



Press release

## Government of Nepal launches Multisector Nutrition Plan II (2018-2022)

**KATHMANDU, 14 December 2017:** The Government of Nepal today launched the Multisector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) II (2018-2022), targeting women, children and adolescent girls in the country. The MSNP II was endorsed and approved by the cabinet of the Government of Nepal on November 19, 2017. Hon'ble Deepak Bohara, Minister for Health, launched the Plan amidst a ceremony held in Kathmandu by the National Planning Commission.

Approximately 36% of Nepal's children suffer from stunting, 10% from wasting and almost 53% from anemia. Forty-one percent of women of reproductive age suffer from anemia and 17% from long term energy deficiencies. These statistics differ by geographical region and social group. The Government of Nepal targets to reduce the rate of stunting from 36 percent to 24 percent by the year 2025 and to 14 percent by 2030.

The cost of implementing MSNP II is estimated at NPR 48.9 billion (approx. US\$ 470 million). The budget is segregated by the National Planning Commission in seven sectors namely education, health, agriculture, livestock, drinking water and sanitation, women children and social welfare and local governance. It is estimated that 59 percent of the budget will be supported by the government and 41 percent by a host of development partners.

"Nutrition is paramount in the overall well-being of children. We must focus on adolescents and women. This requires action in the health sector along with other related sectors, namely agriculture, livestock development, education, water, sanitation, women, children, social welfare and local development" said Hon'ble Deepak Bohara, Minister for Health; He added, "For the implementation of MSNP II, there should be coordinated efforts from federal, provincial and local level governments."

"Under nutrition is a major problem in Nepal where about 36 per cent of children under the age of five suffer from stunting (low height for age) which has serious, irreversible and lifelong consequences". Highlighting the achievements of the first phase of MSNP, Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Hon'ble Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission and Chairperson of the High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee, said that tackling malnutrition, in an integrated way was important to resolve coordination failures typical in multi-sectoral policy interventions. "MSNP II has thus been conceptualized to provide continuity to the achievements of MSNP I (2013-2017)", said Dr. Wagle. He also said, "This new plan related to health and nutrition aims to make a crucial contribution to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and help reap the benefits of the demographic dividend by investing now to ensure a healthier and economically productive population tomorrow."

Prof. Dr. Geeta Bhakta Joshi, Hon'ble Member of the National Planning Commission who is also the Coordinator of Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee, presented the objectives, strategies and future programs of MSNP II.

MSNP II aims to increase the number of service delivery institutions and to scale up nutrition-specific as well as nutrition sensitive services and capacities at federal, provincial and local level governments.

“EU is proud to support Nepal’s efforts to improve the nutritional status in the country”, “said H.E Ms. Veronica Cody, EU Ambassador. “With our concerted efforts we should be able to root out malnutrition from the country, which increases the burden of disease and also causes loss of human capital and economic productivity of the country. It starts with undernourished children who suffer irreparable intellectual impairment and stunted physical growth, and make less productive students as well as unhealthy workers. Cumulatively, this results in impoverished families and communities and an overburdened health care systems.”

Mr. Paras Khadka who is Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition in Nepal, and the captain of Nepal’s cricket team highlighted the need to “bowl out malnutrition” from the country. “Just like in cricket, where it needs a team effort to beat the opponent and win a match, it needs, not just the government agencies, but the support of civil society, the media, the general public to hit a century for nutrition in Nepal. We need to bat, bowl and field in a concerted and coordinated manner to dismiss malnutrition for a duck from the country!”

MSNP is being implemented by the Government of Nepal, in collaboration with various development partners. UNICEF, with funding from the European Union, has been supporting the Government of Nepal to scale up MSNP through “*Poshanka Laagi Hatemalo*” program for Improved Nutrition at 308 local governments (30 districts). Likewise, the World Bank is supporting the Government’s drive against malnutrition through its “*Sunaulo Hazar*” Din (Golden 1000 Days) program in fifteen districts. Agriculture and Food Security Project is being implemented in 19 districts. Likewise, USAID has supported the Government to implement “*Suaahara*” in 40 districts. Other projects like, “*Sabal*”, “*Pahal*” and “*Kissan*”, funded by USAID, are being implemented in 11, 14 and 16 districts, respectively,

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