

**Event Report**

# **Child Malnutrition in Iran: Responsible Product Development**



**Tehran, Iran**

**May 2019**

## INTRODUCTION

Child malnutrition can manifest itself in two main different forms: overnutrition and undernutrition. Overnutrition is a form of malnutrition where there is an excess in the intake of nutrients beyond normal growth, development, and metabolism. Over nutrition often leads to obesity. Undernutrition is a form of malnutrition where there is a deficiency in the intake of nutrients below the level needed for maintaining good health. Undernutrition often leads to underweight, wasting, and stunting. The deficiency of micronutrients can be present in both forms of malnutrition.

According to the Global Nutrition Report<sup>1</sup>, malnutrition costs the global economy a whopping \$3.5 trillion annually. In addition to health issues, malnutrition also slows countries' economic and social development. Food companies can play a significant role in addressing child malnutrition particularly in preventing and adjusting the deficiency of micronutrients among children. There are several ways for food companies to be of influence in this arena such as elimination/reduction of certain ingredients from the products, food enrichment, and food fortification<sup>1</sup>.

The approaches taken by business for food fortification often differ. In countries where a large segment of the population is at risk of a particular type of nutrient deficiency, mass fortification is usually preferred. Mass fortification refers to the addition of nutrients to foods that are generally consumed by all parts of the population such as wheat or rice or with iodized salt. Another form of fortification is targeted fortification which is used when a particular group within the population is at risk of a particular type of nutrient deficiency such as infants and with the addition of nutrients to infant cereals (Allen et al., 2006). These two approaches are usually enforced through government mandatory fortification schemes where certain laws or regulations are enacted that require the fortification of certain foods.

The approach that has gained increasing attention by the food sector is voluntary fortification. In this approach, government may issue guidelines to define the concentrations and types of nutrients or the food items to be fortified but the initiative is typically voluntarily taken by private food companies. Food companies can lead the fight against child malnutrition through innovation in product development and responsible food marketing to children.

With the objective of raising awareness and inspiring positive action among Iranian food companies, UNICEF Iran in collaboration with Iran-Switzerland Chamber of Commerce and Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture with the support of the Embassy of Switzerland in Iran conducted a one-day technical session for businesses in the food industry on improving child nutrition in Iran on Wednesday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

The event was hosted by Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture and was attended by many Iranian and Swiss food companies. Business experts from the food industry in Iran and Switzerland engaged in technical discussions on manufacturing food products enriched

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<sup>1</sup> Global Nutrition Report (2018) accessible at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/>

and fortified specifically for children as well as the best ways to reduce unhealthy levels of fat, salt, and sugar in food products to tackle child malnutrition.

H.E. Markus Leitner, Ambassador of Switzerland to Iran, Ms. Christine Weigand, UNICEF OIC Representative, Dr Bahman Eshghi, Secretary General of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture, and Mr. Sharif Nezam Mafi, President of Iran-Swiss Chamber of Commerce, were among keynote speakers in the opening session of the workshop.

## SPEECHES



H.E. Markus Leitner, Ambassador of Switzerland to Iran, started by expressing the support of the Embassy of Switzerland in Iran for promoting responsible business practices. His Excellency emphasized the relevant and timely focus on child malnutrition in Iran particularly given the current economic environment, the role that can be played by the Swiss companies as key trading partners in the food sector, and, most importantly, the right of every child to have access to sufficient nutritious food. Finally, the Ambassador called upon all participants to use their expertise and access to decision-making power for putting an end to child malnutrition in Iran.



Dr Bahman Eshghi, Secretary General of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture, referred to the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Tehran Chamber of Commerce in reducing poverty and improving the welfare of citizens. Dr Eshghi mentioned examples where Tehran Chamber of Commerce fulfilled its social responsibility such as the establishment of hospital in the less privileged part of Tehran or the contributions to the people affected by the recent flood. He also referred to the Memorandum of Understanding between Tehran Chamber of Commerce and UNICEF signed in September 2017 and how the chamber is working with UNICEF to improve the welfare of children in Iran.

Ms. Christine Weigand, UNICEF OIC Representative, in her remarks mentioned that “UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Iran to help reduce the impact of malnutrition and promote proper nutrition among children particularly in the first 1,000 days of life”. She also discussed the global trends, opportunities, and challenges of malnutrition, UNICEF and UN-led solutions, and the role of the food sector ranging from developing innovative products such as Plumpy’Nut to child-friendly food marketing. She also referred to the 12 WHO Recommendations on Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children and UNICEF guideline on the Child-rights Approach in Food Marketing to Children.



Finally, she pointed out that “UNICEF Iran together with its corporate partners, intends to promote responsible business practices in the business environment in Iran particularly as it relates to children. Given its close partnership with the Government as well as with the private sector, UNICEF can act as a facilitator to help form public-private partnerships to help reduce malnutrition among children in Iran”.



Mr. Sharif Nezam Mafi, President of Iran-Swiss Chamber of Commerce, stated the role of food companies in improving the nutritional value of products used by children. In addition, he promoted the event as a stepping stone towards raising awareness among food companies on the actions they can take to address malnutrition through responsible and innovative product development.

## BEST PRACTICES

Many food companies are now innovating for children in product development and communication to battle malnutrition. The rest of the industry can learn from these pioneers in enrichment, fortification, and the addition of micronutrients to develop new products, retrofit current products, and elimination or reduction of added sugar and saturated and/or trans fats and change the way they communicate with consumers to battle malnutrition.



Ms. Ira Walterscheid Müller, Marketing Segment Lead Early Life Nutrition, from DSM, leading producer of nutritional products, shared best practices from DSM's work in combatting malnutrition particularly with a focus on the MENA region. This included market research-driven product development of fortified food for children.





Ms. Maryam Nikkhah, Head of Marketing of Baby Food Division Kalleh Dairy Co., an Iranian food company, presented their achievements in product development particularly for newborns and children. This included their Iron, Zinc, Vitamins D- & A-enriched/fortified baby food and milk for mothers, probiotic, zero sugar soft drinks, zero fat yogurt and zero milk as well as other low-calorie food items, and fortified products.

## GROUP DISCUSSIONS



A series of group discussions were held after the sharing of best practices of food companies in reducing child malnutrition. The participants were divided into two main clusters focusing on Overnutrition and Undernutrition and then were divided into sub-groups to discuss specific issues related to each form of malnutrition and the role that food companies can play.

**Group 1: Overnutrition (Enrichment/Fortification/Reduction)**

**Synopsis:** Overnutrition is a form of malnutrition where there is an excess in the intake of nutrients beyond normal growth, development, and metabolism.



Questions	Results of Group Discussions
<p><b>Q1. (General) Who are the most important or influential actors in addressing the problem of malnutrition in Iran?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: What are the roles of the government/policy makers, the private sector/food companies, the consumers, and other actors?</i></p>	<p>Three main sectors alongside the most influential actors in each sector were identified. These actors, if work together, can address the problem of overnutrition in Iran.</p> <p><b>Government and Public Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Health and Medical Education (Supreme Council for Health and Food Security, Nutrition Department, etc.): Ministry of Health and Medical Education is the leading ministry in the issues related to health and nutrition. The ministry can be influential in a number of ways: policy making (policy gap analysis and policy change), standard setting and issuing directives, research, awareness raising (issuing guidelines), etc.</li> </ul>

	<p>Supreme Council for Health and Food Security, with chairmanship of the president, holds a high-level authority in facilitating inter-ministerial, inter-agency cooperation at the state level, as well as through public-private partnership, to reduce the effects of malnutrition</p> <p>Nutrition Department can play an important role. It is responsible for improving nutrition and food security of the people of Iran, improving the physical and economic access to food, improving public knowledge and awareness with regard to proper nutrition, making nutritional interventions to prevent and reduce malnutrition, conducting national studies on the nutritional status of the country, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and educational institutions can be influential in raising public awareness particularly among children and adolescents regarding proper and healthy nutrition</li> <li>• Universities and research institutes supporting and undertaking research and development on improving eating habits and dietary intake, life style guidance and governmental organizations such as Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran on setting standards for the industry</li> <li>• Municipalities (child-friendly and child-respecting advertisement throughout the city): many municipalities are engaging with the Ministry of Interior and UNICEF Iran Office on Child-friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)</li> <li>• Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare: Exploring the types of support that can be mobilized from the current social and welfare programmes</li> </ul> <p><b>Private Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector actors working in food and nutrition sectors: Food companies can play an important role in developing healthy products, reducing unhealthy ingredients, and promoting healthy diets through product development and responsible marketing practices</li> <li>• Furthermore, as part of their social responsibility and by focusing on their core business, food companies can set long-term goals in their corporate sustainability or CSR strategy concerning the health of their customers particularly on the issue of overnutrition. The crucial role of ICT and agricultural companies as well as marketing/media agencies should not be overlooked</li> <li>• Food experts and nutritionists: Experts and specialists can be very instrumental in developing state-level responsive policies</li> </ul>
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	<p>and corporate engagement strategies that can address overnutrition efficiently and effectively</p> <p><b>The Social Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental boards: The awareness among children and families can also be integral to a successful nation-wide campaign battling overnutrition. Without proper awareness, the success rate of such programmes would be minimal at best</li> <li>• Media: Media can be a very strong lever in multiplying the effect of programmes aiming to reduce overnutrition. Media, with awareness raising campaigns and enhancing mass education, can also help with public change of eating habits and dietary intake that can significantly reduce overnutrition</li> <li>• NGOs (particularly child-focused): Social sector can be an important partner for the Government and private sector in the problem identification, implementation, and evaluation phases by providing community-level access</li> <li>• International organizations: International organizations such as UNICEF and WHO, among other UN agencies and global organizations, with broad experience in battling overnutrition world-wide, can offer sharing global knowledge and high-level expertise with the national and local actors to build local capacity. They also offer guidelines that can be used by the Government and the private sector in addressing overnutrition</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q2. How can Iranian food companies address overnutrition that leads to overweight, obesity, and possibility of micronutrients deficiency among children and adolescents? What actions business can take?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: through product design and development but also awareness raising, innovation, marketing, etc. (business function, network, and supply chain)</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can take three sets of actions to address overnutrition:</p> <p><b>Awareness Raising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from best practices: storytelling and knowledge sharing through successful case studies and best practices can enhance the capacity of the Government and the local companies in addressing the overnutrition problem</li> <li>• Awareness raising through the nutrition facts (nutritional value of products): Nutrition tables provide information on food composition, nutrient value, and calorie content and can be useful and valuable source of information</li> <li>• Advertisement (to shape a healthier lifestyle): change the educational attitudes in earlier years, obligational physical practices, as well as direct and distance learning</li> <li>• Brainstorming events using modern design thinking and problem-solving methods</li> <li>• Using experiences of UNICEF, WHO, and other leader organizations, interaction with pioneer food companies</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Advocacy and Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating by relevant Government agencies and other actors to develop protective regulations or to regulate food industry to reduce the adverse effect of malnutrition in the food system</li> <li>• Complying with Iran Food and Drug Administration Guidelines on reduction, enrichment, and fortification practices to address malnutrition</li> <li>• Banning, limiting or regulating advertising of unhealthy food products</li> </ul> <p><b>Product Innovation and Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in product development, innovation, and R&amp;D: Food research institutes and companies can address malnutrition with the development of healthier products with a palatable taste</li> <li>• Advocating for labeling and promotion of nutritious food: labeling plays a crucial role in informing the public about the nutritional value of products such as traffic light labeling</li> <li>• Collaborating with the Iranian Food and Drug Administration in innovative product development in line with the policies and guidelines of the organization</li> <li>• Reducing salt, fat, and sugar (for juice, biscuit and soft drinks) and using natural ingredients instead</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q3. Learning from the best practices in the industry, how can Iranian food companies approach reduction of salt, sugar, fat, etc. in their product development process? How about fortification and enrichment?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: development of new products or changing the current products</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can take the following steps to reduce - salt, sugar, fat, etc., and practice food fortification and enrichment.</p> <p><b>Strategy and Business Practices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing clear vision and strategy: defining corporate sustainability strategy and action plan which includes setting long-term goals and SMART objectives and actions to address malnutrition among other food system challenges and bottlenecks</li> <li>• Packaging (i.e. use of traffic light labeling), Marketing and Branding (storytelling such as the use of informative health-related taglines and improving public trust).</li> <li>• Innovating with business models: Using innovative business models to move towards sustainable and nutritious food systems, for instance, vertical business integration to ensure healthy ingredients</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Product Innovation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing (trans and saturated) fats in food products or reducing absorption by adding fiber</li> <li>• Changing the recipes by applications and fortification in such products like: high fiber bread, reduced sugar ketchup, low-fat yogurt, cheese and replacing KCl (potassium chloride) instead of NaCl (sodium chloride) in the products</li> <li>• Focusing on changing taste from childhood, changing the vision of producers to decrease the business benefits and looking at this process in the long-run, indirect advertisement</li> <li>• Enriching products such as flour with zinc, iron, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q4. Which (healthy) food items can be advertised to children to address overnutrition? And how these items should be marketed?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: some countries have set a limit or banned advertisement of food items to children.</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can develop new products, redevelop the existing ones, and take innovative approaches in marketing healthy food items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing healthy snacks/desserts such as: fruit chips, whole grain-based dessert, low fat cocoa milk</li> <li>• Developing fiber food products, low fat dairies, low salt and sugar, diet biscuits</li> <li>• Developing complimentary foods such as Persian Rice Pudding (Fereni)</li> <li>• Marketing healthy food items with simple educational messaging around the area of nutrition</li> <li>• Advertising healthy eating at schools, in family education programs and popular children TV shows with observation of ethical marketing principles developed by WHO and UNICEF</li> <li>• Introducing healthy food products with proper and wide promotion</li> </ul>

## Group 2: Undernutrition (Enrichment/Fortification/Reduction)

**Synopsis:** Undernutrition is a form of malnutrition where there is a deficiency in the intake of nutrients below the level needed for maintaining good health.



Questions	Results of Group Discussions
<p><b>Q1. (General) Who are the most important or influential actors in addressing the problem of malnutrition in Iran?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: What are the roles of the government/policy makers, the private sector/food companies, the consumers, and other actors?</i></p>	<p><i>[Presented in the overnutrition section]</i></p>



<p><b>Q2. How can Iranian food companies address undernutrition that leads to underweight, wasting, stunting, and micronutrients deficiency among children and adolescents? What actions business can take?</b></p> <p><i>Tip: through product design and development but also awareness raising, innovation, marketing, etc. (business function, network, and supply chain)</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can take three sets of actions to address undernutrition:</p> <p><b>Awareness Raising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding capacity building workshops and stakeholder discussion events: increasing the local capacity to address malnutrition in the governmental, private, and social sectors can be instrumental in addressing malnutrition</li> <li>• Changing eating habits through responsible marketing and product innovation (particularly with a focus on positive informative messaging)</li> <li>• Increasing public awareness about undernutrition</li> <li>• Reforming the educational system to increase family and children’s knowledge of the malnutrition problem particularly including underweight and wasting, stunting, and micronutrients deficiency.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advocacy and Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting fair and healthy food products: promotion of healthy food items can improve their market share and nudge other businesses to direct the bulk of their production towards the production of healthy food items</li> <li>• Developing dedicated educational programmes to improve public knowledge and awareness through formal and informal educational system in relation to food products specially among children and adolescents</li> <li>• Monitoring food industry and its performance in addressing undernutrition and propose proper government and public response</li> <li>• Connecting universities, research centers to the industry and food business R&amp;D sections</li> </ul> <p><b>Product Innovation and Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting R&amp;D and product innovation to address undernutrition: Addressing undernutrition through fortification-based products particularly containing Vitamin D, B9, Iron, etc. in line with Iranian Food and Drug Administration and global guidelines</li> <li>• Prioritizing the development of healthy food products with good tastes and high quality</li> <li>• Analyzing the nutritional challenges children face and developing the products that improve these particular problems based on demography and geographical distribution</li> </ul>
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	<p>of products, for instance, developing Vitamin D-enriched yoghurt for children in areas with significant Vitamin D fortified deficiency in the majority of the local population</p>
<p><b>Q3. Learning from the best practices in the industry, how can Iranian food companies approach fortification or enrichment with macronutrients (protein, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates) or micronutrients (vitamins or minerals) in their product development process? How about reduction of salt, sugar, fat, etc.?</b>  <i>Tip: development of new products or changing the current products</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can take the following steps to reduce salt, sugar, fat, etc., and practice food fortification and enrichment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving affordability of healthier or enriched/fortified products</li> <li>• Dedicating a budget to promote and advertise healthy food products, decreasing the amount of salt and sugar step by step.</li> <li>• Reducing added sugar, palm oil and salt, enrich foods by various vitamins and mineral such as vitamin D, folic acid, zinc, iron and etc.</li> <li>• Careful selection of all ingredients and ample considerations for fortification and enrichment, lowering salt, added sugar, unhealthy fats and adding healthy fats</li> <li>• Selecting the target group (age/condition) for developing particular products targeting to address particular undernutrition issues such as the paucity of certain micronutrients</li> <li>• Checking the whole process of production such as quality and reliability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q4. Which (healthy) food items can be advertised to children to address undernutrition? And how they can be advertised?</b>  <i>Tip: some countries have set a limit or banned advertisement of food items to children.</i></p>	<p>Food businesses can develop new products, redevelop the existing ones, and take innovative approaches in marketing healthy food items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing food products containing diverse vitamins and minerals or micronutrients</li> <li>• Improving the tasting of healthy items</li> <li>• Enriching products with essential micronutrients such as iron and zinc</li> <li>• Fortifying with minerals and vitamins such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ fortified milk (fortified with calcium and vitamin D, omega 3 fatty acids...)</li> <li>○ Fortified cake</li> <li>○ Fortified baby food (fruit puree)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Developing separate class of functional foods (such as probiotics)</li> <li>• Promoting healthy/fortified food items can be advertised on TV, radio, traditional and social media</li> </ul>

## PANEL DISCUSSION



**Moderator:** Mr. Sharif Nezam Mafi, President of Iran-Swiss Chamber of Commerce

**Members:**

Dr. Robabeh Sheikholeslam, Nutrition, Health and Development (NHD) Institute

Dr. Mahmoud. Alebouyeh, Director of International Affairs & ICH joint program focal point,  
Iran Food & Drug Administration

Ms. Ira Walterscheid Müller, Marketing Segment Lead Early Life Nutrition, DSM

Mr. Daniel Terjeki, Marketing Manager Middle East, DSM

Ms. Maryam Nikkhah, Head of Marketing of Baby Food Division, Kalleh Dairy Co.

The convergence of ideas around what food companies can do to reduce child malnutrition could only be achieved if all stakeholders were to offer their insights through dialogue. Resting the premise of the discussions on the role of food companies in addressing child malnutrition in the children and adolescent food system, a panel was formed where the Government representative from Iranian Food and Drug Administration that regulates the food industry, social leaders who had campaigned successfully on enrichment, and representatives of leading Iranian and Swiss food companies with best practices in the industry discussed the implications of child malnutrition and how food companies could address the problem using innovative product development and practicing child-friendly food marketing. Finally, the participants were asked to draw their commitments and that of their companies to combat child malnutrition in Iran.

## The Way Forward and Conclusion

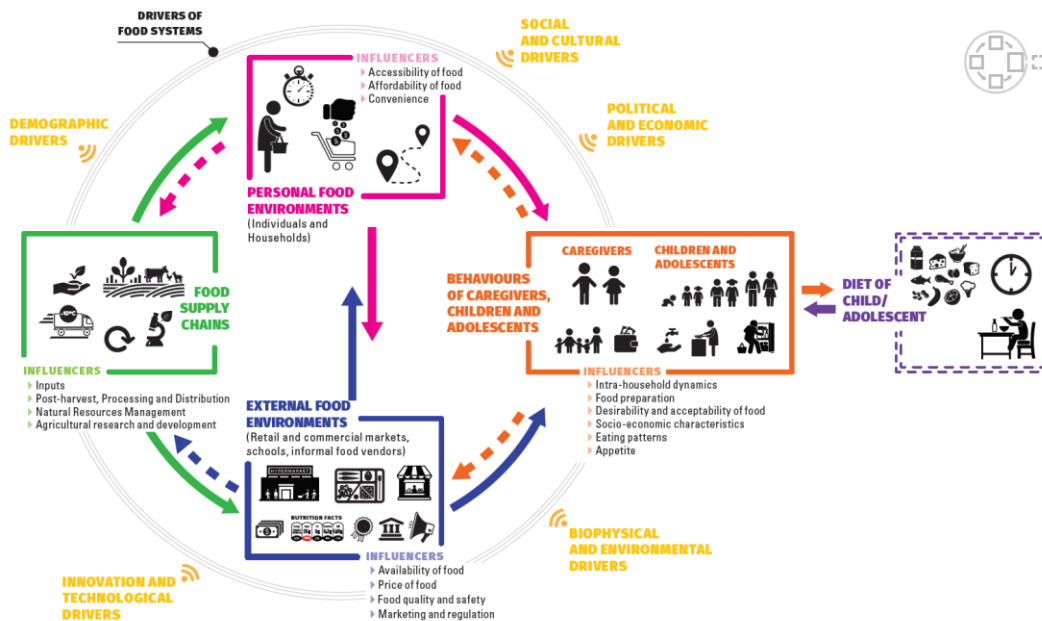
Despite increased attention to undernutrition and micronutrients deficiency, they remain a devastating multifaceted problem affecting infants, young children, adolescent girls and women. Undernutrition represents a violation of children's right to survival and development and the highest attainable standard of health (UNICEF, 2015). Children who suffer from chronic undernutrition in the early stages of life fail to grow and develop to their full potential, both mentally and physically (Black et al., 2013).

The consequences associated with undernutrition can be devastating. In the short term, undernutrition increases the risk of mortality and morbidity, and in the longer term, the consequences of undernutrition extend to adulthood, increasing risk of poor pregnancy outcomes (including newborns who are small for gestational age), impaired cognition that results in poor school performance, reduced economic productivity and earnings, and future risk for overweight and subsequently NCDs such as hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and related NCDs can occur in the same country, district, household and often the same individual over the life course (UNICEF-WHO-World Bank, 2014). On the other hand, the estimated number of children under 5 years of age who are overweight is growing rapidly (Barker, 1997). The causes of undernutrition and overweight and obesity are in many ways similar and intertwined.

UNICEF addresses the problems of undernutrition, as well as overnutrition. UNICEF reaffirms its commitment to sustainably improving maternal and child nutrition, which is critical to promote the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged, to survival and development. Working with national governments, and in partnership with others, UNICEF sets out to improve nutrition for all children and women by creating an enabling environment that results in evidence-based, sustainable, multisectoral nutrition actions delivered at scale. The updated approach to multisectoral nutrition programming is intended to enable a more effective contribution to national efforts to accelerate progress in nutrition. In addition to supporting attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, this will also contribute to attainment of the nutrition targets approved by the World Health Assembly, the United Nations Zero Hunger Initiative and future sustainability developments goals relating to nutrition (UNICEF, 2015). Malnutrition has many faces:

- A child who never reaches full height due to poverty, poor sanitation, lack of breastfeeding and limited access to nutritious foods
- A young woman who becomes anaemic during her pregnancy and gives birth to an underweight baby who later faces developmental delays
- A child rendered blind by vitamin A deficiency
- A child who becomes obese through overconsumption of low quality food
- A desperately thin and wasted child, at imminent risk of death

Malnutrition should be looked at as a system problem. Systems approaches address the direct and underlying system actors, drivers, and dynamics that affect the economy, people, and the planet. The systemic view behind children and adolescent food system can shed light on how malnutrition emerges and how it can be contained. The Innocenti Framework<sup>2</sup>, defined by UNICEF and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), presented below, includes four determinants (food supply chains, external food environments, personal food environments, and behaviors of caregivers, children and adolescents), which together with the drivers<sup>3</sup> shape children and adolescents' diets.



One of the determinants of children and adolescent food system is the external food environments, where consumers interface with food, which includes retail and commercial markets, schools, and informal food vendors. A set of important influencing factors also impact the dynamics within the external food environments such as the price, availability, quality, and safety of food items as well as marketing norms and regulations. This is where the impact of food companies on the children and adolescent food system is the most visible.

To address such a systemic issue, a multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach should be developed that can address the following WHO (2010) recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> The Innocenti Framework on food systems for Children and Adolescents (2018)

<sup>3</sup> A set of underlying drivers impact the functionality of food systems. They include: (1) demographic drivers (urbanization, population growth, migration); (2) political and economic drivers (leadership, policies, trade); (3) innovation and technological drivers (technology, infrastructure, investment); (4) biophysical and environmental drivers (climate change, natural resource management); and (5) social and cultural drivers (norms, traditions, and underlying social dynamics).

## A) Policy Development

### **Policy Development**

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- 1) To achieve the policy objective; stepwise or comprehensive approach to reduce marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt, to children.
- 2) Governments should set clear definitions for the key components of the policy, thereby allowing for a standard implementation process. The setting of clear definitions would facilitate uniform implementation, irrespective of the implementing body.
- 3) Settings where children gather should be free from all forms of marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt.
- 4) Governments should be the key stakeholders in the development of policy and provide leadership, through a multi-stakeholder platform, for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### **Policy Implementation**

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- 1) Considering resources, benefits and burdens of all stakeholders involved, Member States should consider the most effective approach to reduce marketing to children of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt.
- 2) Member States should cooperate to put in place the means necessary to reduce the impact of cross-border marketing (in-flowing and out-flowing) of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt to children in order to achieve the highest possible impact of any national policy.
- 3) The policy framework should specify enforcement mechanisms and establish systems for their implementation.

In this respect, the framework should include clear definitions of sanctions and could include a system for reporting complaints.

## Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

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- 1) All policy frameworks should include a monitoring system to ensure compliance with the objectives set out in the national policy, using clearly defined indicators.
- 2) The policy frameworks should also include a system to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the policy on the overall aim, using clearly defined indicators.

## B) Business Actions

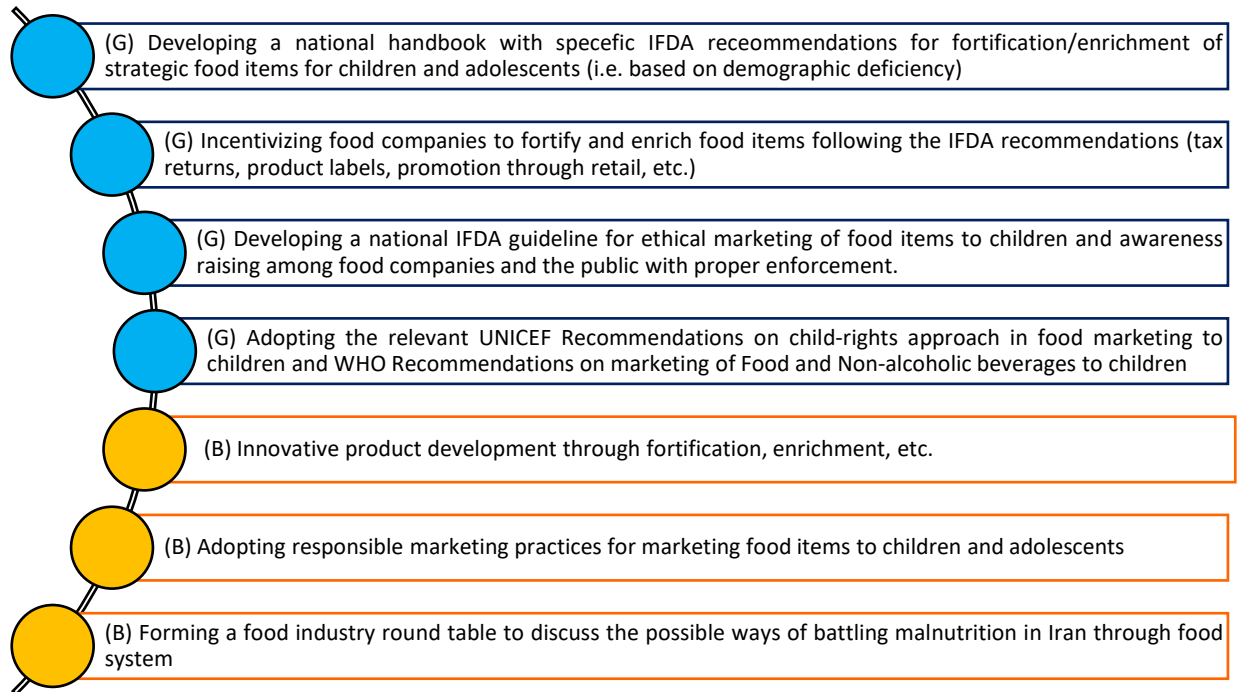
### Food Industry

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- Limit the levels of saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars, and salt in existing products.
- Continue to develop and provide affordable, healthy and nutritious choices to consumers (Low-Cost Nutritious Foods)
- Provide consumers with adequate and understandable product and nutrition information.
- Practice responsible marketing that supports the strategy, particularly with regard to the restriction of foods high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt, especially to children.
- Invest in Development of Nutrition Science Capacity
- Support innovation and Expansion of Foods for Undernutrition; expansion of the portfolio of foods currently available for complementary feeding in settings of acute and chronic undernutrition
- Greater support for biofortification & Food and Beverage Fortification & Invest in Agriculture
- Production of supplementary food to treat malnutrition
- Support Healthy food campaign and exclusive breastfeeding

If we are to successfully combat global malnutrition, efforts must be sustained by multiple stakeholders from various sectors. We believe that trust is built through industry's demonstration of practical actions that improve health, and recognition of these actions by governments and NGOs. Only through new and innovative public–private sector partnerships can we truly make a difference.

Among the outcomes of the session was a set of policy recommendations for the Government (G: Government) to cater for a conducive environ for battling child malnutrition as well as recommended actions for food companies (B: Business) to adopt.

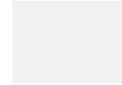


Finally, to inspire actions by participating companies and experts, they were asked to write down their commitment to combat child malnutrition in Iran on the back of a UNICEF greeting cards to be sent to them after a short period to remind them of the actions they committed to carry out.





My commitments for combatting child malnutrition in Iran:




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Photo: UNICEF

My commitments for combatting child malnutrition in Iran:

- ① CONDUCT AN INNOVATION TOUR IN IRAN TO TALK ABOUT FORTIFICATION & INNOVATION
- ② SUPPORT WITH MARKET INSIGHTS & APPLICATION KNOWLEDGE

My commitments for combatting child malnutrition in Iran:

- ① ONE LOCAL DAIRY PRODUCT FOR KIDS WITH DHA
- ② INNOVATION DATA FOR EARLY LIFE NUTRITION
- ③ VITAMIN D3 ANALYTIC SUPPORT IN FLOUR
- ④ APPLY SPECIFIC HEALTH CONCERN STRATEGY IN BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Food fortification, enrichment, and reduction/elimination of certain ingredients from the products are only a few options available to food companies to reduce the adverse effects of child malnutrition and its ensuing impact on economic and social development of the society.

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UNICEF-WHO-World Bank (2014) Joint child malnutrition estimates - Levels and trends. Global database on child growth and malnutrition [online data base]. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2014.

WHO (2010) WHO Sets of Recommendations on Marketing of Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children.

## FURTHER READING



[UNICEF UNICEF \(2018\) A Child Rights-based Approach to Food Marketing: A Guide for Policy Makers, April 2018.](#) (2018)



[WHO Set of Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children](#) (2010)

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<sup>i</sup> Food fortification is defined by the Codex Alimentarius (1991) as “the addition of one or more essential nutrients to a food whether or not it is normally contained in the food for the purpose of preventing or correcting a demonstrated deficiency of one or more nutrients in the population or specific population groups”. Modern food fortification dates back to the 1920s with potassium iodide fortified salt for the prevention of goiter in Switzerland and the United States (Miller and Welch, 2013).