



1st MIYCN Symposium Resolutions Dr. Bashir

1. Nutrition is the pinnacle of human capacity development as early nutrition is key to brain development. Proper nutrition at the right time is an economic development matter. Good nutrition is key for human productivity both economic and physical.
2. After several days of deliberations and stock-taking we have learnt that the nation has made tremendous progress in embedding nutrition interventions within government systems, developing and passing legislation that promotes and protects maternal infant young child nutrition and developing health and community systems that support access to the right information for mothers and children.
3. Despite the progress, the numbers are still disturbing and there is clearly more to be done. Kenya loses 374 billion shillings each year due to malnutrition; 45% preventable deaths with malnutrition as an underlying cause globally. Micronutrient deficiencies and suboptimal infant and young child feeding are the major risk factors contributing to increased morbidity and mortality in Kenya.
4. These factors informed the convention of this conference: Why the first MIYCN Symposium? Complementary feeding remains a national challenge which is especially exacerbated in the arid regions of Kenya, requiring local solutions to complementary feeding that integrate food systems, health systems, WASH systems, education and social protection. In addition, Kenya is

host to diverse examples of innovations and good practices that we can highlight, learn from and scale up.

5. During this conference we learnt that; Reducing the prevalence of stunting from 26% in 2014 to 14.7% the target for Vision 2030 would yield cost decrease in economic losses due to child undernutrition of up to 40.7% (average savings estimated at KES. 33.2 billion). It was also reported that the Ministry has made tangible efforts to take nutrition commitments forward. A nutrition vote has been established at national level leading to increased domestic allocation from KES 400,000 to KES 90M in the last two years; Nutrition is also among the strategic programs included in the Health Sector Financing transition road map 2022-2030; and there is an array of key nutrition policies and guidelines developed including at county-level to contextualize the Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (2018-2022).

6. Approaches to improve MIYCN require a system approach that tackles poor-quality diets in early childhood. Food, health, water, social protection systems, education all have their part to support the family environment of the child. Coordination between governments is key to transform policy to action at household and communities where the child is nurtured. Interventions that improve maternal infant and young child nutrition should be approached by the government as an investment not as an expenditure given that every 1 USD invested in improved nutrition translates to 22 USD.

Subsequent to the deliberations in the last three days, the nutrition sector stakeholders made the following resolutions;

1. **Legislation:** The Nairobi Food Safety Bill regulating vendors that is currently in the Nairobi County Assembly needs to be fast-tracked to protect the food environment our children are exposed to.

2. **Integrated interventions:** We have heard about the Baby Friendly Community Initiative and how it provides sustainable entry points for multi-sectoral community interventions. A major shift required is for our mindset as practitioners to view each household as unit of diverse interventions. In addition to baby-friendly community initiative, the nutrition community needs to promote a baby-friendly society through development and enforcement of legislation that supports and promotes optimal feeding. As key priority, the government, with the support of development and implementation partners will endeavor to develop a framework to guide integrated interventions for improvement of young-children diets.
3. **Financing:** Owing to the shrinking donor basket, we are calling on both county governments and civil society organizations to consider and embrace innovative approaches to financing crucial nutrition actions. For instance, Match-fund is an approach that demonstrates government leadership, commitment and prioritization and also demonstrates civil society alignment and partnership with government.
4. **Coordination:** We have made tremendous effort in building counties to deliver what is required in MIYCN. We have seen how engagement with the WASH sector through innovative technologies has improved access to water at community level – using community-level governance and technologies such as solar powered borehole pumps that utilize the resources available. We have also learnt how government systems can integrate target beneficiaries such as State Department for Social Protection and Health to reduce converging social and nutrition vulnerabilities. Such approaches teach us that from the different line ministries, we are reaching the same communities and we can use harmonized approaches to increase impact. Going forward, we need to ensure interactions between national and county governments remain robust to seamlessly deliver policy interventions.

5. **Innovative technologies:** With the innovation to service delivery and coordination of different government institutions, it is necessary to adopt innovative data systems that pool information from diverse sectors and provides real time information. We also need to view the same data differently. For instance, through evidence building, we are able to know indicators from other sectors that are strongly linked to nutrition outcomes such as poverty rates, girl child education and water and sanitation. In this regard, the National Information Platform for Food and Nutrition Security led by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and the Kenya Institution of Public Policy Research and Analysis seeks to provide a dashboard to answer to multi-sector nutrition information needs.

In conclusion, we are saying that the government, with the support of all development and implementation partners, putting our communities and families at the center, it is possible to get it right for all children during the first 1000 days.