

## Children & Nutrition: Latin America and the Caribbean

| Trends in underweight prevalence in children under five  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1990   | 11%                           |
| Current available data                                   | 7% (4 million children)       |
| Average annual rate of reduction (AARR)                  | 3.8 (on track for MDG target) |
| Other key nutrition indicators                           |                               |
| Children suffering from stunting                         | 16                            |
| Households consuming iodized salt (%)                    | 86                            |
| Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) | 31                            |



UNICEF/ HQ97-0358/Alejandro Balaguer: BOLIVIA: A girl with a bowl of fortified milk provided by UNICEF.

### Challenges

This region is on track to meet the MDG nutrition target, having reduced the proportion of underweight in children by an average of 3.8% every year between 1990 and 2004. Even so, many children face serious nutrition problems. This is a region of marked disparities, with children living in poor households 3.6 times more likely to be underweight and more than four times more likely to be stunted than better-off children, and children in rural areas more than twice as likely to be underweight as those from urban areas. Sixteen per cent of children are stunted and the major challenge of iron-deficiency anaemia is unlikely to be overcome by 2015.

### Priority countries

- In Guatemala, 23% of children are underweight and 49% are stunted.
- In Bolivia and Ecuador more than one quarter of all children are stunted and most (56% and 58%, respectively) have anaemia.
- In Peru, children living in rural areas are four times more likely to be underweight than children in urban areas.
- In Haiti, 65.8% of children are anaemic and only 11% of households consume iodized salt.

### Progress

- Cuba has met the MDG target, reducing underweight prevalence from 9% to 4% in just four years – 1996 to 2000, and the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Peru have all made solid progress.
- The two most populous countries, Brazil and Mexico, are on track for the MDG target. Even so, these two countries face serious nutrition disparities.
- Chile has the best underweight and stunting record in the region, with prevalence of just 1% and 2%, respectively and has achieved universal salt iodization.

### UNICEF in action

- Across the region, UNICEF aims to address nutrition disparities through policy and budget reform in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other UN and external partners.
- In Bolivia, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNICEF, the Micronutrient Initiative and other partners back a programme to tackle child anaemia through the new National Sprinkles Programme (a mix of micronutrients in a powder for use in the home).
- In Guatemala, UNICEF, WFP and PAHO support an integrated approach on complementary feeding to combat child stunting.
- In Paraguay, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP support efforts to combat child stunting through the allocation of public funds (\$3 million) to combat undernutrition in poor children and women.
- In Peru, the Integrated Early Childhood Development programme has helped to reduce stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.
- In Venezuela, a new approach that combines breastfeeding promotion, birth registration and immunization is bringing multiple benefits to children and their families.
- At the regional level, and in collaboration with the private sector, a situation analysis on the nutritional composition, availability, cost and programme coverage of Fortified Complementary Food was conducted in 2005, with information from 20 countries in the region. The analysis will be released in 2006.