

We recognise the political and economic importance to the Dutch population of the impact of increased global instability, conflict and emergencies which have contributed to large scale migration into Europe.

We urge the Government to deepen the way that the Netherlands supports the broad SDG agenda as a roadmap for policy in the areas of development cooperation, trade and investment. We suggest the following measures to accelerate broadly based development in areas which are important for the Netherlands and where the Netherlands can offer added value. Food security and nutrition are primary areas for driving growth. A 2016 Worldbank report² shows returns 1000% - 3500% for every dollar invested in nutrition. Not only are investments in nutrition one of the best value-for-money development actions, they also lay the groundwork for the success of investments in other sectors.

As food and nutrition security organisations, and as citizens who share these concerns, we urge the Dutch government to use its cooperation policy to tackle the root causes of these phenomena. Conflict and migration have complex causes, politically, economically and socially, linked to competition over resources, exacerbated by deep poverty, unemployment, inequality and climate change. There are no quick or magic bullets to stop this consequent tide of migration. But we do know that improvement of the Food and Nutrition Security situation might contribute to tackling root causes of migration.

Suboptimal nutrition during the first 1000 days, or the window of opportunity, deprives a child from reaching their full potential and could cause impaired physical and cognitive development. **Increased nutrition related morbidity and mortality, increased risk of developing non-communicable diseases later in life, as well as decreased IQ and school performance resulting in a lower national gross domestic product between 3-6% could all be attributed to malnutrition.**

1. Dutch expertise for a better nourished world

The Netherlands has a strong international position in the area of food and nutrition. The Netherlands is the globe's number two exporter of food as measured by value, second only to the United States, which has 270 times its landmass. The Dutch are the world's top exporter of tomatoes, potatoes and onions and the second largest exporter of vegetables overall in terms of value. More than a third of all global trade in vegetable seeds originates in the Netherlands. The Netherlands can leverage its competitive edge in food and agriculture, as export of start materials, technologies and knowledge can contribute to nutrition and climate friendlier food systems. In addition, Dutch expertise on dairy, horticulture and nutritious foods, is available to support agriculture interventions worldwide.

2. The Netherlands is a global leader in Public Private Partnerships

¹ The NWGN's mission is to promote inclusion of nutrition specific as well as nutrition sensitive approaches in development policies and strategies of Dutch stakeholders. Members of the NWGN include: DSM, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ETC Foundation, Free University Amsterdam, GAIN NL, ICCO Cooperation, International Medical Corps, Royal Tropical Institute KIT, Save the Children NL, SNV, UNICEF NL, Unilever Research & Development Vlaardingen BV, Wageningen University & Research - Center for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research - Division of Human Nutrition, United Nations World Food Programme NL

² Shekar, Meera; Kakietek, Jakub Jan; Dayton, Julia M.; Walters, Dylan David. 2016. *An investment framework for nutrition : reaching the global targets for stunting, anemia, breastfeeding and wasting : executive summary (English)*. Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/847811475174059972/executive-summary>

But the Netherlands has more to offer than private sector exports alone. Public private partnerships are required to progress the SDG agenda. The Netherlands has a long standing and well-recognised reputation in cooperation between private sector, government, NGOs and knowledge institutes (also referred to as “Dutch Diamond”) and there is continuing value in Dutch aid bringing non-state actors into the development agenda. Improved nutrition outcomes require both nutrition and climate friendlier food systems, which include more sustainable and inclusive production of safe nutritious foods, but also education, pricing, and other policies that affect consumption of nutritious foods. With its experience, reputation and world-class knowledge institutes The Netherlands is well positioned to leverage this capacity, which is good for the international reputation of the Netherlands and offers ample opportunities for universities and other knowledge institutes, Dutch NGOs such as IDH, SNV, ICCO etc.

3. Nutrition as multiplier: A better nourished world is a better world.

Good Nutrition is both a pre-condition for, as well as an outcome of broadly based multi-sectoral development strategies towards sustainable socio-economic growth and investments in preventing and mitigating climate change. Patience and sticking to proven development interventions is the best solution. The 2017 Global Nutrition Report³ shows there are five core areas of development that run through the SDGs which nutrition can contribute to, and in turn, benefit from:

- sustainable food production
 - infrastructure
 - health systems
 - equity and inclusion
 - peace and stability.

Through these areas, the report finds that improving nutrition can have a powerful multiplier effect across the SDGs. Indeed, it indicates that it will be a challenge to achieve any SDG without addressing nutrition. Therefore, ending malnutrition in all its forms will catalyse improved outcomes across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In our view The Netherlands should be pressing for a greater investment in sustainable economic and equitable social development globally. It should maintain a strong focus on nutrition as 1) nutrition is fundamental to inclusive development and 2) The Netherlands has a competitive advantage in this area and can make a significant contribution to the SDG agenda through development cooperation, trade and investment.

We thank you for this opportunity to share our response to the new foreign trade and development policy, and are looking forward to an opportunity to discuss our response with you in more detail in future,

Sincerely,

Saskia Osendarp and Annegré de Roos, co-chairs, NWGN

³ <http://www.globalnutritionreport.org/the-report/>