an all-Africa representatives meeting that focused on child survival and development issues, and in joint regional management team meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean. A further example is the linkage of the Initiative with investments in areas, such as basic education and school feeding, addressing the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

31. The approved and forthcoming country cooperation programmes of WFP and UNICEF, within the UNDAF process with other United Nations partner agencies and led by national authorities, will continue to be the primary vehicles for support to national efforts and frameworks relating to hunger and undernutrition.

32. As ECHUI implementation proceeds, the consultation process between the UNCT and national and international partners will make it possible to consider more fully whether additional resources will be needed within the framework of country programmes where collaboration has already begun.

33. Resource implications can be broken down into two broad categories: (a) costs of funding a small, joint execution team to support the Initiative's work; and (b) reorienting and refocusing within each organization in the framework of its strategic plan:

(a) **Providing leadership to the Initiative.** A small, joint execution team of WFP and UNICEF personnel drawn from other responsibilities will be required to support the Initiative and service both the Steering Committee – the Executive Directors of WFP and UNICEF and the Chair of the Partners' Group – and the Partners' Group. It is expected that the Partners' Group will be chaired by UNHCR, supported by Vice-Chairs from non-governmental organizations and the private sectors. Other responsibilities of the joint team will include:

- (i) management of partnership development processes;
- (ii) best practice and "how to" documentation;
- (iii) joint policy guidelines;
- (iv) establishment and maintenance of strategic partnerships;
- (v) development of communication activities and community approaches;
- (vi) costing and resource tracking work.

The estimated costs for the core team of approximately \$3 million per annum are expected to be funded in part by agency allocations from existing core resources, as well as by supporting foundations, the private sector and other partner organizations.

(b) **Reorientation to contribute to achieving the ECHUI goals.** WFP and UNICEF will call on internal divisions and offices to enhance their focus on the Initiative. In the case of UNICEF, these costs will mainly be covered through

allocations of part of the time of existing staff. Some specific areas, such as communication and data monitoring capacity in support of the Initiative, may require limited additional resources. As implementation of the Initiative begins, these costs will be incorporated within the existing UNICEF strategic planning framework and in regular budget planning and programme submissions.

34. WFP and UNICEF themselves will not seek to channel wider resources to meet the estimated resource gaps for national action. Their role will focus on advocacy and leveraging of resources with decision makers at national and international levels in order to promote increased and more effective investments. Among the initiating partners, UNICEF will focus in particular on: intensifying support for national efforts to tackle undernutrition through its country programmes of cooperation; working as a catalyst for national and global action by drawing on its capacity and expertise in communication, in the monitoring of child data and, increasingly, in policy-oriented advocacy; and on promoting inclusive, rights-based strategies and social mobilization to help to empower, and strengthen demand among, poor families and communities. UNICEF will also make its global supply capacity and procurement services available to national and other partners who are scaling up nutrition-related interventions and services in the commodity groups where UNICEF has established expertise. The organization will assist in monitoring nutrition-related indicators and trends in areas related to the Initiative through UNICEF global publications and databases on children.

V. Next immediate steps

35. The secretariat seeks the Executive Board's support for implementation of the ECHUI Global Framework for Action and its draft work plan, including those operations and activities specific to UNICEF.

36. Following consideration by the Executive Board, WFP, UNICEF and other partners will finalize the detailed work plan for the Initiative, including an annual results matrix, and will regularly update and integrate their agency work plans to take the Initiative forward. The plans will ensure that monitoring and accountability — including key performance indicators for assessing impact and effectiveness - are part of the ECHUI management structure. The two organizations will also provide the Executive Board with periodic information and analysis on progress of the Initiative, including results achieved, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.

VI. Draft decision

The Executive Board,

Having considered the document on the Global Framework for Action to End Child Hunger and Undernutrition,

1. *Welcomes* the Global Framework for Action for the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative;

2. *Recognizes* the Initiative's potential contribution to achieving Millennium Development Goal 1, and the catalytic role of WFP and UNICEF, working through their respective mandates and established Memorandum of

Understanding, in mobilizing the wider global partnerships required to end child hunger and undernutrition;

3. *Encourages* UNICEF, with WFP, to mobilize a broad range of partners to support national efforts in this critical area, with the goals of:

(a) Increasing awareness of child hunger and undernutrition, and increasing understanding of potential solutions;

(b) Strengthening national policies and programmes;

(c) Increasing country capacities for direct community action;

(d) Increasing the effectiveness and accountability of global efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition.

4. *Requests* UNICEF, with WFP, to provide periodic information and analysis on progress of the Initiative, including results, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.
