

# Building a USG Commitment at N4G: Recommendations from US Civil Society

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[The Nutrition for Growth \(N4G\) Summit](#) is a global pledging moment that brings together governments, donors, the United Nations, philanthropies, businesses, academia, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to accelerate progress against malnutrition. The last N4G Summit in Tokyo in 2021 proved the most successful summit to date, with [donors committing over US \\$27 billion in new funding to tackle malnutrition](#). The next N4G Summit will take place on March 27-28, 2025, in Paris, France, and will focus on mobilizing new policy and financial commitments to combat malnutrition.

**We call on the United States Government (USG) to make a pledge of at least \$13.3 billion in funding attributable to nutrition-related activities over FY 2025 to FY 2028, including at least \$2 billion for nutrition-specific activities** (subject to Congressional appropriations).

In addition to financial commitments, we request that the USG make programmatic commitments to:

- Advance women's and adolescent girls' nutrition by accelerating progress against anemia and supporting the prevention and treatment of other micronutrient deficiencies;
- Strengthen food and health systems with a focus on building nutrition resilience
- Prevent and treat more cases of child wasting;
- Increase protection, promotion, and support for optimal breastfeeding practices; and
- Increase transparency on USG nutrition appropriations, obligations, and spending.



# The United States Government Leads the Way

At the 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit, [the United States committed to invest up to \\$11 billion](#) over three years to combat global malnutrition. As part of this global commitment, USAID made [several other programmatic and partnership commitments](#), including:

- Expanding Data Availability and Use;
- Prevention and Treatment of Wasting;
- Breastfeeding for Maternal and Newborn Care; and
- Nourishing Food Systems.

USAID also played an essential role in inspiring country- and donor-level nutrition commitments. Seven of USAID's Nutrition Priority Countries [made domestic financial commitments](#) at the 2021 N4G Summit. Building on the momentum of its strong N4G pledges and track record on nutrition programming, the President signed into law [The Global Malnutrition Prevention and](#)

[Treatment Act](#) in October 2022, signaling its ongoing commitment to ending global malnutrition.

USG engagement is essential to a successful Summit in 2025. **A commitment from the USG, and purposeful engagement of USAID Missions in shaping key stakeholders' commitments, will build on the USG's transformational legacy of nutrition leadership.**

**As the host of the next N4G Summit in 2028, the United States has a unique leadership role to play at N4G Paris.** The United States can be an active partner with a core group of donor governments, alongside France as the current host and Japan as the previous host.

**A strong pledge from the United States will help mobilize pledges from a wide-range of donors and demonstrate commitment to a successful Summit in 2028.**

## Why Nutrition Matters

The evidence is clear: insufficient nutrient intake before or during pregnancy, and while breastfeeding, has debilitating and often deadly consequences for women and their children. Without proper nutrition, children [perform less well in school, earn less as adults](#), and are [more likely to get sick or die from common childhood illnesses](#), such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria. Anemia, undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies are a serious threat to women's

lives and health. The human potential lost to malnutrition costs low-income nations [up to 16% of their GDP annually](#). Fortunately, we know what works to combat malnutrition: scientists have consistently identified the same cost-effective interventions - including many of the [direct nutrition interventions](#) that are key to USAID's programming - as extremely effective for preventing and treating malnutrition.



# A Bold United States Government Pledge Should:

# 01.

**Commit at least \$13.3 billion in funding attributable to nutrition-related activities over FY 2025 to FY 2028, including at least \$2 billion for nutrition-specific activities (subject to Congressional appropriations)**

The United States is leading the global charge in scaling up cost-effective nutrition interventions. In the past 10 years, USAID's maternal and child health and nutrition programs have helped [save over 6 million lives](#). From FY20 to FY22, relatively minor funding increases have allowed USAID to reach an additional 8.3 million women and children with nutrition-specific interventions. These investments are paying off: [stunting rates have decreased](#) in all but one of the 18 countries where USAID targets its nutrition investments. As global challenges threaten to undo years of progress against malnutrition, ongoing USG leadership for global nutrition will be critical to prevent child and maternal deaths and ensure all women and children have the same chance at a healthy life.

**We call on the USG to continue to build on this progress by coordinating a pledge of at least \$13.3 billion in funding attributable to nutrition-related activities over FY 2025 to FY 2028, including at least \$2 billion for nutrition-specific activities, as defined by the health indicator reference sheet.** Not only will this funding support the implementation of key initiatives like the [Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Plan](#), a strong USG commitment for N4G Paris would serve as a rallying call that encourages other countries to commit.

**Given the USG's ability to inspire other countries' commitments, we encourage the USG to seek opportunities to make a strong N4G pledge.** Many countries are looking to the United States for leadership in this sector and will be more likely to act in the wake of a USG commitment.

USG commitments at previous Summits have relied on essential support from across USAID. Malnutrition is a multisectoral issue that persists in both development and humanitarian contexts. Funding from the Global Health Bureau, Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security, and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance is necessary to combat malnutrition in all its forms.



# 02.

## Advance women's and adolescent girls' nutrition by accelerating progress against anemia and supporting the prevention and treatment of other micronutrient deficiencies

[Anemia is the number one threat](#) to the long-term health of adolescent girls and [afflicts almost one-third of women of reproductive age](#). Anemia can be life-threatening and causes extreme fatigue and poor concentration, which hinders learning potential, educational attainment, and productivity.

Progress against anemia lags behind other nutrition achievements. Although we have made impressive strides against stunting and wasting, [72% of USAID Nutrition Priority Countries have seen anemia rates stagnate or worsen](#) and [only 1 country \(Guatemala\) is on track](#) to meet the globally agreed-upon 2030 target on anemia. Reducing anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies can increase women's and girls' learning potential, wages, and life opportunities, while also reducing risks of infection and complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

**A USG commitment focused on women's and girls' nutrition could bring us closer to closing the [gender nutrition gap](#) and finally moving the needle on adolescents' and women's nutrition.**

Here are some concrete actions that the USG should take to make progress against anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies:

- Build on successes delivering Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) in Nigeria to support the establishment and scale up of health systems delivery mechanisms for MMS in at least five additional countries.
- Introduce an indicator to track MMS uptake into USAID's Performance Plan and Report process and the Demographic Health Survey.
- Bolster women's access to high-quality antenatal care services that include nutrition counseling.
- Scale up the USG's commitment to large-scale food fortification, building on its [2021 N4G commitment](#) to invest \$38 million over five years to expand large-scale food fortification.
- Ensure women and girls' nutrition is prioritized in USAID's renewed commitment to accelerate progress in health and survival through primary health care.
- Partner with governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations to adopt and scale up the [World Health Organization's guidelines on essential nutrition actions in antenatal and postnatal care services](#), including providing additional support for community health workers to identify and refer pregnant adolescent girls and women as early as possible to health services.
- Invest in more and stronger nutrition information systems and nutrition-data and dashboards and help track adolescent and maternal nutrition data, including the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, especially those associated with anemia (to include iron, folate, Vitamin A, and Zinc).

# 03.

## Strengthen food and health systems with a focus on building nutrition resilience

Global food and nutrition insecurity is still far worse than it was prior to the pandemic, [with 122 million more people facing hunger in 2022 than in 2019](#). Ongoing conflict, climate change, and economic shocks continue to threaten food and nutrition security and are causing rates of malnutrition to skyrocket. For example, climate change is [increasing extreme weather events](#) like heat waves, droughts, and floods, which impact food quantity, quality, and diversity. These weather events make [crops harder to grow and livestock harder to raise](#), which decreases food supply and incomes for agricultural workers. The food that does grow will be [less nutritionally dense](#), which can lead to deficiencies in certain vitamins and minerals. Women and children are especially vulnerable to the nutritional impacts of conflict, natural disasters, and other emergencies. Women have unique nutritional needs and tend to earn less and often [reduce their food consumption in times of crisis](#) so other household members can eat. For children in their first 1,000 days, even short episodes of malnutrition can have lifelong health and learning consequences.

### **Bolstering nutrition resilience through stronger and more equitable food and health systems can help mitigate some of the most devastating impacts of global shocks.**

Here are some concrete actions that the USG should take to build nutrition resilience:

- Commit 25% of Feed the Future funding to nutrition-sensitive agriculture and other interventions focused on improving nutrition outcomes (eg. food fortification). Although nutrition is equal among the 3 pillars of Feed the Future and the Global Food Security Strategy, nutrition-focused interventions receive fewer resources and priority. Programs and goals should be rebalanced to put more emphasis on nutrition goals and outcomes. *Note: We are not asking for a Congressional earmark, but rather a target set by USAID as the lead agency for Feed the Future.*
- Add a child nutrition indicator to Feed the Future's initiative-level FY30 performance targets.
- Take steps to strengthen food systems and [mitigate growing threats to food safety](#) by: bolstering regulatory and management systems; engaging private sector actors to meet global and local food safety standards; and strengthening local capacity and infrastructure for safe food storage, processing, and transport to improve food safety and quality and reduce waste; .
- Ensure women and children, especially those in the 1,000 day window or in places that are particularly vulnerable to shocks from conflict and extreme weather, have access to preventative nutrition care. This should include: robust breastfeeding support; growth monitoring and promotion; vitamin A supplementation; prenatal vitamins for pregnant women; and specially formulated foods (SFF) such as SQ-LNS.
- Support increased investment in building resilient health systems that can support regular functioning of health care services, including during emergencies.



- Invest in further research to understand what helps minimize reliance on food assistance in prolonged humanitarian settings. In addition, prioritize improved coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in fragile and humanitarian contexts to support adequate, safe, diverse, and healthy diets to improve cost-effectiveness of USAID's nutrition investments.
- Invest in additional research on which agricultural interventions reliably and cost-effectively lead to improved nutrition outcomes. Use this new evidence to review and update existing Feed the Future concepts of causality (pathways). The connection between agricultural interventions and nutrition outcomes is complex, with some interventions appearing to have little direct impact on nutrition outcomes. Practitioners should prioritize strategies with proven benefits for nutrition.
- Increase research investments for food crops beyond major staple grains and tailor this research for different geographies. Invest in plant breeding and modern biotechnology to develop drought-resistant varieties of nutritious local foods, especially "[forgotten crops](#)". Ensure that small- and medium-scale producers can access these innovations.
- Reduce food waste and loss by strengthening local supply chains. Increase access to innovations that extend food shelf life and enhance stability (e.g. canning, drying, and processed foods) as well as innovations that lower harvesting costs and reduce post-harvest losses.



Credit: USAID / Malala Ramarohetra

# 04.

## Prevent and treat more cases of child wasting

Every year, [one million children die from wasting](#), a severe form of malnutrition that [increases a child's chances of dying by 12 times](#). Therapeutic foods, like Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), could save most of these children, but today [only one in three](#) is receiving any treatment. While the majority of children who receive treatment are in emergency contexts, [three quarters of children](#) suffering from severe wasting live in non-emergency settings and do not receive the same level of treatment coverage.

The United States has been a leader in child wasting treatment and USAID pledged at the last N4G Summit to [strengthen its approaches to preventing and treating child wasting](#). USAID is working towards delivering on this commitment through the recent [USAID Position Paper on Child Wasting](#). [USAID took historic action](#) in 2022 to build on this by committing \$200 million to wasting treatment and by working with governments, partners, and philanthropies to secure more than \$330 million in additional pledges to support this global effort. In recent years, children have faced a number of threats, including climate shocks, price inflation, conflict, and the pandemic, that have made them increasingly vulnerable to wasting. These challenges are likely to compound in the future, as extreme weather threatens food security and drives migration. [Systemic approaches will be critical](#): even after being successfully treated for severe wasting, the rate of [relapse can be as high as 50%](#).

**By building on its previous commitments on child wasting and deepening its systemic approach, the United States can help millions more children survive and thrive.**

Here are some concrete actions that the USG should take to prevent and treat wasting:

- Support in-country action to roll out the new WHO guidelines on wasting prevention, detection, and treatment with a focus on supporting better nutrition for vulnerable women and infants to prevent wasting from occurring and optimize cost effectiveness.
- Prevent wasting in humanitarian contexts by ensuring flexible funding, which allows for early anticipatory action when nutrition and food security indicators are expected to deteriorate.
- Partner with national governments to prioritize social protection programs that provide cash transfers and target women and children during the first 1,000 days.
- Build sustainable solutions by supporting the integration of wasting prevention, detection, and treatment into primary health care and national health systems.
- Work to close coverage gaps by setting explicit treatment coverage targets.
- Catalyze investments in ending child wasting by pledging an annual investment of \$10 million for 3 years to the [Child Nutrition Fund](#), a financing mechanism designed to accelerate the scale-up of policies, programs, and supplies to end child wasting, including the implementation of the U.S. Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Plan. The funding requested for this account should not come at the expense of other programs.

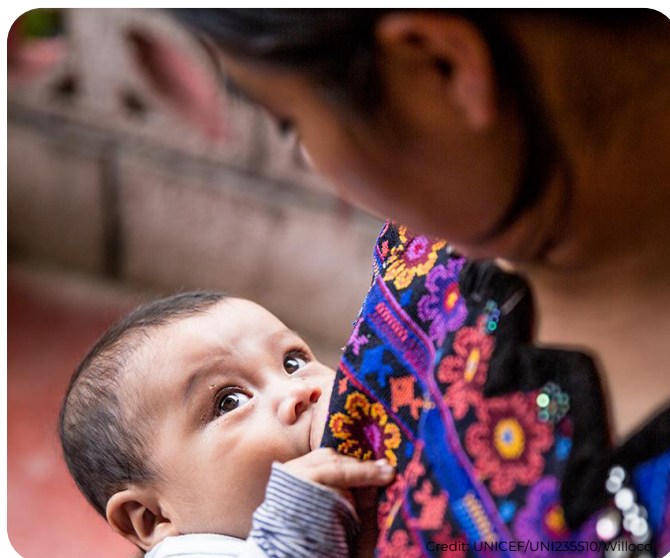
# 05.

## Protect, promote, and support optimal breastfeeding practices

Breastfeeding provides numerous benefits to both mothers and their babies. [Breastfeeding gives all children the healthiest start in life](#), promoting cognitive development and acting as a baby's first vaccine, providing critical protection from disease that lasts into childhood. It also has positive impacts for mothers, decreasing their risk of breast and ovarian cancer. However, women who choose to breastfeed often lack the support they need to be successful and [only 22% of USAID Nutrition Priority and Strategic Support countries are on track](#) to meet the World Health Assembly's target on exclusive breastfeeding. Women and families should receive support regardless of how they choose to feed their infants; however, breastmilk substitute producers often use [predatory marketing practices to spread disinformation](#), which forces many women to make fear-based infant feeding decisions. **By giving women the information, support, and space they need to breastfeed successfully, they can be empowered to make an informed choice about how to feed their children.**

Here are some concrete actions that the U.S. Government should take to protect, promote, and support optimal breastfeeding practices:

- Continue to prioritize increasing access to skilled and peer-to-peer breastfeeding counseling and support at both community and facility levels.
- Strengthen national health systems' capacity to implement regular antenatal and postnatal care that includes breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding counseling.
- Ensure mothers in humanitarian contexts have the support they need to continue breastfeeding, including: privacy and space; community and family support; psychological counseling; and assistance with attachment and positioning.
- Promote equity and sustainability by ensuring all frontline health workers, including those who serve as breastfeeding counselors, are paid a fair wage for their work and are provided adequate training and supervision.
- Sign and fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions.
- Advocate for stronger enforcement mechanisms for the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.
- Advocate for adequate paid family leave, including maternity and parental leave, and breastfeeding breaks for women working outside the home.





# 06.

## Increase transparency on USG nutrition appropriations, obligations and spending

Large pledging moments are critical for raising the profile of nutrition programming, but they can only be truly successful if stakeholders are held accountable for the commitments they make. This accountability requires commitment makers to invest in clear and high-quality data on spending, outputs, and outcomes. **Increasing transparency around how the USG funds its nutrition programming through specific funding mechanisms and tying these investments to results (nutrition outcomes and impacts) will help ensure that every dollar is providing maximum impact.** It will also help advocates accurately tell the stories of the United States' many successes reducing both global and country-level malnutrition rates.

Here are some concrete actions that the USG should take to increase transparency on nutrition spending:

- Commit to timely and transparent reporting on progress towards USG N4G commitments to the Nutrition Accountability Framework.
- Use the USG's convening power to help ensure that all countries that have made N4G commitments report into the Nutrition Accountability Framework.
- Include aggregate spending on nutrition from all programs and Bureaus in USAID's annual GMPTA report.

- Improve USAID's ability to report on the impact of the USG's financial contributions on broader nutrition outcomes, rather than just output level indicators, especially with increased focus on localization and a shift from direct implementation to increased technical assistance.
- Provide a clear definition for the term 'nutrition-related activities', which has been used in previous N4G pledges to describe USAID's financial commitments.

