



Joint News Release

Niger joins call for increased efforts to end the plight of child under nutrition

Niamey, Niger 12 December 2018 – The economy of Niger is losing 289 billion CFA francs (US\$539 million) more than 7 percent of annual GDP to the effects of child undernutrition.

This has been verified by results of the Cost of Hunger Study which is led by the African Union in collaboration with NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), with support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The study is conducted in fulfilment of the 2014 Malabo Declaration to reduce stunting and malnutrition by 10 and 5 percent by 2025.

The *Cost of Hunger in Niger* attributes the losses to the increased healthcare costs, additional burdens on the education system and, further down the line, reduced workforce productivity.

The new study findings also show that:

- 48.2 percent of the adult population in Niger were affected by stunting as children
- 42.7 percent of infant mortality cases in Niger are associated with undernutrition
- Children suffering from stunting have a repetition rate of 19.8 percent against only 8.1 percent for those not suffering from stunting

The study was undertaken by the Government of Niger, under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The *Cost of Hunger in Niger* calls for nutrition to be made a national priority in the national plans, as well as increased resource mobilization to ensure these plans are implemented.

"It is imperative that Niger invests in nutrition for sustainable economic growth and our objective is to reduce acute malnutrition and stunting below the WHO alert thresholds," said His Excellency Albade Abouba, the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Niger during the launch of the report. He further called for increased commitment to achieve the nutrition targets contained in the global 2030 Agenda and Africa Agenda 2063.



The price tag that the report puts on the effects of malnutrition are mainly due to the loss of productive capacity as the additional mortality induced by malnutrition is more than 6 percent of the GDP. In addition, the burden of this undernutrition on the health and education sector represents heavy burden for households and the public system. Infant mortality reduced the labor force by almost 7 percent and chronically malnourished children complete almost one school year less than those who have not suffered from stunting which affects their chances of actively participating in economic life as an adult.

“WFP is committed to continue fighting alongside the government to address all the challenges of malnutrition and food insecurity in Niger,” Sory OUANE, Director and Representative of WFP in Niger concluded.

Dr Margaret Ayama Anyetei, representing the African Union Commission recalled that, "of the 16 countries that have completed the COHA study, some have already begun translating the results of their studies into action, efforts which have also involved the private sector in their countries". She urged the Government of Niger to take advantage of the findings of the COHA study to engage in national and regional efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition in children and women in particular.

The *Cost of Hunger in Africa* (COHA) study has so far been conducted in 16 countries. The findings from these countries show that losses associated with child undernutrition ranges from 1.9 percent to 16.5 percent of GDP per year.

To access the report [click here](#)

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