STOP STUNTING I NO TIME TO WASTE
SCALING UP CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE WASTING IN SOUTH ASIA

REGIONAL CONFERENCE
May 16th – 18th 2017 | Kathmandu, Nepal

REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES
Country Context
Demographics

- **Population**: 338,434 (Census 2014)
- **Number of Atolls**: 20
- **Number of islands**: 195 (inhabited)
- The health care delivery system is organized into a **four-tier referral system**, i.e.
  - **Island > atoll > regional > central**
Context of Maternal and Childhood Nutrition

- Rates of malnutrition has gradually declined from 1996 to 2009
- Nutrition situation has not improved in pace with other health developments

**Child Nutrition (U5): Trends Over Time**

- Stunting
- Wasting
- Under Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stunting</th>
<th>Wasting</th>
<th>Under Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 MICS I</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001 MICS II</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 MDHS</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>

Under-nourished children less than five years of age, 1991, 2001 and 2009
(Moderate and severe, Percent)

**Source:** DHS, 2009
Child nutrition – IYCF practices

- Exclusive Breastfeeding for first 6 months: **48%** (10% (MICS II, 2001))
- Early Initiation: 64%, within the first hour of life, 92% of newborns within the first day
- Median duration of Breastfeeding: 2.2 months
- 12% of last born are reported to have received pre-lacteal feeds
- Complementary Feeding:
  - 89.9 percent infants are given timely semi-solid or solid food,
  - 47 percent is introduced to infant formula at age 6-8 months
  - 58% of children age 6-23 months met the minimum standard with respect to all three IYCF practices

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**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFED (DHS 2009)**

- **Under 2 months**: 69%
- **2 - 3 months**: 60%
- **4 - 5 months**: 26%
- **0 - 6 months**: 48%
National Policy Response to Maternal and Childhood Undernutrition

National Policies / Strategies

- **The Integrated National Nutrition Strategic Plan (INNSP) 2013-2017**: The 5th strategic plan is a 5-year plan (2013-2017) endorsed in 2012 which has a multi-sectoral approach and measures to address optimal IYCF, malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

- **National Food and Nutrition Council**: Established in 2012. High level advocacy and multi-sector involvement to strengthen advocacy, partnerships and networking.
  - Rein station ongoing.
  - **Breast Feeding Hospital Initiatives (BFHI)**: Needs to be reviewed and strengthened

- **Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) strategy (2010)**
National Policy Response to Maternal and Childhood Undernutrition

National Policies / Strategies

- **Breast Milk Substitute Code (BMS):** implementation ongoing—“Regulation on Import, Produce and Sale of Breast Milk Substitutes in the Maldives”

- **Food advertisement regulation:** in place, limited restriction on marketing of unhealthy foods to children

- **National RH Strategy** – new born feeding
  (exclusive BF, maternal nutrition, micro nutrient deficiencies)

- **Child Health Strategy**

- **Maternity Leave:** 60 days (excluding public holidays) with full pay

- **Public Health Act**

- **IYCF Guideline updated**

- **School Canteen Guideline:** ban on use/sale of energy drinks in schools and health facilities.
## INNSP 2013 - 2017

**Policies, Goals and Targets related to IYCF practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Targets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen health promotion, protection and advocacy for healthy public policies</td>
<td>Ensure caregivers practice appropriate IYCF and dietary practices</td>
<td>- &lt;10% of children under 5 years are undernourished</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- &lt;15% stunted</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- &lt;8% wasted</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- &lt;5% of children are obese</td>
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<td>- &gt;95% coverage of monthly growth monitoring in children under 2 years</td>
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<td>- 60% of children exclusively breastfed for 6 months</td>
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<td>- &lt;10% of infants under 6 months fed with BMS</td>
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<td>- 75% of infants fed with the 3 IYCF practices</td>
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<td>- &lt;25% of infants fed with commercial baby food</td>
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<td>- 60% of infants over 6 months to 2 years fed with fruits and vegetables daily;</td>
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<td>- All hospitals confirm to the 10 steps of a Baby Friendly Hospital</td>
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<td>- All marketed BMS and packaged infant food conform to labelling and marketing regulations</td>
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<td>- All food advertisements giving appropriate warnings</td>
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<td>Policy Goal</td>
<td>Enhance health and wellbeing of the population of Maldives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2: Reduced disease and disability among population</strong></td>
<td>Prevalence of underweight (weight-for-age) in children &lt;5 years of age (%): 17.3 (2009) Reduce to 15% and maintain below 15%</td>
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<td>Prevalence of wasting children &lt;5 years (weight for height below -2SD): 10.6 (2009) Reduce by 1/3 and Maintain</td>
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<td>Prevalence of overweight children &lt;5 years (weight for height above +2SD): 5.9 (2009) Reduce by 1/3 and Maintain</td>
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<td>Prevalence of stunting (height for age &lt; -2 SD from the median of the WHO child growth standard) among children under 5 years of age: 18.9 (2009) Reduce by 1/3 and Maintain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Output 5: Enabled a healthy start in life and childhood enabled through the health system</strong></td>
<td>% of children introduced with complementary foods at 6 months: 90% (2009) Increase to 95% and maintain above 95%</td>
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<td>Number of government hospitals compliant with breast feeding hospital initiative (BFHI): 9 (2009) Increase to 50% and 100% of all govt hospitals</td>
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<td>Proportion of breast milk substitute products registered and sold: 35% (2016) 95% and maintain Above</td>
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National Policy Response to Maternal and Childhood Undernutrition

In progress

• Food Bill (draft)

• Revision Food Advertisement Regulation-restriction on marketing of unhealthy products to children..
  • Nutrient Profile Model pretested

• Growth Monitoring and Promotion Program review and Development of Protocols and resources.
  • ECD integration
Main Core Programmes

- **Micro-nutrient supplementations** (Vitamin A, De-worming)

- **Growth Monitoring and Promotion** – institutionalised (system in place)

- **Irion & Folic Acid supplementation** to all pregnant women

- **Child Health programmes**
  - IMCI – Intergrated Management of Child Hood Illness
  - New Born Care (Essential newborn care & management of Sick NB)
  - Vaccination coverage is high

- **Reproductive, Maternal, newborn and child health programe (ANC, PNC clinics)**
  - Information and counseling
  - Adolescent health friendly Services Clinic - pilot project
Programmes

- **MCH – online surveillance system** for monitoring nutrition interventions including growth monitoring, vaccination and IYCF information

- **School Health**
  - School Health Screening–targeting preschools; parent awareness, teachers, students
  - **Health and Well-being** incorporated as a subject in Key Stage 1
  - Training of preschool teachers, school health assistants and teachers on Nutrition and Physical activity.
Programmes

• **Advocacy, sensitization & awareness** programs for stakeholders, community leaders, families ongoing
  • **Partnership with local NGO**s reaching out to the families and children
  • **National Nutrition Conference** focused on **first 1000 days**
  • **High level Meeting on NCDs.**

• Nutrition and Health awareness via fairs, walks, radio, tv programmes etc

• **Trainings (in-house/refreshers)** Breastfeeding, IYCF (5 regions), IMCI, Newborncare ongoing every year etc
Programmes (cont.)

- Behavior change communication Campaign on Maternal and Child Nutrition

  - Maternal and Child Nutrition Guide for caregivers
  - Maternal and Child Nutrition Manual for Community health workers
  - Pretesting of Guide and Manual conducted in three atolls
  - IEC and Advocacy tools leaflets, posters, banners, Mass media spots. Social media messages, TV/radio
  - Orientation to MCN Guide and training of healthcare workers on MCN completed in 3 atolls
  - Exploring Development of Mobile App on MCN key information
Opportunities

- Nutrition global mandates: SDGs, Global Nutrition Targets
- Integrate wasting indicators in the existing nutrition surveillance administrative data.
- Focused programmes on **first 1000 days** (include preconception, pregnancy, exclusive breast feeding, IYCF)
- Comprehensive women and child nutrition programme that takes a **life cycle approach** – and links sector and creates synergies
- Develop a comprehensive, integrated program on IYCF
- New operational program framework, package & tools developed for child feeding programs at
  - Accelerate efforts to translate policies to action – eg INNSP
- Growth Monitoring needs to be strengthened – enhance the counselling and intervention – for prevention and management of Severe Acute Malnutrition
Challenges

• Needs new / updated data on nutrition indicators. Current situation??

• Higher focus on curative care rather than preventive health

• Some critical policies have been in draft stage, some for a long time

• Difficulty in implementing and enforcing existing policies and strategies
  • Due to changing political climate, limited resources (HR, technical, funds)
  • Changing policy priorities (which is dynamic), changing leaderships
  • Use of data / existing evidence for informing policies and programs is weak
Challenges

- Linkage of BCC counselling to GMP / ANC / EPI is weak
- Whole of government approach missing; Intersectoral gap: Multi-sectoral working approach is not in place: Education, Health, Env and Energy, Agriculture needs to work together and reflect it in joint programming
- Changing food transition: Transition to middle income - the convenient lifestyle preferred by mothers and families – lead to a heavy reliance on processed food, unhealthy junk food and higher ‘value’ to it
- A lifecycle approach is missing. Public Health Programmes are in silos
- Capacity Issues – limited national technical staff, skills and knowledge, number of staff in public health
Thank you!