

# Celebrating the African Day of School Feeding: Guidance Note to Member States



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## Background

The African Heads of State and Government during the 26th African Union Summit in January 2016 (Assembly/AU/Dec.589(XXVI)) passed a decision in support of School Feeding, and established 1<sup>st</sup> of March as the Africa Day of School Feeding.

School Feeding Programmes have been a key tool in realizing the efforts needed to get every girl and boy to school by reducing poverty related disparities as demanded by agenda 2063 and CESA 16-25. School Feeding Programmes have a significant impact on access and retention, and attendance, and in reducing drop-out rates among school-age children. In-school meals provided directly to hungry children reduce short-term hunger and can serve as a vehicle for meeting their nutritional requirements. Moreover, it also improves students' learning, cognitive functions, in-class behaviour, academic performance and ability to concentrate. School Feeding Programmes also contribute to children's psychological well-being by addressing factors that can cause childhood depression, being hungry and being out of school.

School Feeding Programmes improve household food security for marginalized, food-insecure families by increasing the food baskets of families when targeted for food-deficit areas. It provides an important means to transfer revenues to beneficiary families and a social safety net for poor households. These programmes have the potential to benefit entire communities through stimulating local markets, enabling households to invest in productive assets and impact the wider economy through its potential to facilitate agricultural transformation through linkages with smallholder farmers.

Furthermore, investments in human capital in general and School feeding in particular are believed to anchor the two major Global Development Goals-SDG 2 and SDG 4 -through improving the education, health and nutrition status of school going children. It also contributes significantly in catalysing the process of reaping the youth demographic dividend, thereby expediting an unprecedented economic growth on the continent.

## The Second African Day of School Feeding

The Second African Day of School Feeding is aimed at heightening the awareness of the importance of School Feeding, under a carefully thought out theme:

### Home Grown School Feeding:

### Investment in Youth and Children to Harnessing the Demographic Dividend.

This theme categorically states that school feeding is an investment, not mere spending of national resources. It buttresses the fact that school feeding has short, medium and long term dividends to our children, through their demographic transition. The income of local communities would be increased as most of their produce finds a ready market for feeding school children. A dollar spent on school feeding is likely to generate more dollars as the children grow to become healthy skilled and employable young adults. Furthermore, youth will be productively engaged in local food production for school feeding, thus reducing unemployment while increasing disposable incomes in the community. Strategically managed Home Grown School Feeding will spawn value chains for local agriculture, catalyzing innovation and entrepreneurship. These directly contribute to Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want.

## National Activities:

The main Activities proposed for the celebration of the Second Day of School Feeding are highlighted hereunder:

### 1. Media Advocacy:

The Minister of Education, involving relevant ministers like Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Commerce and others, should use the national mass media including television and radio to promote the objectives of School Feeding. In doing so Ministry of Education should aim to change the way community members think the programme, motivate policy makers to get involved, and encourage professionals to search out more about School Feeding .

### 2. Debates on School Feeding. These should cover the following

#### a. Implementation of decision of AU Assembly(Assembly/AU/Dec.589(XXVI))

- Discussion on reports of the School Feeding Activities of the country.
- The impact of School Feeding
- The involvement of partners in School Feeding
- The lessons and experiences of countries in School Feeding
- Member States participation in the ongoing study of School Feeding

#### b. Implementation of CESA16-25

- Pillar 4-Resource Mobilisation with emphasis on domestic resources
- Strategic Objective 2/c: Ensure harmonious development of the body, taking into account a voluntary feeding and school health policy
- Strategic Objective 2/f: address access constraints imposed by poverty, lifestyle, culture, location among others,

#### c. Theme of the year 2017: Harnessing Demographic Dividend through Investment in the Youth,

### 3. Celebration of March 1, 2017 in Schools

- Organize an event for all school children where all of them are supposed to share meal by bringing food from their homes or eat food prepared at school, as a sign of solidarity.

### 4. The Role of Stakeholders

- The Role of Member States, UN WFP, UN FAO, Development Partners, Private sector, Civil Society Organization, Local Small Producers.
- Support of UN WFP and Center of Excellence Against Hunger.

## Expected Results

- Deepened understanding and wide appreciation by stakeholders, including private sector actors on the importance of scaling up School Feeding Programme.
- Networking and interconnectedness among various organizations, and partners.
- Consensus on appropriate strategies and mechanisms for supporting, resourcing, sustaining and promoting school feeding programme across Member States;
- Discussions on impact of School Feeding aiming at strengthening School Feeding Programmes.

## Report:

- National reports to be sent to the AUC