



## The XVIII Global Child Nutrition Forum

Building powerful and durable national school meals programmes

Yerevan, Armenia, September 5 to 9 2016

### Communiqué

The Eighteenth Forum was organised by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation in partnership with the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger, the Government of the Republic of Armenia and with the support from the World Food Programme Armenia Country Office and the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI), and other partners, including experts from governments, private sector, media and other organisations.

The Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) brought together 247 participants (110 women) from 45 countries, including 13 ministers and vice-ministers.

GCNF is a platform for leveraging effective change in the development of home-grown school meal programmes. The increasing engagement of governments is reflected in the declaration of March 3<sup>rd</sup> as the International School Meals day, the development of regional and global networks such as the Latin American School Feeding Network, the African School Feeding Network and the first South Asian meeting on school feeding. The forum acknowledges the importance of the endorsement of home-grown school feeding by the Heads of State of the African Union at the January 2016 Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the declaration of March 1<sup>st</sup> as the African School Feeding Day.

The present Communiqué recalls the recommendations of the XVII Forum as follows:

- Nutritious school meal programmes are a long term investment with strong economic, social and educational returns;
- Regional and global networks on home-grown school meals are effective platforms for sharing best practices and lessons learned.

“Building powerful and durable national school meal programmes” constitutes an important means to address the fundamental rights to food and education.

The Forum acknowledges the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need for inter-sectoral efforts to achieve them.

The Forum recognizes that:

1. Strong political will is a prerequisite for integrated and sustainable Home-Grown School Meal programmes;
2. There is a need for the development of clear policy and legal frameworks to guide long-term implementation of Home-Grown School Meal programmes;
3. Sustainable funding is key to efficient and effective implementation, supported by clearly articulated resource allocation mechanisms and targets. Long-term investment in Home-Grown School Meals leads to multi-faceted benefits in terms of health, education, social and economic development, among others.
4. Adequate institutional capacity is required at all levels for effective delivery of Home-Grown School Meal programmes;
5. Continuous advocacy and sensitization about Home-Grown School Meal programmes should be pursued at regional and global levels;
6. There is a need for government-led multi-sectoral coordination platforms, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities which support active participation of all relevant stakeholders such as: schools, communities, civil society, private sector, NGOs, development partners, academic and research institutions, media, regional and global cooperation platforms;
7. Well-designed Home-Grown School Meal programmes should be integrated in social protection systems with the implementation of the essential package interventions<sup>1</sup> and taking into consideration food safety, agriculture, local and regional procurement, post-harvest handling and integrated monitoring and evaluation systems, as appropriate and relevant in each country's context;
8. The development of appropriate, country-specific oversight mechanisms with community engagement contributes to optimal achievement in the implementation of Home-Grown School Meal programmes;

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<sup>1</sup>The Essential Package includes: Basic education, Food for Education, Promotion of girls' education, Potable water and sanitary latrines, Health, nutrition and hygiene education, Systematic deworming, Micronutrient supplementation, HIV and AIDS education, Psychosocial support, Malaria prevention, School gardens, Improved stoves. See <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/PovertyForum/Documents/The%20Essential%20Package.pdf>

9. A range of stakeholders from the private sector, development partners, NGOs are contributing technically and financially to the successful implementation of Home-Grown School Meal programmes around the world.

The Forum recommends that:

1. Governments should develop clear legal and policy frameworks to guide long-term implementation of Home-Grown School Meal programmes;
2. Home-Grown School Meals should be pursued as priority programmes by governments, ensuring adequate ring-fenced budget allocation as appropriate for the country context and based on studies and analyses;
3. Governments should create an enabling environment and market linkages for sourcing ingredients from local producers to promote local economies. Local procurement mechanisms should be based on a thorough analysis of gender and age gaps and special vulnerabilities, ensuring equitable access for women, youth and other vulnerable groups;
4. Governments should actively coordinate all stakeholders as elaborated in point six of the considerations above;
5. Governments should establish innovative funding mechanisms as appropriate, coordinate development partners, private sector and other stakeholders, utilizing tools, for example an integrated fund tracking system;
6. Governments should pursue evidence-based approaches to improve the design and implementation of school meal programmes and promote the development of results frameworks;
7. Governments should encourage and strengthen international cooperation for Home-Grown School Meal programmes through global and regional organisations;
8. The participating countries should translate the recommendations of this communique into action plans, as appropriate and relevant in their respective country contexts, and report on their progress in next year's Forum.