UNICEF’s commitment
As part of the global commitments to nutrition that will be articulated at the Nutrition for Growth Summit, UNICEF aims to:
• Expand our already substantial capacity to support formulation of policy, implementation and monitoring of direct nutrition interventions. Our presence of over 300 nutritionists in the field will provide significant support to scale up national programmes.
• Increase the number of countries where we create synergy between our nutrition-specific and our nutrition-sensitive programming (health, water and sanitation, and social protection).
• Identify gaps and potential for action and take leadership in the areas of breastfeeding promotion and infant and young child feeding, where progress is lagging.
• As leader of the Cluster on nutrition in emergency situations – work to reach more children who need treatment for severe acute malnutrition with all the interventions they need in the first 1,000 days.

Global momentum to scale up nutrition
The international community is united behind a central understanding: undernutrition causes poverty; and poverty causes undernutrition. The result is a severe downward intergenerational spiral of wasted human potential and effects on economic growth in country after country around the world.

The scope of undernutrition goes beyond the crises we see in the headlines. Stunting affects 165 million children under five years old – one out of every four. The effects of stunted growth on the developing brain and body in the first two years of life are largely irreversible. Stunting is associated with poor school achievement and performance, and can reduce income-earning capacity in adulthood by as much as 22 per cent.

Results
In 2012, UNICEF
• Helped reach more than 920,000 children in the Sahel with treatment for acute malnutrition;
• Supported community-based management of acute malnutrition in more than 65 countries;
• Procured approximately 80 per cent of Ready-to-use Therapeutic Foods used globally (about 32,000 metric tons);
• Supplied two doses of high-dose vitamin A capsules to 263 million children between 6-59 months (in 2011);
• Supported programmes to improve complementary food with micronutrient powder reaching more than 14 million children between 6-59 months (in 2011);
• Continued to promote exclusive breastfeeding, with recorded increases of more than 20 per cent in 10 years.

Yet the scope of UNICEF’s work goes far beyond our direct impact through these interventions; we also strengthen national nutrition coordination and policy as well as build and convene alliances and partnership among stakeholders to support legisla-
tion on food fortification, marketing of breast milk substitutes and universal salt iodization.

Strategy
This year, 2013, has seen the launch of the UNICEF report, Improving Child Nutrition: The Achievable Imperative for Global Progress. As the report accords, UNICEF believes that investing in improving maternal and child nutrition, especially during the crucial 1,000 days from the mother’s pregnancy to the child’s second birthday, is the cornerstone upon which we must build our new development agenda.

Partnerships
UNICEF is committed both to working in and convening partnership across all sectors of society with governments, UN organizations, the private sector as well as civil society. We also support the work of advocacy organizations like the U.S.-based 1,000 Days Initiative.

The four UN agencies – the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and UNICEF – work in active partnership in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) countries. These agencies also meet regularly to discuss global issues of UN coordination through the UN’s Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN).

A valuable mechanism in supporting SUN is REACH – Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger and Undernutrition. Working in about 12 SUN countries, REACH helps to coordinate governments and multiple agencies as they design and implement national child undernutrition policies and programmes. UNICEF is committed to further expanding the UN Network in order to streamline partnership and make the best possible use of resources.

Value for money
UNICEF uses innovative methodologies and technology to strengthen monitoring systems and inform programming approaches and strategies in close to ‘real time’. We are expanding our use of SMS technologies to improve programme management (e.g. supply, tracking) and community involvement, building on our effective experience in Rwanda, Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria. We will use every means at our disposal to make sure every dollar we spend is used wisely and well, further exploiting synergies between our existing nutrition programming and nutrition-sensitive interventions such as WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene). Many innovative delivery mechanisms have also been pioneered by UNICEF, such as low-cost multiple micronutrient powders, which can be sprinkled on complementary foods and have been found highly effective in preventing iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia.

UNICEF’s capacity
UNICEF is uniquely positioned to address the immediate and underlying causes of undernutrition in women and children through nutrition-specific programming as well as nutrition-sensitive interventions such as health, water and sanitation, and social protection.

UNICEF works to support governments in setting national nutrition priorities and implementing nutrition programming. We have the global reach, the knowledge, and the technical capacity.

Required resources
With nutrition continuing to grow as a global and an organizational priority, more countries are taking up the challenge of ending undernutrition in children at the same time as aid levels in general are falling. UNICEF needs partners with leadership and vision to invest in nutrition at this pivotal moment to improve the lives of children.

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