

## International Development Select Committee Inquiry: DFID Economic Development Strategy

A briefing on DFID's contribution towards nutrition through the Economic Development Strategy

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The UK has long been a world leader in tackling malnutrition. In 2013, the UK hosted the first Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit and pledged an incredible £1.2 billion towards nutrition programmes between 2013 and 2020.

That funding has had a real impact and has contributed to 6 million fewer children being physically and intellectually stunted than in 2013. This has meant more children are developing into healthier and productive adults, thus improving communities' prosperity. Despite this progress, 3 million children die every year because their bodies are not nourished enough to fight common childhood illnesses. Millions more are unable to complete schooling, or make the most of it. Furthermore, as adults they are unable to gain and sustain a decent employment. Malnutrition is a silent everyday crisis affecting every third person in some form or the other. It continues to undermine human capital and collective economic progress that is achievable.

The UK committed to improving nutrition for 50 million people between 2015 and 2020. DFID have reportedly reached 26.3 million between 2015 and 2017 through their nutrition efforts. However, the impact of this 'reach' in terms of nutrition improvement among vulnerable groups such as women, girls, and children is yet to be reported.

Investing in nutrition not only saves lives, it also drives a 10% increase in individual earnings and to a country's GDP. The bigger the malnutrition burden, the greater the increase in incomes following nutrition improvements. Every pound invested in improving nutrition gives 16 in return.

### DFID's Economic Development Strategy

DFID's recent Economic Development Strategy rightly recognises the importance of tackling malnutrition, stating as one of its aims:

*"Building a sharper focus on nutrition, human development and skills for work into our economic development programmes and helping to build a healthy, educated and productive workforce for the future"* (p.5)

Among other commitments, the Strategy goes on to state that DFID will:

*"...encourage businesses to promote good health and nutrition, recognizing how disease and malnutrition reduce workforce productivity and create huge costs for families, businesses and public services"* (p.13)

We welcome this recognition of nutrition as a driver of sustainable economic progress. However, with the world being way off track to meet the SDG2 to end malnutrition in all its forms by 2030, we need more and better efforts to push us closer to the goal we have set ourselves. In view of this, following questions must be asked:

- Since the launch of this strategy, how have DFID scaled up their efforts to improve nutrition for the poorest and most marginalized people to unlock their growth and economic potential, and how do DFID intend to further build on these effort?
- How are DFID measuring and monitoring the impact of their nutrition efforts?