



## Nutrition-Specific Interventions to Counter Malnutrition in Yemen

**Introduction:** *Continuous work with everlasting hope* Dr. Abdulfah M. AL-Mahdi

Better late than never, this proverb really applies on the health and nutrition situation in Yemen. Thus, the ministerial decree No.( 12/58), dated 23/12/2018 was issued by the Ministry of Public Health and Population to upgrade the department of nutrition into a General Directorate of Nutrition and the decree includes creation new directorates with new assignments added to previous programs and departments, some with new crucial duties managed by professional and qualified young staff.

This comes within tremendous changes in the organizational structure of the MOHP which reflects the attention paid to the health situation reform and general situation in Yemen.

The General Directorate of Preventive and Curative Nutrition is exerting utmost efforts with huge potentials to save the lives of people including preventing all kinds of malnutrition diseases and it progresses with firm steps to improve the indicators of nutrition in Yemen. The General Directorate also supports and cooperate with all its partners to achieve the tasks and achieve the goals represented in alleviating the diseases of malnutrition with children and mothers.

\* General Director of Preventive and Curative Nutrition – MOHP

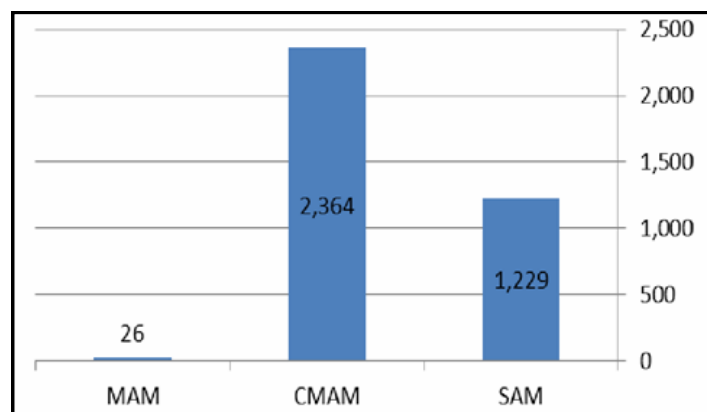
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### The Current Situation in Health Sector

The health sector in Yemen is classified as one of the most fragile systems worldwide. The health sector faces many challenges in light of the land, sea and air blockade imposed on Yemen, which impedes the arrival of medical aid. The United Nations confirms that 16 million Yemenis lack adequate health care. The health sector is suffering from shortage of medicines and laboratory solutions, inability of patients to travel abroad for treatment, the high cost of medicines which burdens the capacity of patients, the health system is unable to meet these challenges in providing the minimum needs of those medicines, and the medical assistance provided through international organizations takes a long time to reach patients in need of regular medicines such as cancer, renal failure, etc., due to restrictions and obstacles imposed on Yemen. The delay of pharmaceutical aid arrival contributes to the damage of some of these medicines as a result of bad storing and proximity of expiration date of some of them. On the other hand, the deterioration of the health situation, the low level of provision of health services to citizens and the lack of food quality and quantity contributed to the spread of diseases of malnutrition in all its forms among pregnant and lactating women and > 5 children. The indirect factors also helped to create a fertile environment for the spread of epidemics such as cholera, diphtheria, dengue fever and malaria.

### Total health faculties in Yemen implanted for several malnutrition treatment



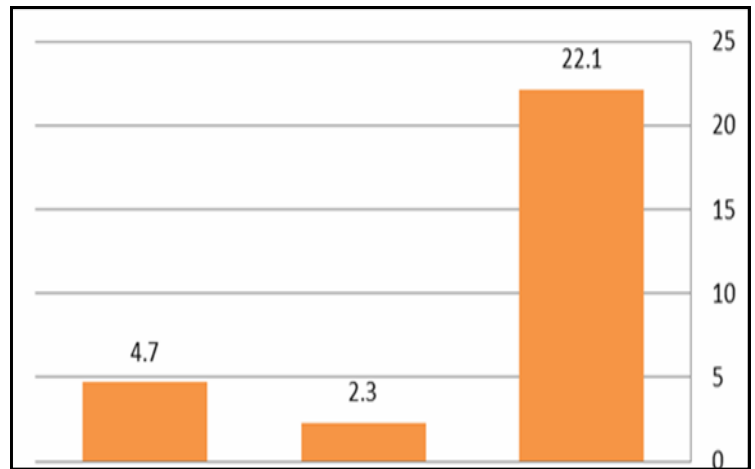
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## Nutrition Situation in Yemen

The United Nations estimates that there is one child dying every 10 minutes in Yemen due to diseases and humanitarian conditions, especially malnutrition. Statistics indicate that 2,300,000 < 5 children are malnourished, including 400,000 are severely malnourished. UNICEF estimates there are 1,200,000 Lactating and pregnant women are malnourished and this threatens their children with malnutrition as well.

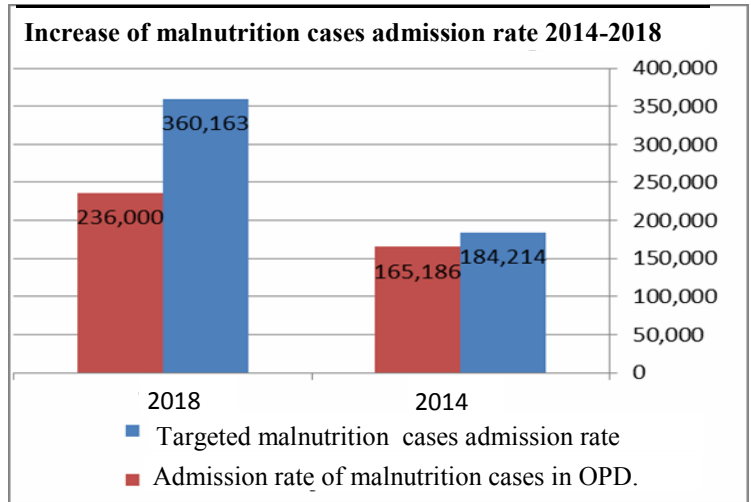
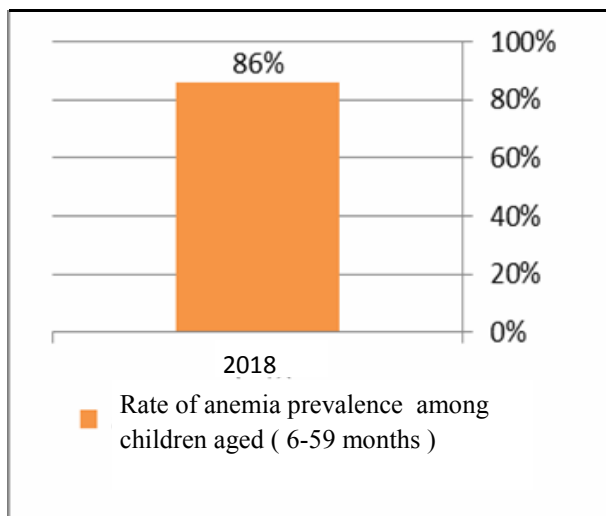
The indirect factors in the relevant sectors contribute to the increase in malnutrition rates, the most important are water and environment sector, agriculture and irrigation sector, education sector and fisheries sector, respectively, in providing safe and clean drinking water, environmental sanitation, provision of food quantitatively and qualitatively, raising awareness among community through teachers and schools, as well as provision of fish to become accessible to citizens due to their importance.



4.7 million > 5 year children are in need for urgent nutrition  
 2.3 million of pregnant and Lactating women suffer from malnutrition  
 22.1 million persons are in need for urgent nutrition interventions to remain survived

### Statistics of 2018

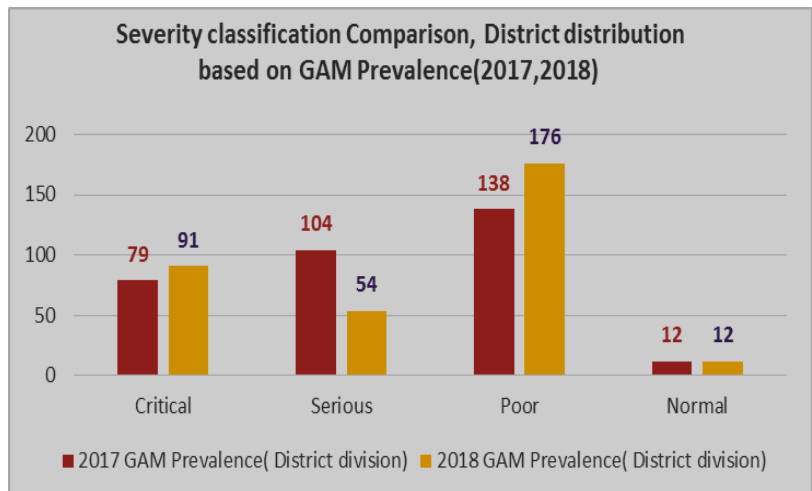
### Rate of anemia prevalence among children aged ( 6-59 months )



The diagram indicates a comparison between the risk rates among the districts for the two years 2017 & 2018.

**Severity classification Comparison, District distribution based on GAM Prevalence (2017,2018)**

| Severity classification | 2017 GAM Prevalence (District division) | 2018 GAM Prevalence (District division) |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Critical                | 79                                      | 91                                      |
| Serious                 | 104                                     | 54                                      |
| Poor                    | 138                                     | 176                                     |
| Normal                  | 12                                      | 12                                      |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>333</b>                              | <b>333</b>                              |



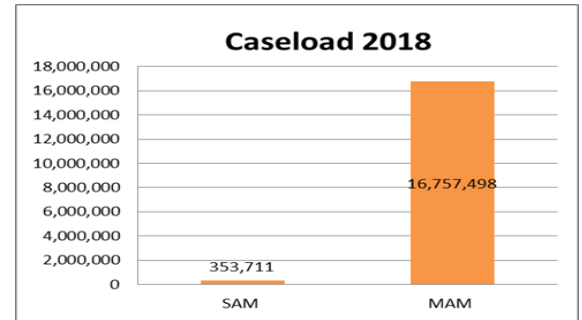
## SMART Surveys

Ministry of Public Health and Population realizes the importance of data availability and indicators related to prevalence of various types of malnutrition among > 5 children and pregnant and Lactating women through Anthropometric Measurement of the target categories represented in measuring upper mid arm circumference ( MUAC ) , *weight-for-height* Z-score ( WHZ ) , *height for age* Z-score ( HAZ ) , weight for age (WA) according to the international standards .SMART Approach is one of the approaches used worldwide to obtain the best results in anthropometric measurement for the target categories and to provide fast review on the nutrition condition of the target population in order to carry out urgent intervention to combat malnutrition particularly in the situations of conflicts and disputes being passed by some countries. Thus, MOHP , along with governmental partners such as Central Statistics Organization , Coordinating Secretary of Scaling Up Nutrition in Yemen (SUN) and other international partners such as UNICEF as the main supporter , WHO , FAO , WFP , ACF , Nutrition Cluster in management and implementation of Smart Surveys in Yemen through the supervisory committee presided by H.E , the Minister of Public Health and Population and the Technical Committee presided by the Deputy Assistant of the Central Statistics Organization including a number of professional technicians and trainers in the field of management and implementation of nutrition surveys with SMART approach from the relevant parities as well as representation from CSOs in the technical committee :

The partners , through the technical committee shall carry out the following duties :

- ◆ Identification of governorates and areas targeted according to results
- ◆ Of the Previous surveys or relevant surveys.
- ◆ Develop annual plans
- ◆ Set out training needs
- ◆ Approval of implementation budgets.
- ◆ Resolve differences and problems, if any
- ◆ Participate and supervise the implementation of field surveys.
- ◆ Coordination with governorates and relevant authorities in the arrangement process.
- ◆ To carry out the surveys and take the necessary approvals and permits.
- ◆ Follow-up implementation quality.
- ◆ Participate in data cleaning.
- ◆ Follow up and discuss initial reports.
- ◆ Discussion of survey results.
- ◆ Approval of publishing the survey results.

The following diagram indicates an increase of MAM & SAM in 2018.



## Malnutrition indicators

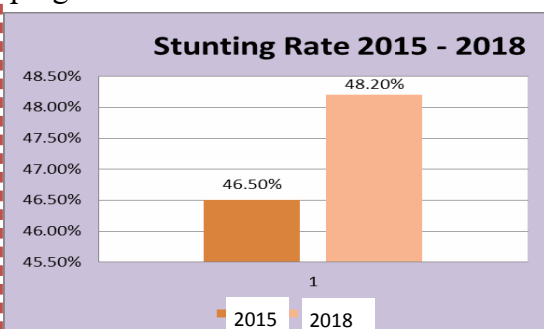
Ministry of Public Health and Population has

intensified its efforts in the past year of 2018 through the technical committee of SMART by covering 18 governorates in the Republic of Yemen and the results showed a variance in the indicators of such surveys from one governorate to another. The rate of general malnutrition prevalence in such governorates was as follows :

| Governorate | Survey zone       | GAM Prevalence |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Abyan       | Highland          | 5.3%           |
| Abyan       | Lowland & coastal | 10.0%          |
| Aden        | Whole             | 15.5%          |
| Al Bayda    | Whole             | 7.3%           |
| Al Dhale'e  | Whole             | 12.1%          |
| Al Jawf     | Whole             | 9.2%           |
| Al Maharah  | Whole             | 9.9%           |
| Al Mahwit   | highlands         | 5.5%           |
| Al Mahwit   | lowlands          | 11.8%          |
| Amran       | Whole             | 7.4%           |
| Dhamar      | Eastern           | 5.9%           |
| Dhamar      | Western           | 10.1%          |
| Hajjah      | Highlands         | 8.9%           |
| Hajjah      | Lowlands          | 14.9%          |
| Lahj        | highlands         | 12.0%          |
| Lahj        | lowlands          | 22.2%          |
| Marib       | City (TC)         | 10.1%          |
| Marib       | Rural             | 10.0%          |
| Sana'a      | Dry (SAD)         | 5.6%           |
| Sana'a      | Temperate (SAT)   | 7.0%           |
| Socotra     | Whole             | 9.6%           |
| Taizz       | City (TC)         | 15.4%          |
| Taizz       | Highland          | 15.0%          |
| Taizz       | lowlands          | 22.6%          |

## Stunting Indictors

Despite the conditions being passed by Yemen during the past four years and the high indicators of food insecurity, which are reflected in the lack of access to adequate quantities of food, the indicators of Stunting during the period 2015-2018 witnessed a slight increase of 1.7%, where in 2015 it was 46.50% and increased to 48.20% in 2018. This means that the critical crisis in the country has helped to increase the rate of Stunting despite the large interventions in programs to combat malnutrition..



The diagram shows an increase of 1.7% for the Stunting rate between 2015 and 2018.

## The Institutional Building to Encounter Nutrition Challenges

### » Prevention and treatment

- ◆ **Department of Preventive and Curative Nutrition** : This Department is involved in following up early detection of malnutrition cases and tracking them through mechanisms approved by scientific standards for accurate treatment until achieving recovery.

**Overall Objective of the Department:** To improve indicators of malnutrition in the Republic of Yemen and to reduce malnutrition in children and pregnant and lactating mothers.

#### CMAM Special Objectives:

- ◆ Detection of moderate and severe acute malnutrition.
- ◆ Follow-up on cases of malnutrition.
- ◆ Training health staff on how to detect and treat cases.
- ◆ Training the staff in dealing with records and how to report.
- ◆ This program is divided into several sections, each section has special admission criteria, treatment criteria and discharge criteria for recovery. There are two types of programs:

#### Preventive Programs:

- ◆ Community Health Volunteers (C.H.V)
- ◆ Infant and young child nutrition counseling (I.Y.C.F)
- ◆ Micronutrients

#### Treatment programs :

- ◆ Treatment of Integrated Malnutrition (MAM)) with its following types
- ◆ Severe acute malnutrition (SAM)
- ◆ Moderate acute malnutrition (MAM)
- ◆ Therapeutic Feeding Center (TFC).

### » Food safety and Healthy Nutrition

#### ◆ Food Safety and Healthy Nutrition Department

Due to increasingly dependence on imported food in Yemen from many countries, some of them do not comply with food safety standards for many reasons related to food handling methods in Yemen, and since the food industry and trade have become more complex and developed than before and the possibility of forfeiting foods which certainly lead to several disease's and transmission of infectious diseases become easier and dominant ; All these require MOHP to handle its key role to protect the health of people and promote "the healthy food vigilance" through establishing a specialized directoraterf to carry out a duty of food safety , to complement the chain of services provided by the ministry in the field of nutrition.

**General Objective of the Department:** The Ministry of Public Health and Population has a more comprehensive view of the status quo and the role which must be played in the field of food safety.

**The practical objective:** To know the details of the existing situation, to understand its historical, legal and real dimensions, to identify ways of dealing effectively with its details, and the nature of the tasks to be carried out, with a clear framework.

#### Sections of the Department:

- ◆ Research and Studies
- ◆ Health Education
- ◆ Coordination and Public Relations

### » Nutrition in Hospitals and Health Centers

#### ◆ Nutrition at Hospitals and Health Facilities Department:

This Directorate is responsible to establish an accredited program to feed patients and employees in all hospitals and health facilities. It seeks to develop and implement mechanisms to ensure continuous development of patients' nutrition performance in hospitals. It aims to meet the nutritional needs of hospitals (especially intensive care rooms) and to develop a mechanism to measure the impact and give feedback continuously so that it can meet the standards and conditions adopted internationally and develop standards that take into account the needs of the Yemeni society.

#### Sections of the Department:

- ◆ ICU Nutrition program.
- ◆ Outpatient Nutrition Programs Program + Nutritional Education.
- ◆ Monitoring and Evaluation of Nutrition in Kitchens and Nutrition Departments

### » Emergency Nutrition

#### ◆ Emergency Nutrition Department

It is a specialized department dedicated to enhancing training and research capacities to meet food needs during natural and man-made disasters and exerts efforts to prevent famine

#### Emergency Nutrition Department Tasks:

- ◆ To know the health and nutrition condition of the community in overall governorates of the republic.
- ◆ To provide the indicators of the nutritional status
- ◆ Preparing and preparing to build a map of the spread of malnutrition of all kinds and periodically updating it, issuing periodicals on the nutritional status of the Republic of Yemen and establishing events that will reduce the spread of malnutrition and increase the effectiveness of early detection and response.
- ◆ Monitor the performance of feeding programs.
- ◆ Emergency medical intervention.

#### Sections of the Department:

- ◆ Nutritional Surveys & Evaluation Program
- ◆ Nutritional surveillance program

#### References:

- ◆ Preventive and Curative Nutrition – MOHP
- ◆ Yemen Nutrition Cluster Bulletin