



Joint News Release

NEW STUDY REVEALS ECONOMIC TOLL OF MALNUTRITION IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

KINSHASA 7 July 2017 – The economy of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is losing 1,637 billion Congolese francs, or more than a billion dollars a year, to the effects of child undernutrition. This is equivalent to as much as 4.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).*

The social and economic costs of undernutrition are revealed in a new study released in Kinshasa today.

The *Cost of Hunger in Africa* (COHA) study was undertaken by the government of DRC in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The study shows that the losses are incurred each year through increased healthcare costs, additional burdens to the education system and reduced workforce productivity.

"I welcome this important joint initiative which will contribute significantly to the government's efforts to minimize the loss of human and economic potential to malnutrition," said DRC Prime Minister and Head of Government Bruno Tshibala Nzenzhe, at the launch ceremony in Kinshasa. "Malnutrition is a silent emergency, accounting for nearly half of all infant deaths. For the country to develop, we need to address this situation urgently."

According to the report, DRC could save up to CDF355 billion (around US\$383 million) by 2025 if the prevalence of underweight children is reduced from 11 to 5 percent and if stunting (low growth for age) is reduced from 43 to 10 percent.

"These results call on all of us to act now to avoid future losses caused by hunger," said WFP Country Director in DRC, Claude Jibidar. "I'm convinced that with the understanding we now have of the terrible economic and social impact of malnutrition on children, we and our partners can work with the government to make a real difference to this alarming situation."



“In line with Agenda 2063 – ‘The Africa we want’ – we seek to completely eliminate hunger and food insecurity on this continent during the coming decades,” said Kefilwe Moalosi, speaking on behalf of the African Union Commission and NEPAD. “Africa has the potential to reap a demographic dividend from a young, educated and skilled workforce. But this potential can only be harnessed if we continue to invest in the health and nutrition of its people, particularly its women and children, and secure the necessary economic growth”.

The *Cost of Hunger in Africa* study has so far been conducted in 11 countries. The economies of these countries suffer an estimated annual loss associated with child under nutrition that is equivalent to between 1.9 percent and 16.5 percent of GDP. Results of recently undertaken COHA studies are due to be released soon in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Similar studies are being planned for Mali and Mauritania.

**Data and exchange rates from 2014 (year of research).*

For the full report, please click here: http://www.costofhungerafrica.com/s/DRC_Reportfinal-2.pdf

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