

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **African Union Commission Announce New Initiatives to Tackle Nutrition Challenges in Africa During the 5<sup>th</sup> Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Nutrition, Population, and Drug Control**



In response to the rising nutrition challenges across Africa, the African Union Commission (AUC) has launched a series of ambitious initiatives aimed at improving nutrition outcomes continent-wide. These efforts were highlighted during the Fifth Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Nutrition, Population, and Drug Control (STC-HNPDC-5) held from 5-9 August 2024 in Addis Ababa, under the theme “Cultivating Wellness in Africa: Holistic Approaches to Health, Nutrition, Population, Drug Control, Crime Prevention, and Education,”.

The initiatives represent a critical step forward in tackling the persistent issues of malnutrition, food insecurity, and the socio-economic impacts of climate change. At the heart of these efforts is the renewal of the AU Regional Nutrition Strategy for another decade (2026-2035), which will serve as a foundation for combating nutrition-related challenges.

“We are encouraged by the political leadership we have witnessed in recent years,” said H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development. “But it is vital to intensify our efforts and partnerships, ensuring that every African child has access to the nutrition they need to thrive.”

Prof. Julio Rakotonirina, Director for Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the AUC, emphasized the Union’s continued dedication: “The African Union Commission remains committed to fighting malnutrition and advancing health security. While we have made substantial progress, the renewal of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy and the implementation of recommendations from the 2022 AU Year of Nutrition are key to sustaining this momentum.”

The new initiatives include expanding key programs like the African Leaders for Nutrition Initiative (ALN), which has played an essential role in fostering political commitment and action on nutrition. The renewed ten-year strategy will adopt an integrated approach, combining nutrition with health, education, and economic development to foster holistic well-being across Africa.

The need for increased financial investment and stronger strategic partnerships, particularly with the private sector, to support these initiatives was also stressed. The AU Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard will be instrumental in monitoring progress and ensuring the success of these efforts at the national level.

Prof. Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, highlighted the critical role of education in combating malnutrition: “Education is a powerful tool in this fight. By embedding health and nutrition into our educational frameworks, we empower the next generation to make informed, healthy choices that will shape productive lives.”

The AU Commission’s renewed focus on nutrition is timely, as Africa grapples with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-related disasters, and ongoing conflicts. These factors have exacerbated food insecurity and malnutrition across the continent, making these initiatives pivotal in fostering a healthier, more resilient future for Africa.

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