

**WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY 2016:
A HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH FOR CHILD NUTRITION**

Dear Director-General Chan

The organisations and individuals who have signed this letter work in hundreds of countries and on many different issues. What unites us is our hope that 2016 will see bold action on nutrition.

We are writing to ask you to make the World Health Assembly in 2016 a historic breakthrough moment on the road to the Rio nutrition summit. We believe that such a breakthrough can be achieved if at the WHA all health ministers make specific, measurable, ambitious, reasonable, and time-bound (SMART) commitments to tackle both child obesity and child under-nutrition in their countries and to deliver on the ICN2, SDG, and WHA nutrition targets.

41 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2014. These children are not only to be found in high income countries, child obesity is now a problem all over the world. At the same time there are 159 million children who are stunted and over 50 million who are wasted. Humanity finds itself in an absurd situation where billions of us eat too much of the wrong food, whilst billions more of us have too little good food. In many countries, towns, villages, and indeed within some families, obesity and under-nutrition now coexist.

The cost of obesity and under-nutrition to all countries is now vast. It can be measured in terms of the direct costs to health systems of dealing with these problems; in terms of loss of productivity of work forces; or in terms of loss of future potential. The total economic impact of obesity is about \$2 trillion a year while the cost of under-nutrition in adults in Africa and Asia is estimated to be equivalent to 8-11% of GDP. It is time for action.

2016 provides a unique opportunity for just such action to address the double burden. The SDGs have fired the starting gun in the race to end all forms of malnutrition. The report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity will deliver an action plan for tackling child obesity. And an ambitious Nutrition for Growth summit in 2016, ahead of the Rio Olympics, is a critical opportunity for world leaders to make political and financial commitments to ensure that nutrition targets are achieved for all during a Decade of Action on nutrition.

Thanks to your efforts and the efforts of your staff, we now have the right research and the right targets to make great progress on child nutrition. What we now need is government action. We urge you to do everything in your power to galvanise such action at the World Health Assembly in 2016. If you do so we commit now to doing everything we can to support you.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dr. Hermann Toplak, President, **European Association for the Study of Obesity** | Aaron Oxley, Executive Director, **RESULTS UK** | Professor Pinki Sahota, Chair, **ASO** | Lucy M. Sullivan, Executive Director, **1000 Days** | Kate Dain, Executive Director, **NCD Alliance** | Petra Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, **International Diabetes Federation** | Anna Taylor, Executive Director, **Food Foundation** | Professor Simon Capewell, Vice President, **Faculty of Public Health** | Kate Allen, Executive Director, **World Cancer Research Fund International** | Gail Gallie, CEO, **Jamie Oliver Food Foundation** | Marc van Ameringen, CEO, **GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition)** | Barbara Frost, CEO, **Wateraid** | Dominic MacSorley, CEO, **Concern Worldwide** | Simon Gillespie, CEO, **British Heart Foundation** | Justin Forsyth, Chief Executive, **Save the Children** | Dr Tim Lobstein, Director of Policy, **World Obesity Federation** | Milo Stanojevich, Network Chair, **SUN Civil Society Network** | Glen Tarman, International Advocacy Director, **Action Against Hunger** | Eloise Todd, Global Director of Policy, **The ONE Campaign** | Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins, Chair, **BMA Board of Science**



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