



## Joint Call to Action

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, and UNICEF Yemen Country Representative

# Breaking the Cycle of Malnutrition: Operationalizing the Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP) and Expanding Local Accelerator Programmes (APs)

### BACKGROUND

Around half of all children under five in Yemen - 2.2 million children - as well as 1.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls are acutely malnourished (Yemen HNO 2025). This is among the highest levels of acute malnutrition ever recorded in the country. Additionally, stunting remains the most significant long-term health threat, with a national prevalence as high as 49% (MICS). This level indicates a severe, prolonged nutritional deficit that permanently impairs physical and cognitive development.

Addressing malnutrition crucial for Yemen's children today and the country's future. This is the generation that Yemen will rely on to rebuild when the political crisis ends, yet they are at risk of becoming a lost generation. Malnutrition damages a child's physical and cognitive development, especially during the first two years of life. It is largely irreversible, perpetuating illness, poverty and inequality. This means it is now more critical than ever to adopt a comprehensive and multisectoral approach for tackling undernutrition in Yemen.

In Yemen, a child's future shouldn't be determined by a roll of the dice. In Abyan, two-year-old Ekram is thriving, laughing, and hitting every milestone thanks to proper early nutrition. But just a few doors away, little Bothaina can barely stand, her growth stunted because her family could only afford bread and tea. Same town, same age, completely different lives. This heartbreak is 100% preventable. We must scale up maternal and child nutrition programs now—before the damage becomes irreversible. Waiting is not an option.

### YEMEN MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION ACTION PLAN AND THE ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME APPROACHES

A multi-sectoral and systems approach – prioritizing key actions across food, health, education, water and sanitation and social protection systems as a package of interventions– is vital to prevent child undernutrition.

The **Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP 2025–2030)** is the nationally endorsed strategy to combat malnutrition. It breaks down traditional siloes, unifying health, agriculture, water, sanitation, and education under a shared objective: prioritizing the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life.

To bridge the gap between national strategy and localized execution, a targeted Accelerator Programmes (APs) has been initiated. These programme structures are designed to deliver a high-impact, integrated menu of services tailored to the specific vulnerabilities of each governorate. Successfully, Yemen managed to roll out first two sub-national MSNAP in Taiz and Lahj.

However, localized success is only step one. The ultimate mandate is to map out and develop tailored Accelerator Programmes for all remaining target governorates nationwide. The Yemen-MSNAP approach is to be implemented to avoid excess morbidity and mortality while improving overall nutritional status.

#### Target Population

Children under 5 years of age; pregnant and breastfeeding women; adolescent girls; and women and caregivers of children under 5 years of age.

#### Yemen-MSNAP Coordination among all partners

should be ensured at subnational and national levels to optimize the overlap of existing sectoral interventions and maximize the provision of services that address the basic, underlying and immediate causes of undernutrition.

#### Food and Nutrition Awareness and Education

should be incorporated in all nutrition priority interventions with key messages tailored to respond to the needs of the different target population groups.

## The Call to Action: Who Must Do What

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To translate this framework into real-world results, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and UNICEF Yemen issues a direct, strategic mandate to four core stakeholder blocks:

### All Line Ministries & Local Authorities (The Government)

- ✔ **Own the Integration:** Embed the MSNAP directly into all sectoral annual budgets and operational workflows.
- ✔ **Health:** Institutionalize MIYCN counseling and preventive micronutrient supplementation within Universal Health Care (UHC) platforms.
- ✔ **Agriculture & Fisheries:** Scale up small-scale fisheries, and climate-resilient irrigation to secure year-round availability of nutrient-dense foods and stabilize livelihoods.
- ✔ **WASH:** Accelerate targeted investments in safely managed community infrastructure to eliminate waterborne pathogens and optimize nutrient absorption.
- ✔ **Social Protection:** Expand shock-responsive, nutrition-sensitive safety nets—including cash transfers—to protect vulnerable households' dietary diversity.
- ✔ **Education:** Institutionalize nutrition-sensitive at schools using homegrown feeding programs.
- ✔ **Local Leadership:** Direct governors and local councils to clear administrative bottlenecks for the immediate deployment of their respective Action Plans (APs).

### Donors

- ✔ **Shift to Sustainable Financing:** Move from fragmented, single-year emergency funding toward flexible, predictable, multi-year commitments.
- ✔ **Fund the MPPF:** Consider financial investments directly into a SUN Multi-Partner Pool Fund (MPPF) to guarantee structured, equitable resource distribution.
- ✔ **Finance the Expansion:** Fully fund the execution phase of the Taiz and Lahj APs,

### United Nations Agencies

- ✔ Build upon the joint UN nutrition workplan. Leverage each agency's unique comparative advantage to avoid overlapping mandates and wasteful resource replication.
- ✔ Work hand-in-hand with the SUN Secretariat to provide the rapid technical assistance required to draft the upcoming governorate-level APs.
- ✔ Deploy robust, digitized monitoring systems to track indicators like the Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) and childhood stunting variations in real time.

### Civil Society Organizations (CSOs & NGOs)

- ✔ Align all local project designs with the strategic objectives and priorities of the MSNAP.
  - ✔ Translate the macro goals of the Taiz and Lahj APs into behavioral realities within rural communities. Lead grassroots education on breastfeeding, dietary diversity, and WASH.
  - ✔ Voice of the Vulnerable: Document real-time ground feedback and challenges, helping on adapt the upcoming governorate APs to the needs of local populations.
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The time to act is now. Undernutrition is entirely preventable, yet its consequences can last a lifetime. We cannot build a resilient future on a foundation weakened by child malnutrition. Today, we have a critical opportunity to change that trajectory. Let us unite behind the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP), secure the financing needed for the Taiz and Lahj programs, and accelerate the development of plans for all remaining governorates. The future of our children - the recovery and prosperity of our nation - depends on the decisions we make today and the collective commitment we demonstrate together.

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