

DECLARATION ON NUTRITION SECURITY FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, having met at our Twenty Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014, on the Theme of the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security: *“Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods through Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”*;

Recalling the OAU Resolution AHG/Res.224 (XXIX) of 1993 that recognised the seriousness of the African Food and Nutrition Situation and the efforts of Member States towards alleviating the challenge;

Further Recalling the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa [Assembly/AU/Decl.7(II)] of 2003 that called for increased stakeholder collaboration and increased food production;

Mindful that food security without improved nutrition will not deliver the desired inclusive socio economic outcomes; as the number of those affected by hunger and malnutrition has continued to increase over the past few years;

Stressing that Agriculture and Food Security are key determinants of child nutrition that require coordinated and comprehensive responses from other sectors, including health, education, labour, social protection, and coordinated collaboration with the development partners, private sector, the academia, civil society and communities;

Noting that human capital is the engine for the economic and structural transformation of Africa, and that the first 1000 days provide the window of opportunity for children which can influence the cognitive and physical capacity of all children, with life-long consequences;

Recognizing that as a continent efforts need to be enhanced to address childhood under-nutrition, in order to continue to reduce the prevalence of childhood stunting, but also in order to reduce the absolute numbers of stunted children in Africa;

Noting the multi-country study on the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) being led by the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the World Food Programme, to quantify the aggregate social and economic impacts of chronic hunger in Africa;

Noting With Concern that the results of the study on the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) revealed the degree to which child under-nutrition influences health and educational outcomes; the additional barrier it has on children's ability to achieve their full potential; and the impact it has on national productivity;

Acknowledging the current efforts being made by stakeholders such as: (i) coordination of efforts through the African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) (ii) generation of evidence through the Cost of Hunger Study; (iii) Africa's Renewed Initiative for Stunting Elimination (ARISE 2025), a direct outcome of the COHA study; and (iv) nutrition advocacy initiatives by the African Nutrition Champion, His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho; WE hereby:

1. **REAFFIRM** our commitment to end hunger by 2025 through strengthening our development policies as an effective investment in the human capital of our countries;
2. **COMMIT** to ending child stunting bringing down stunting to 10% and underweight to 5% by 2025 and in particular, focusing on the first 1000 Days as the only window of opportunity during which permanent and irreversible physical and mental damage would be avoided; and **COMMIT** to positioning this goal as a high-level objective in national development plans and strategies, and to establish long-term targets that give all children equal chance for success, by eliminating the additional barriers imposed by child under-nutrition;
3. **CALL UPON** Member States, who have not yet done so, to consider participation in the study on the Cost of Hunger in Africa and **REQUEST** the Commission, UNECA, WFP, UNICEF and other Development Partners to expedite the successful completion of the study, including wide dissemination of the results at country and regional levels;
4. **REQUEST** the Commission, the REC and Development Partners to facilitate the establishment of a continental-wide mechanism to monitor progress towards the elimination of child under-nutrition in Africa;
5. **COMMIT** to continue the dialogue and strengthen advocacy efforts in support of improved nutrition including through supporting the AU Champion.