

Committing to a fortified future

In 2023, national delegates to the 76th World Health Assembly (WHA) resolved to accelerate their efforts to prevent micronutrient deficiencies through food fortification. As established in the resolution, this can be accomplished by strengthening financing and monitoring mechanisms for existing large scale food fortification (LSFF) programs and assessing whether these programs can be improved through updating fortification standards to align with dietary patterns and levels of micronutrient malnutrition in the country.

Nutrition for Growth (N4G) is a global effort to bring together country governments, donors and philanthropies, businesses, and NGOs, to mobilize new policy and financial commitments to tackle all forms of malnutrition, positioning the fight against malnutrition as an essential development priority.

Partners unlock the power of good nutrition by:

- Adopting stronger, evidence-based nutrition policies at global, regional, and country levels
- Pledging to increase financing for proven nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.
- Committing to align and harmonize actions across sectors and stakeholders.

In 2025, the Nutrition for Growth Summit will offer national governments and regional entities an opportunity to officially register their plans and commitments to strengthen food fortification programs in response to the WHA resolution. Information and guidance on how to take advantage of this opportunity can be found below.

N4G Food Fortification Commitments

Nutrition for Growth commitments are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). N4G pledges to Improve nutrition and strengthen food systems through large scale food fortification (LSFF) are a perfect way to build on the momentum created by the WHA food fortification resolution. LSFF is the addition of vitamins and minerals to widely consumed foods and condiments to address one or more deficiencies that are prevalent across the population. Some of the vitamins and minerals used for fortification include iodine, folic acid (vitamin B9), iron, vitamin A, and zinc. Deficiencies of these micronutrients have serious consequences, including spina bifida and other neural tube birth defects, blindness, fragile immune systems, diminished physical capacity, premature birth, low birth weight, and impaired brain development.

A Guide for N4G Commitments on LSFF

LSFF commitments as part of N4G can:

- be programmatic, policy-based, or financial, supporting progress toward national and regional nutrition goals and targets

- strengthen or build upon existing LSFF programs and policies, enabling these programs to reach more people with higher-quality fortified staple foods
- revise and update existing LSFF policies, bringing them in line with current data regarding food consumption and micronutrient deficiency

N4G commitments always align with national challenges, conditions, and priorities. Some examples that could be adapted to a particular national context include:

Conduct an analysis to:

- evaluate the quality and coverage of existing fortification programmes, and if found to be robust, evaluate the effectiveness, safety, and impact of existing fortification programs, including how these programs could be improved;
- assess the need for new staple food fortification vehicles or additional nutrients that should be added to existing national fortification standards;
- determine what support national actors require to move the fortification agenda forward;

And establish or amend fortification policies and standards in accordance with the results of this analysis:

- i. Conduct and publish an annual national assessment of the quality and coverage of fortified staple food. Add appropriate fortification-related questions to relevant national surveys.
- ii. Require the distribution of fortified foods in social safety net programs. When social safety nets distribute fortifiable staples, require that they are fortified. When social safety nets are cash or voucher based, require availability of fortified foods and the use of Social and Behaviour Change Communication to build demand for them in the target population. Require procurement of fortified staple foods by public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and shelters. Educate the public regarding the importance of good nutrition to good health.
- iii. Create (or increase) a line in the national budget to [number] [currency] for oversight, enforcement, and impact assessment of fortification standards and regulations. Appoint or create a nodal ministry to oversee national fortification programs.
- iv. Create (or increase) a line in the national budget to [number] [currency] for financial support to build the capacity of small, and medium enterprises to fortify staple foods in compliance with national standards.
- v. Support the ability of the private sector to produce fortified staple foods by:
 - classifying vitamin and mineral premix as an essential health commodity to ensure rapid clearance at ports and border crossings;
 - exempting premix from import duties and taxes;
 - prioritizing the use of foreign exchange for premix imports; and/or
 maintaining or facilitating a stock of premix at national level to ensure local availability for producers of fortified foods.