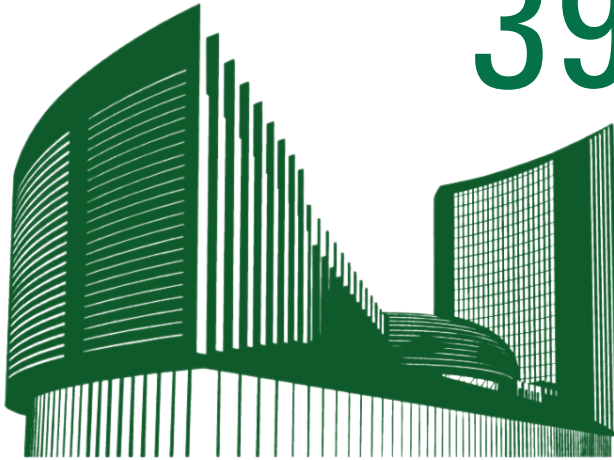




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COMMUNIQUÉ



HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT ON THE MARGINS OF THE 39TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

RECOMMIT AFRICA TO CHILD SURVIVAL THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION OF MALNUTRITION

[Kingdom of Lesotho]

13 FEBRUARY 2026 | 1800 HRS – 2000 HRS (EAT)

**HYATT REGENCY HOTEL,
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



1. We, the Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Representatives of African Union (AU) Member States, the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Communities, development partners, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, philanthropies, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector, convened on **13 February 2026** in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the High-Level Side Event titled *"Recommit Africa to Child Survival through Strategic Investment in Prevention of Malnutrition."* The event was hosted by **His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho**, African Union Nutrition Champion, co-hosted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the **African Union Commission, African Development Bank Group (ALN Initiative), FAO, Nutrition International and World Vision International**.
2. The meeting **reaffirmed Africa's collective commitment to child survival through nutrition-led prevention**, recognizing **nutrition as the most powerful and cost-effective investment to save lives, build human capital, and accelerate sustainable socio-economic development**, with **water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) as essential enabling systems** for nutrition to achieve full child survival outcomes.
3. **Commended His Majesty King Letsie III** for exemplary leadership in elevating nutrition as a continental priority, mobilizing political will, and catalysing investments for prevention-focused interventions across Africa.
4. **Recalled previous AU communiqués and decisions**, including the **High-Level Side Event on Nutrition at the 2025 AU Summit** and the **Doha 2025 High-Level Side Event on Nutrition Financing**, as well as relevant AU Assembly and Executive Council Decisions, which called on Member States to increase domestic nutrition investments, adopt multisectoral frameworks, and implement measurable, time-bound action plans to accelerate progress on malnutrition and child survival.
5. **Member States expressed concern** that Africa remains the only region where stunting continues to rise, affecting nearly **59 million children under five**, alongside persistently high wasting, anemia among women of reproductive age, and rising childhood and adolescent overweight and obesity, undermining survival, learning, and productivity.
6. **The meeting emphasized that malnutrition is preventable**, reflecting policy, financing, and implementation choices, and reaffirmed that **nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, delivered early and at scale, are proven, cost-effective, and transformative** for child survival and human capital development.
7. **Underscored the nutrition-WASH nexus**, noting that nutrition interventions **cannot achieve their full impact without safe water, sanitation, and hygiene**, and that integrated nutrition-WASH systems across households, schools, health facilities, and communities are critical to sustained child **survival outcomes**.

8. **Noted with concern the persistent underinvestment in nutrition**, with most countries allocating less than 1% of national budgets, while malnutrition costs African economies up to **11% of GDP annually**. They stressed that prevention-focused nutrition budgets must be protected even amid shrinking fiscal space and declining external assistance.
9. **Reaffirmed the centrality of African leadership** in advancing nutrition and child survival, emphasizing domestic resource mobilization, policy coherence, multisectoral coordination, and accountability as decisive for success.
10. **Recognized the catalytic role of partners**, including development partners, multilateral development banks, UN agencies, philanthropies, civil society, and the private sector, in supporting aligned, predictable, and innovative financing to complement domestic investments without undermining national ownership.
11. **Called upon Member States to:**
 - Prioritize **nutrition as a core to Child Survival, national development and human capital investment**;
 - Integrate nutrition objectives, supported by WASH as enabling systems, into national plans, sector strategies, and budgets;
 - Increase and protect domestic nutrition financing alongside strategic WASH investments;
 - Strengthen governance, regulation, and accountability through the **Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard (CNAS)**;
 - Promote multisectoral coordination across nutrition, health, water, sanitation, education, agriculture, climate, and social protection sectors.
12. **Called upon partners to:**
 - Provide sustainable, aligned financing for child survival interventions and enabling WASH systems;
 - Support policy design, implementation, and capacity strengthening;
 - Promote innovative and blended financing approaches to maximize nutrition and human capital returns;
 - Align support with AU priorities and country-led strategies.
13. **Committed to translating this Communiqué into measurable actions, sustained financing, and strengthened partnerships**, and called upon the African Union Commission, in collaboration with partners, to support implementation, policy coherence, and mutual accountability toward **nutrition-led, prevention-focused child survival outcomes, with water and sanitation as critical enabling systems**, in line with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Adopted on 13th February, 2026

At the “Recommit Africa to Child Survival through Strategic Investment in Prevention of Malnutrition.” high-level event held on the margins of the Thirty-Ninth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of African Union, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.