

Africa Highlights (Part I)
Global Financial and Food Crisis in the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals

Session Background / Description

More than half-way to the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium development Goals (MDGs), there are serious doubts that countries in Africa can achieve these Goals. Progress in the area of maternal and child nutrition (MDGs 1, 4 and 5) has been slow for the time the goals were set, and are likely to remain so. The current global food and financial crisis, which has resulted in the dwindling of income and food for many households, has made matters worse for the continent. A recent analysis by IFPRI indicates that the global financial and food crisis could cause significant increases in malnutrition in developing countries. They estimate that, as a result, about 16 million more undernourished children will be added by 2020. World Bank also predicts that between 2009-2015, an average of 200,000 to 400,000 more people may die each year if the crisis persists. African countries being most vulnerable are likely to be worst hit by this crisis. Under these conditions, at no time has the need for good leadership at all levels including leadership for nutrition been more critical. Africa needs re-strategize, regarding the training of nutrition professionals to meet current and future nutrition challenges facing the continent. It is against this background this symposium, which will feature speakers who are knowledgeable of the field and have firsthand experience of the conditions in Africa, is presented.

Session Objectives

1. To provide information on successful nutrition programs in Africa for addressing maternal and child malnutrition.
2. To discuss the current financial crisis on the attainment of the MDG and safety nets to mitigate the effects.
3. To provide information on building nutrition capacity in Africa to meet current and future challenges.

Session Co-Chairs

Prof. Ruth Onaing'o, African Journal for Agriculture, Nutrition and Development and Dr. Anna Lartey, University of Ghana and IUNS Council Member for Africa

Session Topics and Speakers

Topic 1: *Programs to improve maternal and child nutrition in Africa: Lessons for scaling up*

Speaker: Anna Lartey, University of Ghana and IUNS Council Member for Africa

Topic 2: *Global food and financial crisis: Implications for food and nutrition security and the attainment of the MDG in Africa*

Speaker: Harold Alderman, Social Protection Advisor for the Africa Region at the World Bank

Topic 3: *Nutrition leadership in Africa: meeting the current and future nutritional challenges*

Speaker: Johan Jerling, Professor, University of Potchefstroom and Director, African Nutrition Leadership Program (ANLP)

Topic 4: *Nutrition Profession in Africa: meeting the current and future nutritional challenges*

Speaker: Tola Atinmo, President, Federation of African Nutrition Societies

Africa Highlights (Part II)
The Nutrition Transition and the Double Burden of Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa

Rationale and Objectives:

The nutrition transition is partly responsible for the increasing prevalence of obesity and nutrition-related chronic diseases, even in low-income countries of Africa. This is concurrent and synergistic with persisting undernutrition. However, the nutrition transition and its consequences are poorly documented in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The specific objectives of the symposium are: 1) To share the existing scientific evidence on the nutrition transition and the double burden of malnutrition in Africa; 2) To examine the implications for policy, programmes and research.

Program:

The following will be addressed by speakers and discussants of the 120-minute session:

- Introduction – The nutrition transition and the double burden of malnutrition: statement of the problem (15 minutes, H. Delisle, Session Chair)
- What is known on the nutrition transition in sub-Saharan Africa and its links with the rising prevalence of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases ? (25 minutes, Dr J.C. Mbanya [Cameroon])
- What are the potential links between past and concurrent micronutrient deficiencies and chronic diseases ? (20 minutes B. Maire, IRD [France])
- What types of policies and programmes have been implemented in Africa to address the nutrition transition and diet-related chronic diseases ? (15 minutes, H.H. Vorster [South Africa])
- What are the research, policy and programming priorities to control the rise of diet-related chronic diseases ? (15 minutes, Dr C. Nishida, [WHO Geneva])
- Discussion and wrap-up (30 minutes).

Expected Outcomes of the Symposium:

The symposium is intended to raise awareness of the double burden of malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also serves as advocacy strategy for its control and prevention through highlighting policy, programme and research priorities. Finally, the symposium will foster networking and collaboration among participants.