

THE SEQOTA DECLARATION

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA'S COMMITMENT TO
END STUNTING IN CHILDREN UNDER TWO BY 2030

High Level Side Event on the Seqota Declaration at the 74th UNGA

26th September 2019 | 6:45 – 8:45PM

Conference Room 6: UN General Assembly Building

Context

The Government of Ethiopia recognizes that addressing malnutrition is essential to achieve inclusive, people-centered and sustainable development. As a result, bold actions have been taken to put in place policies, programs and large-scale multisectoral interventions to significantly reduce all forms of malnutrition among the most nutritionally vulnerable groups – young children, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls. Nevertheless, stunting among children remains an urgent concern, requiring accelerated multisectoral efforts.

Ethiopia has made great strides in steadily reducing the national prevalence of stunting by 20% in 16 years - from 58% in 2000 to 38% in 2016. However, national estimates mask geographic and socio-economic disparities in stunting prevalence. The highest stunting prevalence rates are concentrated in the northern regions of the country. Analysis of the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data showed that stunting declined at a faster rate among children living in the top wealth quintile and in educated families.

Seqota Declaration is a high-level commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to end stunting in children under two by 2030. Launched during the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, Seqota Declaration is an innovative, methodical and evidence-based framework for accelerating coordinated and integrated implementation of multisectoral nutrition smart interventions that aim to improve nutrition outcomes at household level. It has a 15-year roadmap that will be implemented over three phases commencing with an *innovation phase* from 2016 – 2020. This phase is focused on the Tekeze River Basin in northern Ethiopia which encompasses parts of Amhara and Tigray regions and covers a population of approximately 4 million people living in an exceptionally challenging terrain, with historical food security issues and notably high rates of stunting.

Overview of progress

An inter-ministerial visit to Seqota Declaration innovation phase woredas (districts) was conducted in March 2019 to gain contextual knowledge and review program implementation. The visit generated momentum, fostered collaborative team spirit, and ignited a truly multisectoral collaborative action resulting in an endorsed set of inter-ministerial priorities that will be implemented and tracked over the next two years from July 2019 – June 2021. As a result, Seqota Declaration is now uniquely



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positioned as a blueprint for Ethiopia's multisectoral woreda transformation agenda,¹ which seeks to leverage the relative strength of each sector and develop harmonized criteria for model households, kebeles², institutions³ and woredas⁴ with the intention of achieving *double wins* for sectors that serve as underlying drivers of nutrition.

A financing request for Seqota Declaration Accelerated Stunting Reduction Project (ASReP) has been submitted to the African Development Bank (AfDB). This is aligned with President Adesina's strong commitment to unlock sustainable economic growth by developing Africa's 'grey matter infrastructure' through nutrition smart multisectoral investments targeted at the most vulnerable population groups in geographic areas with the highest stunting prevalence. It is envisaged that this project will serve as a model for the *Banking on Nutrition* program launched by AfDB in partnership with Big Win Philanthropy and Aliko Dangote Foundation. The program is redesigning the Bank's investments in areas such as agriculture, social protection, WASH, and health to become nutrition smart and deliver greater social and economic returns alongside achieving nutrition impact, thus representing a *double win* for AfDB and its member countries.

With technical and financial support from Big Win Philanthropy, the Seqota Declaration innovation phase is rooted in a culture of evidence generation, use of data to inform decision-making, and performance management led by program delivery units (PDUs) that have been established at federal and regional levels. The PDUs are currently driving implementation of other innovative approaches such as: the establishment of Community Labs to develop and test solutions addressing context-specific challenges of host communities; the roll-out of a social movement to promote behavioral change necessary at the individual and household level to address stunting; the introduction of innovative agricultural and water solutions; and the operationalization of costed woreda-based multisectoral nutrition investment plans founded on the "Three One" principles: *one plan* that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; *one budget*; and *one monitoring and evaluation system* for tracking progress and ensuring accountability specifically through the roll-out of a single multisectoral monitoring and reporting platform - Unified Nutrition Information System for Ethiopia (UNISE).

¹ Woreda Transformation Agenda is the Government of Ethiopia's blueprint to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

² Kebele is the smallest administrative unit of Ethiopia (similar to a ward or neighbourhood).

³ Institutions refers to health posts, health centers, schools, Farmers Training Centers, Kebele Administration Offices, Transport Centers, etc. that exist at kebele or woreda level.

⁴ Woreda is a third-level administrative division of Ethiopia (similar to a district).



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Objectives of Side Event

1. To showcase progress achieved in delivering on the Government of Ethiopia's high-level commitment to end stunting in children under two by 2030.
2. To enhance interest in the cross-sectoral response, which has evolved into a model for operationalizing effective cross-government collaboration that could be applied in other countries.

Format and Preliminary Run of Show

Hosted by the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, **H.E. Sahle Work Zewdie**, keynote speakers include the First Vice-President, South Sudan, **H.E. Taban Deng Gai**, the President of the African Development Bank, **Dr. Akinwumi Adesina**, and the Assistant Director-General for Data, Analytics and Delivery at the World Health Organization, **Dr. Samira Asma**.

A moderated panel session will feature the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, **H.E. Ato Gedu Andargachew**, Commissioner, Ethiopian Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, **Prof. Fekadu Beyene**, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, **Ms. Gerda Verburg**, Director General, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), **Dr. Shenggen Fan**, CEO, Save the Children International, **Ms. Inger Ashing**, and CEO, Power of Nutrition, **Mr. Martin Short**.

Opening remarks will be delivered by **Mr. Ferew Lemma**, Senior Advisor, Office of the State Minister of Health, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Closing remarks will be delivered by **Ms. Jamie Cooper**, President & Chair of Big Win Philanthropy.

