Malawi
Ending Hunger and Undernutrition: Challenges and Opportunities

Dr. Alexander Kalimbira
Associate Professor of Human Nutrition and Head, Department of Human Nutrition and Health, LUANAR

Roundtable Discussion
May 26, 2016 | Lilongwe, Malawi
Progress in reducing hunger, but more to be done

- Hunger fell from 45% to 21% (1990/02-2014/16)
  - Number of hungry people fell from 4.3 to 3.6 million in same period

- Malawi food deficit: 139 kcal/day

- Poor spend 77% of income on food

Calorie deficiency in Malawi

Prevalence (%)

Number of calorie deficient people (Millions)

Sources: FAO 2016
Food availability increasing with room for improvement

Change in production, area, and yield for selected crops, 2000 to 2013/14 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots &amp; Tubers</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Progress varies across crops; from 2005-2011
  – Per cap. supply increased for pulses (44%), roots and tubers (13%), but decreased for fruits (-7%)
  – Per cap. consumption of maize increased from 40 g/day to 60 g/day

Sources: FAO 2016, Verduzco-Gallo et al. 2014
Poverty persists despite strong economic growth

- Low income country with modest GDP growth
  - 4.3% average GDP growth (2000-2014)
  - 1.3% average GDP per capita growth (2000-2015)

- Poverty high with 51% living below national poverty line (2010)
  - Majority of poor live in rural areas

Sources: World Bank 2016, NSO 2012
El Niño, drought, and famine hold back progress

Near Term: February - May 2016

Medium Term: June - September 2016

IPC 2.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase

1: Minimal  2: Stressed  3: Crisis  4: Emergency  5: Famine

Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance

Source: FEWSNET 2016
Despite gains, child stunting is high

Prevalence of under-5 stunting (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of under-5 stunting (%)</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prevalence of under-5 stunting by district (2010)

"Hidden hunger" still a problem

Despite progress, more interventions needed to control micronutrient deficiencies among women and children.

Selected determinants of nutrition

- **Diet diversity**: Maize-dominated diets
  - Average proportion of calories from maize: 50% (2013)

- **Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH)**: Increased coverage from 1990 to 2015
  - Safe drinking water: 42% to 80%
  - Improved sanitation coverage: 46% to 65%

- **Women empowerment** is shown to improve nutrition, food security
  - Ranks 68 of 146 countries in the WEF Global Gender Gap Index (2015)

Hunger and undernutrition are costly

• Child undernutrition imposes social and economic costs via
  – Impaired physical and cognitive development
  – Productivity losses; direct healthcare costs

• Malawi loses an estimated US$ 597 million (10.3% of GDP in 2012) due to child undernutrition
  – Highest element of cost: Loss in potential productivity from undernutrition-related mortalities

• BUT returns to investing in nutrition are high
  – Global estimate: Every $1 invested yields $16 in returns

Source: WFP 2012, GNR 2015
# National frameworks and plans for food security and nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy/Plan</th>
<th>Relation to food security, nutrition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision 2020</strong></td>
<td>• Aims for all members of all households to have access to adequate and safe food at all times of the year to meet their nutritional requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II</strong></td>
<td>• Centers on economic growth and poverty reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agriculture and food security are among main priority areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Agricultural Policy and National Nutrition Policy</strong></td>
<td>• Forthcoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Nutrition Policy

**Goal:** To attain optimal nutrition for all Malawians by 2020 with emphasis on children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, other vulnerable groups

**Eight priority areas**

1. Prevention of undernutrition
2. Gender equality
3. Treatment & control of acute malnutrition
4. Overnutrition & nutrition-related NCDs
5. Social mobilisation & behaviour change communication
6. Nutrition in emergency situations
7. Creating an enabling environment for nutrition
8. Nutrition research & surveillance
Architecture of nutrition coordination

MoH – Ministry of Health
DNHA – Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS
MoAIWD – Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development
MOEST – Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MoIT – Ministry of Industry and Trade
MoGCDSW – Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare
MoLG – Ministry of Local Government
CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
DONUTS – Donors Nutrition Network
DCAFS – Donor Committee

MoH

DNHA

MoAIWD

MoEST

MoIT

MoGCDSW

MoLG

CSOs

DONUTS/DCAFS

Private Sector
Selected policy gaps

• Investing in development/resilience programing while addressing humanitarian crises

• Leveraging agriculture for growth, reduced poverty, and better nutrition and health

• Developing continuity of policies and M&E systems to reform, improve policies

• Enhancing multisectoral approach through nutrition mainstreaming in all relevant sectors
Selected implementation gaps

- Boosting institutional capacity for designing, implementing, and monitoring policies and programs
- Improving coordination and capacity across sectors, stakeholders, AND levels of government
- Reducing inefficiencies and leakages of otherwise effective policies
- Implementation of national agriculture and nutrition strategies and policies
Selected knowledge gaps

• Moving from early warning to early action

• How to break the cycle of annual crises and humanitarian response

• Linking agriculture, nutrition, and health

• Improving systems to collect, compile, organize, and disseminate information
## In summary

### Challenges and opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Government commitment to ending hunger and undernutrition</td>
<td>• Weak agriculture-nutrition linkages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vulnerable groups left behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relatively weak enabling environment for private sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Momentum from MDGs/SDGs and commitment from development partners</td>
<td>• Land degradation, natural disasters and climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highly suitable for investment in diversified food systems</td>
<td>• Population growth/changing demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of youth in agriculture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>