

Mr Michael Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of the
Children's Investment Fund Foundation

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the
opportunity to speak. Thank you to WHO and the FAO for hosting us
all at this critical time for nutrition.

It's been 22 years since we last came together like this at ICN1, so
we've had a lot to catch up on.

Over the past two decades we've learned a huge amount about the
importance of nutrition as a fundamental building block for child
development.

We've also got some of the facts to back this up.

I want to talk about facts, numbers. About data. I DON'T hesitate to
do this at the end of the day – because it's so important and I know
you're going to be interested.

We've heard some hard hitting numbers this week. Numbers that tell us that under-nutrition is a problem affecting every country in the world. And that action can deliver huge returns.

161. Million. The number of children stunted around the world. Right now.

42 million. The number of children under 5 who are overweight or obese.

16. The cost ratio benefit of investing in nutrition. For every dollar, euro, rupee we invest in nutrition, we'll have a return – on average - of 16 TIMES what we put in

That's what we've learned over the past 20 years, but there are some very big data gaps. And the data that we are missing matters enormously. It matters because, without quality data, we don't know where to act, how we're doing, and where the gaps are.

94. The number of countries missing data to report on the World Health Assembly 2025 targets.

40. The percentage of countries who are using anthropometric data that is more than 5 years old.

And 37, the number of countries that have coverage data on all five of the nutrition interventions and practices with the most extensive coverage data.¹

We've seen huge progress in the science. Huge progress on political commitment.

¹ early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding of infants under six months old, continued breastfeeding up to 12 months, vitamin A supplementation of preschool-age children, and iron–folic acid supplementation of pregnant women for more than 90 days.

But if we now want a decade of urgent action on nutrition, we need a decade of action on data.

At CIFF our mission is for every child to survive and thrive. And we find that only by investing in data and evidence can we measure the impact of what we do with partners. Without measurement we are guessing.

So let me give you one last number. 1500. The number of delegates here - at least 1,500 - although I've not counted them myself.

If we all work together to fill in the data gaps highlighted by the Global Nutrition Report, we can rapidly speed up progress towards our nutrition goals. And we need data to hold each other to account. To hold governments to account, to donors and businesses to account, to hold academics and journalists to account, and yes, to hold civil society organisations to account too.

The next time we come together for ICN3 – hopefully before the 2030s – we can measure our progress and hold ourselves accountable for the promises we have made.