

Recommendations for Developing Commitments on Nutrition and Resilience to Crisis



Background

Malnutrition and food insecurity are exacerbated in fragile and crisis-affected settings. In 2023, almost 282 million people experienced high levels of acute food insecurity across 59 countries, due to conflicts, climate emergencies and other drivers.¹ The 2024 Global Humanitarian Overview warned that wasting will threaten the lives of 45 million children under 5 years of age (accounting for 7% of all children). Of this figure, 13.6 million are already suffering from severe wasting, placing them at imminent risk of death. Nearly 50% of countries that are classified as fragile experience high levels of multiple forms of malnutrition, compared to just 7.4% of non-fragile countries.²

Fragility is a multidimensional phenomenon, which is characterized by a wide spectrum of contexts, and mutually reinforcing drivers, ranging from conflict, weak governance, political and economic instability, to extreme poverty, environmental threats and climate change impacts.³ The latest data⁴ indicate that fragile contexts are on the rise and are home to 24% of the global population. Today, 73% of the world's extreme poor live in fragile contexts and this figure is projected to reach 86% by 2030.

Crisis contexts vary widely, ranging from acute emergencies to protracted situations. Conflict is a major driver and amplifier of high levels of malnutrition and acute food insecurity, presenting unique challenges, such as constrained access to populations in need due to increased insecurity. Conflict also directly affects access to and availability of food, access to services and the ability to cope with other shocks. About one in every five children around the world are living in or fleeing from conflict zones.



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- ¹ Food Security Information Network and Global Network Against Food Crises, *Global Report on Food Crises 2024*, Rome, 2024, <<https://www.fsinplatform.org/grfc2024>>.
- ² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme and World Health Organization, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023: Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural–urban continuum*, FAO, Rome, 2023, <<https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/09ed8fec-480e-4432-832c-5b56c672ed92>>.
- ³ Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, *Strengthening food systems in fragile contexts. Policy Brief, 15*, 2020, <https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/10989%E2%80%A2Fragile-Context-Policy-Brief_3Aug.pdf>.
- ⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *States of Fragility 2022*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <<https://doi.org/10.1787/c7fedf5e-en>>.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing all regions today. The climate crisis poses a significant threat to nutrition across the life cycle, exacerbating all forms of malnutrition and affecting all countries. Conflicts and climate disasters remain the main factors driving internal displacement and refugee crises. In these contexts, access to good nutrition and healthy diets is even more compromised by interconnected and accumulating challenges that can disrupt national systems (including food, health, education and social protection) and undermine the ability to access adequate and nutritious foods, especially for vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.

Fragility and crisis affect women and girls differently than men and boys. Women and adolescent girls in fragile contexts are more exposed to distinct health risks, tend to have lower educational outcomes, and experience higher levels of gender discrimination, lower access to social protection, poorer working conditions and lower pay. Moreover, fragility holds back women's economic empowerment and constrains human capital outcomes for the current and the next generation.⁵

In fragile and crisis contexts, vulnerability is brought to the extreme, putting higher risks on the most vulnerable groups, including children under 2 years, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older adults, children and adults with disabilities, people living with HIV, internally displaced people, refugees and marginalized groups.

In contexts of multiple crises, humanitarian aid and effective emergency preparedness remain crucial to address urgent and dire needs. However, building resilience is pivotal for managing the chronic fragility that hinders access to healthy diets and good nutrition. Nutrition is both a critical input to resilience and an outcome of it. Well-nourished individuals are healthier and better equipped to withstand crises. Bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and improving the systems that deliver diets and services in fragile settings also contributes to enhancing people's ability to withstand shocks and stressors, build social cohesion and help prevent future crises.

Fragile and crisis-affected settings have unique nutrition needs, yet the world has made little progress in addressing them, hindered by the persistent inadequacy of humanitarian funding in these contexts. Despite an increase in the volume of funding for nutrition in fragile contexts between 2016 and 2022, there is still a major gap between funding needs and actual funding allocated to the sector, which averaged only 53% of total funding needs. Beyond financing flows, the nutrition sector faces significant finance quality gaps, including under-prioritization in humanitarian funding allocations compared with other sectors, and limited multi-year funding. In 2021, multi-year funding reached a record low, accounting for only 2.5% of the global humanitarian funding for the sector.⁶ In 2023, humanitarian funding for the nutrition sector fell sharply by almost 40% compared with the previous year.

⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *States of Fragility 2022*, OECD, Paris, 2022, <<https://doi.org/10.1787/c7fedf5e-en>>. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *How fragile contexts affect the well-being and potential of women and girls*, OECD Development Perspectives, No. 19, OECD, Paris, 2022, <<https://doi.org/10.1787/c8b2287c-en>>.

⁶ Global Nutrition Cluster, *Landscape: Nutrition financing Trends in Fragility Contexts 2023. Why It Is Important to Invest in Nutrition in Contexts of Fragility*, GNC, 2023, <<https://www.nutritioncluster.net/resources/landscape-nutrition-financing-trends-fragile-contexts>>.

Opportunities for N4G Paris

The Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Tokyo Summit in 2021 recognized resilience to crises as one of its three core areas. Building on its successes, the Paris Summit represents a vital opportunity to assess progress made on nutrition and resilience since then, while reaffirming and reinforcing ambitious political and financial commitments to combat malnutrition and poor diets in fragile and crisis-affected settings. The Paris Summit is nested in a number of global, regional and country-level initiatives, processes and opportunities that have the potential to reinforce and amplify stakeholder efforts and engagement, as indicated below.

Building on and furthering global political initiatives and agendas:

- With only five years left to meet the World Health Assembly Global Nutrition Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG2, the Summit plays a pivotal role in supporting actions and multi-level commitments – from global to local – focusing on the nutrition and resilience of vulnerable groups in fragile and crisis contexts, promoting impactful, community-driven, context-specific actions. The Summit also aligns with the conclusion of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and will support the realization of Agenda 2030, particularly SDG2, fostering sustained global efforts.
- Several initiatives, including the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (through its special project focusing on healthy diets in fragile contexts), the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus Coalition, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the Global Network Against Food Crises, facilitate collaboration among different actors in preparation for the N4G Summit and will support implementation after the Summit.
- In addition, in the upcoming biennium, the Committee on World Food Security, as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform on food security and nutrition for all, will develop actionable policy recommendations for building resilient food systems, which are crucial for advancing nutrition goals.
- The G7 countries have prioritized food security and nutrition in conflict and fragile settings, while recognizing the need for innovative solutions to increase public and private funding for food security and nutrition. Similarly, the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, proposed under the Brazil G20 presidency, aims to tackle the systemic challenges of hunger and poverty globally, while contributing to the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2. The Paris Summit will provide a key opportunity to further these ambitious commitments.

Leveraging humanitarian initiatives and frameworks:

- Key resources and humanitarian frameworks focusing on nutrition, climate and resilience can also be leveraged to amplify the N4G agenda. These include: the recommendations of the Global Resilience Report 2024; the 2024 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Climate Crisis Roadmap to advance climate action as a central part of humanitarian response; the Committee on World Food Security Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises; and the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, including the package of reforms to humanitarian funding under the Grand Bargain in 2016.

Supporting the revision of national nutrition policies, guidelines and processes:

- At country level, several governments have already revised or are in the process of revising national nutrition protocols and guidelines to incorporate new evidence, such as the WHO Guideline on Prevention and Management of Wasting and the WHO Guideline for Complementary Feeding of Infants and Young Children. By elevating the importance of nutrition and resilience to crisis, the Paris Summit offers an excellent opportunity to influence national nutrition policy-making processes to focus more on prevention, multisectoral resilience approaches and emergency preparedness.



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Call to action

Addressing the disproportionately higher burden of malnutrition in fragile and crisis-affected contexts requires transformative actions. N4G Paris commitments should focus on the following areas of action:

- 1. Increase the focus on and investment in multisectoral approaches to prevent malnutrition in countries facing the greatest risks.** In the face of growing humanitarian needs and constrained funding, there is a need for a paradigm shift in the way that malnutrition is addressed by governments, donors and other relevant stakeholders. Prevention and system-strengthening must become central to our collective efforts to address malnutrition and enhance resilience. This approach should involve significant investments across various sectors and systems – food systems, health, water/sanitation, social protection, and education - to address the multifaceted direct and underlying drivers of poor diets and malnutrition in fragile contexts.
- 2. Enhance the resilience of local and national systems to ensure access to nutrition services and protect and improve diets in contexts of fragility.** Concerted and multi-stakeholder actions are needed, including responsible private sector actions, to enhance the resilience of people, communities and the systems they depend on, particularly the food, health, education and social protection systems. This will ensure people, communities and systems can adapt, absorb and transform in the case of shocks and crises, enabling reliable delivery of services and ensuring continued progress to improve diets.
- 3. Implement risk-informed policies and programmes that support earlier anticipation of and response to shock and crises.** National systems need to be designed in a way that enables risks to be assessed, prepared for and managed effectively. Furthermore, the adoption of global, streamlined, evidence-based indicators that inform approaches to preparedness and response should be promoted. Investments in nutrition information and early warning systems are needed at all levels to inform preparedness, anticipatory action and effective response. Finally, stakeholders should ensure that appropriate programme options and funding mechanisms, as well as robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks and evidence generation mechanisms, are in place.

4. Enhance nutrition governance, accountability and coordination in contexts of fragility and crisis.

Improving nutrition governance in many fragile and crisis-affected contexts poses several specific challenges: interventions tend to focus on short-term emergency approaches; countries can lack the capacity to design and implement multisector nutrition strategies; and there is a tendency for weak or non-existent accountability linkages between the state and society. All actors, including governments, international organizations, donors, civil society organizations and private sector entities, have an essential role to play in strengthening nutrition governance and promoting transparency and accountability mechanisms. Multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination are also pivotal in ensuring holistic approaches that integrate nutrition and resilience-building into broader crisis response strategies. Additionally, there is a need for better division of responsibilities and coordination among global, regional, country and local actors, as well of strengthened complementarities between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding partners and structures, with the IASC cluster approach as the core mechanism for coordinating humanitarian response efforts. Capacities of governments and local and national actors need to be strengthened to ensure all governance, accountability and coordination efforts are country-led.

5. Mobilize sufficient, long-term, predictable and flexible funding. The fight against malnutrition in fragile and crisis-affected contexts demands a combination of funding streams and financial instruments that allow for predictable, phased and complementary funding, while avoiding the detrimental effects of significant fluctuations in funding. Levels of financial support for fragile contexts need to be increased in general, but particularly for local actors, to allow the implementation of multisector and multi-year programmes to prevent and manage malnutrition at scale. In addition, commitments should incentivize the private sector to invest and act responsibly in fragile contexts. There is an urgent need for: 1) long-term investments from governments and development partners to build resilient systems that tackle the underlying causes of malnutrition; 2) risk financing and shock-responsive financing mechanisms to enable the scale-up and early response to shocks to prevent and mitigate the impacts on nutrition and diets; and 3) predictable financing in the face of predicted and emerging crises to address humanitarian needs and help chronically at-risk people meet their immediate nutrition needs. Better budget-tracking instruments also need to be used to manage the complexity of flows of humanitarian financing and longer-term multisector development investments.

Commitments should also integrate these important underlying principles:

- 1. National and local actors, communities and locally-led initiatives.** A localization lens to each of the proposed areas of action will ensure that local actors and communities are at the forefront of resilience-building efforts for more timely, appropriate and effective nutrition interventions. Furthermore, in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, local solutions and community-based nutrition initiatives help overcome access issues and bring nutritious foods and nutrition services closer to those most in need.
- 2. The climate crisis.** Given the impact of the climate crisis on malnutrition and the bidirectional relationship between climate and nutrition, nutrition commitments must be 'climate informed'. This includes supporting adaptive and risk-informed social protection, health and food systems approaches that deliver better nutrition. Priority should be given to locally-led climate mitigation and adaptation approaches, while also leveraging climate finance mechanisms for healthy diets and better nutrition outcomes.
- 3. Life cycle approach and leaving no one behind, with a focus on gender equity.** Commitments should be inclusive, ensuring the nutritional needs of those most at-risk, including women and girls, people with disabilities, people living with HIV and people on the move, are properly supported. Commitments should also consider impact across the life cycle, focusing on the specific needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women and adolescent girls, infants and children, school-aged children and adolescents.



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Examples of commitments

All commitments should be set on national evidence and should be disaggregated by target groups (children, adolescent boys and girls, women, men, other vulnerable and nutritionally at-risk groups) ensuring that no one is left behind.

1. Increase the focus on and investment in the multisectoral approaches needed to prevent malnutrition in countries facing the greatest risks

<p>Increase the coverage of malnutrition prevention activities by XX% in fragile, crisis-affected contexts and hard-to-reach areas, and in response to shocks, through targeted, multisectoral, multi-year, programmes.</p> <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] in collaboration with [International Organization] and supported by [donor] and [NGO] will increase coverage of malnutrition prevention interventions by [XX%] over the next three years by prioritizing children under 5 years of age, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and other vulnerable groups at high risk of malnutrition, in [geographical area]. Efforts combine health services, agriculture, education and social protection sectors.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Develop/revise and roll out emergency nutrition plans and protocols that include the provision of a targeted package of prevention interventions for the most at-risk groups in the face of crises and shocks. These plans should incorporate capacity-building programmes that are essential for preparedness and fostering long-term resilience.</p> <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] in collaboration with [International Organization] will design resilience programmes that include livelihoods support (such as cash transfers, drought-resistant seeds and training for farmers in sustainable agriculture) to improve access to nutritious foods. These programmes will specifically target drought-affected counties.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Enhance investments in research and innovation on cost-effective prevention approaches in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, while leveraging local actors' capacities and initiatives, and encouraging new solutions and ways of providing aid.</p> <p><i>Example: [Donor] commits to invest \$XX million in the next [XX] years in research and innovation aimed at enhancing nutrition resilience programmes in fragile contexts, prioritizing local actor capacities and empowerment and encouraging new solutions and cost-effective prevention approaches.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society Private sector</p>

2. Enhance the resilience of national and local systems to ensure access to nutrition services and protect and improve diets in contexts of fragility

<p>Implement inclusive, multisectoral, nutrition-sensitive programmes aimed at building the resilience of the most nutritionally at-risk groups in fragile and crisis contexts and in the face of diverse shocks and crises.</p> <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] in collaboration with [International Organization] will develop a nutrition-sensitive programme targeting pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 5 years of age in areas affected by ongoing conflict and climate-related shocks, aiming to, for example: to build capacity of communities on climate-resilient agricultural practices and disaster preparedness that enable them to purchase nutritious food during crises through cash-transfer programmes.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Increase access to and coverage for quality essential nutrition services in vulnerable, hard-to-reach and underserved areas. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Building appropriate climate-smart health infrastructures and strengthening the number and capacities of community and health workers; → Establishing emergency nutrition units and teams to rapidly respond and ensure continuity of essential nutrition services and inputs in face of crises; → Setting up an efficient supply chain for nutrition inputs, including by exploring and favouring localized solutions, to ensure they are available in a timely manner in hard-to-reach areas and in response to crises. <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] in collaboration with [International Organization] and supported by [Donor] and [NGO] will include a defined amount or a share of national health care or aid budget allocated to develop nutrition services in underserved and hard-to-reach areas.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society Private sector</p>
<p>Strengthen nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes and social safety nets to improve diets and nutrition for the most vulnerable households in areas with food and nutrition insecurity and in the face of shocks and crises.</p> <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] in collaboration with [International Organization] will expand the availability of nutrient-rich foods in social protection programmes in areas with high malnutrition rates and set a target of reducing undernutrition by a percentage in selected regions over a defined timeframe.</i></p>	<p>Governments Donors United Nations Civil society And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>

3. Implement risk-informed policies and programmes that support earlier anticipation of and response to shocks and crisis

<p>Strengthen and implement robust, national nutrition information, data surveillance and early warning systems at all levels (from regional, to national, to local levels) to enable timely nutrition interventions in response to diverse shocks and crises and to track nutrition outcomes in real-time during crises.</p> <p><i>Example: In [Country], a country frequently affected by drought, conflict and displacement, the Government of [Country], in collaboration with international agencies, will implement a nutrition Early Warning System as part of its national nutrition information framework to integrate the nutrition data with climate and market surveillance (e.g., rainfall patterns, food prices) to anticipate crises. The Government of [Country] commit to coordinate with regional hubs to collect and analyse data and support local health centres to use this data to prepare for increased demand of nutrition services during crisis, with the adequate technical support of international agencies.</i></p>	<p>Governments United Nations Donors Private sector And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Enhance capacities of local government authorities and actors to design and implement risk-informed nutrition programmes that can be quickly adapted to respond to crises.</p> <p><i>Example: [International Organizations] in collaboration with relevant partners, such as the Government of [Country] and [civil society organizations], will provide capacity development training to local government officials in risk analysis, climate change adaptation and the design of nutrition-sensitive programmes that are responsive to crises.</i></p>	<p>United Nations Governments Civil society</p>

4. Enhance nutrition governance, accountability and coordination in contexts of fragility and crisis

<p>Develop and strengthen country-led, multisectoral, national and subnational nutrition coordination mechanisms to facilitate coordinated efforts, information-sharing, joint actions and accountability that contribute to the realization of the right to food in fragile and crisis-affected contexts.</p> <p>This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Enhancing local and national actor leadership and governance structures, with international actors supporting the strengthening of these capacities; → Ensuring clear roles and responsibilities and improved coordination between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors; → Bringing together ministries of health, agriculture, education and social protection to ensure aligned and cohesive nutrition actions across sectors; → Leveraging multi-stakeholder platforms to ensure all key stakeholders have a voice in nutrition policy and programme implementation. <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] will work with relevant partners, such as [International Organizations] to establish a multisectoral, national-level nutrition coordination mechanism to ensure effective, coordinated responses to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, bringing together government ministries, United Nations agencies, donors and local NGOs to plan and implement joint actions by ensuring regular coordination meetings where agencies share data on nutrition indicators, joint planning for interventions and tracking of outcomes.</i></p>	<p>Governments</p> <p>And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Establish monitoring and accountability frameworks and transparent data systems in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to track and report nutrition expenditures and progress before and after shocks, including for example – and as feasible - nutrition needs, access to essential maternal and child nutrition services, individual dietary diversity estimates, access to care and feeding practices.</p> <p><i>Example: The Government of [Country] will work with relevant partners, such as [International Organizations] to track and report nutrition-related data – particularly for the most affected populations and most food-insecure areas – and ensure accountability for nutrition expenditures and progress, allowing optimization of resource allocation and ensuring that nutrition funding is directed to the most affected groups and regions.</i></p>	<p>Governments</p> <p>United Nations</p> <p>Private sector</p> <p>And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>

5. Ensure sufficient long-term, predictable and flexible funding to reduce malnutrition and improve access to healthier diets in fragile and crisis-affected contexts

<p>Establish multi-year funding mechanisms to build resilient national nutrition systems through, for example, nutrition contingency funds and/or flexible, innovative nutrition funding that can respond to shocks while ensuring sustainable access to essential nutrition services.</p> <p><i>Example: [Donors] will support the Government of [Country], in partnership with [International and local organizations] to invest in a nutrition contingency fund as part of a national nutrition resilience strategy by targeting pregnant and breastfeeding women, children under 5 years of age and food-insecure communities to enable rapid deployment of nutrition supplies.</i></p>	<p>Donors</p> <p>Governments</p> <p>United Nations</p> <p>And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Scale up forecast-based financing, anticipatory actions and climate insurance schemes that prevent and mitigate the impacts of predicted climate hazards on diet and nutrition for the most at-risk groups.</p> <p><i>Example: In [Country], the [International Organization], in coordination with the Government of [Country] and [civil society organizations] will implement a forecast-based financing and anticipatory action system to mitigate the impacts of predicted floods on vulnerable populations, particularly households with women and children under 5 years of age and smallholder farms, whose livelihoods are most at risk from flooding.</i></p>	<p>United Nations</p> <p>Governments</p> <p>Civil society</p> <p>And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<p>Increase by XX% the share of climate finance for adaptation actions that include considerations of nutrition security and have clear diet and nutrition co-benefits for vulnerable communities in contexts prone to climate shocks.</p> <p><i>Example: In [Country], [Donor] will allocate funds in climate finance specifically for adaptation actions to increase funding allocation for nutrition-sensitive climate adaptation from XX% to XX% of the country's climate finance envelope over five years, as well as to improve dietary diversity scores in targeted communities by XX%, with a focus on children under 5 years of age and pregnant women.</i></p>	<p>Donors</p> <p>And other relevant stakeholders as appropriate</p>

Additional commitments related to gender:

<p>Commit to gender equity and women's and girls' empowerment (including strategies to prevent early pregnancy and gender-based violence) in resilience programmes and emergency response plans.</p> <p>Strengthen both formal and informal education systems for girls and women in contexts of fragility and crisis, and integrate girls' education programmes in nutrition prevention, preparedness and long-term resilience programmes.</p>	<p>Governments</p> <p>Donors</p> <p>United Nations</p> <p>Civil society</p>
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Edited by Julia D'Aloisio. Design implemented by Nona Reuter (UNICEF).

Contact N4G Paris Summit
n4g.dgm-dag-huma@diplomatie.gouv.fr