

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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Mr. Chairperson

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

On behalf of the Kenya delegation, I am delighted to join you during this Second International Conference on Nutrition. I would like to thank the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization and Director General of the World Health Organization for inviting Kenya to participate in this important conference and contribute to this very important agenda.

Chairperson

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Kenyan economy directly contributing to 26 per cent of the GDP annually and another 25 per cent indirectly. The sector accounts for 65 per cent of Kenya's total exports and provides more than 70 per cent of informal employment in the rural areas. There are other sectors in the country contributing to its economic growth and these are manufacturing, real estate, ICT, and communications. All these have enabled the classification of the country as a middle income economy.

Chairperson

The Government of Kenya is committed to the theme of this conference of *Championing for Better Nutrition for Better Lives*.

Malnutrition still remains a big public health challenge in Kenya. Stunting rates stand at 35%, Underweight at 16%, Wasting at 7%, Overweight at 4.7% and

Vitamin A deficiency among under-fives is at 76%. Iodine deficiency among children of 6-72 months is 69%, while Iron deficiency among pregnant women stands at 55%. There are increased incidences of diet-related non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, some cancers and kidney complications which are attributed to the consumption of foods low in fiber and high in fats and sugars.

Chairperson

To address these statistics, the Government has set targets to be achieved in breast-feeding, optimal complementary feeding, Zinc in management of diarrhoea, folate supplementation in pregnant women, Vitamin A supplementation for children and presence of Iodised salt in households. In addition, the Government has created an enabling environment through enacting various legal frameworks and policies in order to improve nutrition of its citizens. Foremost is the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which guarantees every Kenyan the right to the highest possible standards of health and nutrition. It further addresses issues of freedom from hunger, citizen's rights to food of acceptable quality, and makes nutrition a rights issue for children.

Kenya's line ministries are currently implementing the **National Food and Nutrition Security Policy** through multi-sectoral collaboration with the UN agencies, donors, private sector and other implementing partners. In addition, the **Kenya Health Policy 2014-2030** gives direction to ensure significant improvement in the overall status of health in Kenya, in line with the country's long term development agenda Vision 2030.

Chairperson

With regards to Agriculture, efforts have been made to implement various drought recovery and resilience-building measures to increase food production and productivity in the subsectors of agriculture, aquaculture and livestock. All these efforts are geared to ensure food security and promote consumption of wholesome nutritious food to eradicate malnutrition.

In the Education sector, the government is implementing a **Regular School Meals Program**, which is integrated with the Multiple Micronutrient powders supplementation, in order to enhance access, retention and transition in basic education. The school meals programme currently targets the arid and semi-arid counties with a total enrollment of 1.5 million school children. There is also a Homegrown **School Meals Programme** whose food commodities are sourced locally. I am pleased to report that this programme is fully funded by the government and currently targets 760,000 children.

Chairperson

In November 2012, Kenya signed up as a member of the Scaling up Nutrition Movement and adopted a set of High Impact Nutrition Interventions. These commitments and actions are articulated in the **National Nutrition Action Plan** which defines Nutrition Interventions from community, County to National level, articulates opportunities for resource mobilization with a clear Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Chairperson

Allow me to mention a few commendable best practices that the country has registered. **Firstly**, Kenya has developed Maternal Infant and Young Child

Nutrition Policy Guidelines, Strategy and has gone even further to legislate a **Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitute Act.**

Secondly, there is a continued investment in strengthening the Public-Private Partnership for food fortification. This has enabled Kenya to register tremendous success in reducing iodine deficiency. A Web based Food fortification Hub has also been developed to monitor production and performance of brands at market level.

Chairperson

The Government of Kenya greatly appreciates the support extended to her and is committed to continued cordial working relations with FAO, WHO and other development partners in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Kenya therefore appeals for continued support from FAO and WHO in areas of scaling up specific and sensitive high impact nutrition interventions, as well as support for capacity strengthening of the county governments in tackling malnutrition. In the agricultural sector, support is required in increasing production and productivity through irrigation and implementation of drought recovery measures for building resilience.

In conclusion, I urge the distinguished delegates represented here today to take up their roles in the implementation of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition for better lives that would eventually lead to national economic growth for our countries.

Thank you for your kind attention