

# Statement at the 72nd Session of the WHO World Health Assembly 20 – 28 May 2019

## Agenda Item: 11.5 Universal Health Coverage: Preparation for the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on universal health coverage

Honourable Member States, this statement is delivered by Action contre la Faim, supported by the International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition.

Preventing and treating malnutrition in all its forms, especially during the first 1000 days, is a critical pathway to realising universal health coverage (UHC). Affecting every third person, malnutrition and related non-communicable diseases underlie almost half of all child deaths, and 71% of global deaths.

Malnutrition disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable, aggravating the intergenerational cycle of ill-health and poverty. Essential nutrition services like breastfeeding and dietary counselling, hygiene promotion, wasting treatment, and, vitamin and micronutrient supplementation promote development, reduce non-communicable diseases, and increase immunity and resiliency to infection. Investing in these high-impact, low-cost interventions will support the achievement of UHC.

We urge Member States to prioritise nutrition in the UN High Level Meeting on UHC outcome document as a determinant of UHC and commit to:

- Integrate nutrition interventions and health promotion in primary health care, focusing on the poorest and most marginalised, especially women and girls;
- Train and support community health workers to deliver key nutrition services;
- Ensure essential medicines include health products to prevent and treat malnutrition in all its forms;
- Allocate greater financing for and ownership of nutrition by the highest level of decision makers, in collaboration with other stakeholders including WASH, education, agriculture and social protection.

