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World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Regional Bureau for **Eastern Africa**

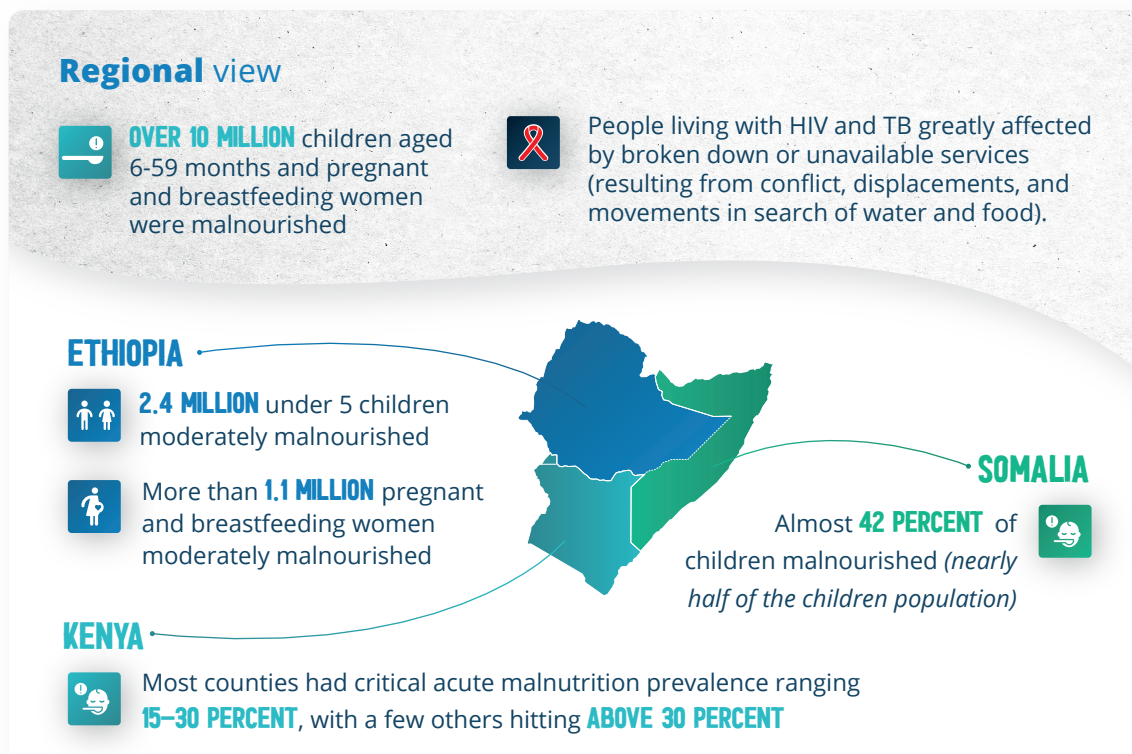
Nutrition

2022 Regional **Achievements and Outlook**

April 2023

Regional Nutrition Overview

Malnutrition in the region is widespread and deteriorated due to successive shocks including drought, floods, conflicts and macro-economic crises since 2021. This was at a backdrop of an existing fragile situation with Global Acute Malnutrition rates of above 15 percent for most countries prior to the shocks. Furthermore, about 50-70 percent of the population was unable to afford a healthy diet. The deteriorating food security in the region exacerbated malnutrition levels for the most at-risk households and individuals, particularly young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and people living with HIV.



Regional Nutrition Achievements

Preventing and Treating Acute Malnutrition

Stabilisation of malnutrition rates was a priority for saving lives in the Horn of Africa. Intensified operational reach to treat and prevent moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among children under 5 years and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers was prioritised in the Horn of Africa. About 5 million women and children were treated for MAM. The exceptional supplemental funding from USAID enabled the much-needed procurement and delivery of specialized nutritious foods (SNFs) thereby increasing programme coverage.

Nutrition capacity was augmented for the three priority countries with functional staff at senior levels and temporary duty assignment (TDYs) for the Horn of Africa response. Notably with significant increase in emergencies throughout the region, a more deliberate shift to integrate nutrition and diversify approaches for both prevention and treatment, was the focus of nutrition technical support and service provisions. Country level collaboration through the nutrition cluster was also amplified to improve complementarity and coverage to respond to nutrition risks.

Mixed Approaches for Emergency Nutrition Response

With malnutrition needs increasing due to rising cases of acute malnutrition, the region faced limited supplies for Specialized Nutritious Foods (SNFs) competing with global demand. WFP took initiatives to engage local suppliers to increase production and, in some countries, substitute products as appropriate for different target groups.


In addition, WFP explored a mixed model approach of using in-kind and/or cash for malnutrition prevention and the use of specialized products. Not intervening in the absence of specialized nutritious production was not an option. Throughout, as the emergency evolved rapidly and at large scale, nutrition integration was adopted through use of other opportunities such as in social protection to target at-risk groups to improve consumption of nutritious foods and increase access to and affordability of healthy diets for all. Wherever and whenever feasible, together with governments and partners, nutrition programme integration continued to take a progressive intent to leverage on the existing systems - food, social protection, education, and health for human capital development.

Continued Focus on HIV/TB

With the effort to leave no one behind, protect and be inclusive, positioning of HIV/TB sensitive social protection remained a core pillar for WFP country office initiatives. In Burundi, entry points for HIV/TB in 'Merankabandi' were defined. In Rwanda, HIV-sensitive social protection mapping exercise was done to enhance the capacity of the national social protection system in reaching people with HIV. Further, a Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis was conducted in Djibouti to inform a government priority nutrition programme for urban areas.

Integration and Advocacy

Nutrition-sensitive cash programming was a core advocacy piece and picked momentum in 2022, building on the rising use of the cash-based transfer modality. Cash for nutrition grew using various platforms; in Burundi it was linked to resilience, in Uganda Nutri-cash was linked to social protection, while in Somalia it was part of *Baxnaano social protection scheme in emergencies*.



A cash for nutrition interim guidance for the prevention of acute malnutrition has been articulated. Decisions on the transfer value are, however, challenged by rapidly rising food prices and inflation rates in countries to make a meaningful contribution to dietary diversity. In addition, to advocate for nutrition, the region hosted a high-level nutrition advocacy mission by the Princess of Jordan, Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah Zeid, a maternal and child health advocate, who visited four countries – Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. The mission highlighted the need to prevent malnutrition and leverage emergencies to build resilience.

Course Correction and Informed Programming

Several studies were undertaken in 2022 and continue to inform programming and course correct. First, the Nutrition in Retail Study landscape of local food processors and retailers of nutrient-dense foods to promote use of cash transfers for healthy diets. Secondly, the food security and nutrition vulnerability protocols among people living with HIV (PLHIV) applied in Somalia and Uganda shed light on the risks of PLHIV during emergencies. Further, the study on HIV Sensitive Social Protection in East and Southern Africa Fast Track Countries was commissioned jointly by WFP, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

As part of enhanced monitoring, the Nutrition Outcome Response and Information System Hub (NOURISH) dashboard was created for Somalia, providing a near real time monitoring and reporting of nutrition data from cooperating partners. Moving forward, other countries are exploring the potential of a country level or regional level 'NOURISH' dashboard.

Enhanced Partnership

WFP efforts are undertaken together with regional economic bodies supporting the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other stakeholders. At the regional and country levels, WFP works with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the partnership framework. The two UN Agencies focus on three front runner countries (Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia), and developed Global Action Plans for prevention of wasting.

In addition, a regional stock-taking meeting was held by WFP and UNICEF and discussions focused on the progress made in addressing acute malnutrition and school health and nutrition. At the end of the meeting a report was developed, detailing the partnership activities, modalities of engagement between the two agencies, and lessons learnt across the three countries. Furthermore, in the Regional AIDS Team for East and Southern Africa (RATESA), WFP Nutrition Team remain actively engaged in shaping regional priorities.

Further, WFP sustained collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for HIV programming in emergencies. WFP also collaborated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the social protection agenda, while also exploring partnership opportunities with academic institutions and research centres.

2023 Nutrition and HIV Outlook

With a focus on improving human capital as an investment by governments, systems and sectors, WFP will leverage social protection and education, nutrition, HIV/TB and school-based programmes to improve diets to prevent all forms of malnutrition. Innovations, such as the cash for nutrition, will ensure learning and evidence generation. The Home Grown School Feeding (HGFS) will continue to be a flagship programme as an anchor for intentional local and regional procurement, and agricultural markets linkages for smallholder farmers, further demonstrating the unique capacity of school meals to create both demand and supply in the food system. Where possible, WFP will leverage schools as a system for resilience. WFP will continue to generate evidence and test the choice and inclusion of appropriate monitoring and evaluation indicators for school feeding, currently a global gap, while enhancing knowledge management and fostering partnerships for scale.

Contact Information

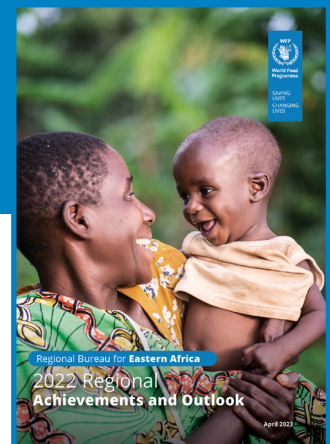
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