

Keynote Address "On a New, European Commission-Inspired, All Stakeholders, All Food Chain Sustainable Strategy"

Ladies and gentlemen

- First of all: thank PA international and CY PRES for organizing this conference and for maintaining the spotlight on the problem of malnutrition
- Encouraging to see numerous representatives from a variety of different institutions and entities are participating here today: European institution, EUMS, UN agencies, NGOs, private enterprises ...
- This **collaborative approach** and partnership is essential if we want to successfully tackle malnutrition
- We clearly have to make **joint efforts** to help the most vulnerable improve their nutrition status - in particular children and pregnant and lactating women
- **Figures** are telling:
 - more than a third of all child deaths are linked to undernutrition
 - undernutrition in young children hampers their development => does not only have a personal cost for the child, who will be unable to live up to his/her potential but also a measurable overall economic loss: estimated at 2% of GDP
- However, while figures and statistics provide overall information to illustrate the problem of malnutrition, let us not forget that it is **people** who we are talking about and who should be at the heart of our efforts - the **most vulnerable** who risk having no or only a bleak future because they find themselves victims of natural disasters, conflict or poverty
- We therefore need a **comprehensive strategy** that addresses the different elements leading to malnutrition and involves a variety of

stakeholders so as to provide a comprehensive response and make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable. We need to save lives, build their resilience and help create a sustainable future for them.

- The **European Commission** has been making increasing efforts to address the problem of malnutrition over the past few years.

- This includes:

- increased **funding**

- increased **operational** efforts: more factoring of nutrition considerations, more direct nutrition interventions, more nutrition-sensitive interventions and programming

- clear **political commitment**: e.g. active participation in SUN Initiative, commitment to reduce the number of stunted children under five by 7 million by 2025

- In this vein, we are **now preparing a policy framework to enhance maternal and child nutrition in external assistance**

- **DG ECHO and DEVCO** are **jointly** working on this policy framework - recognize the fact that nutrition needs to be tackled through a multi-sectoral approach and from both the humanitarian and development angles

- **Main challenges** that need to be addressed to arrive at a new, all-stakeholder comprehensive strategy:

- **overcome sectoral silos**: integrate nutrition as a key objective of agriculture, food security, health, social protection and water and sanitation

- **more coherence between emergency and development actors** to address both immediate and basic causes; for instance, successful example of SHARE in the Horn of Africa and the new AGIR Initiative for the Sahel

- **improve aid effectiveness and quality of aid**: chose the right type of response to undernutrition – for instance, in emergency situations a

product-based approach to acute malnutrition is not necessarily the most efficient and effective response

- **increase funding**: appeal to preserve the humanitarian budget in the ongoing MFF negotiations and properly factor in nutrition in the negotiations for external aid budget

- However, clearly international assistance should only help address malnutrition when national capacities insufficient; first and foremost, **responsibility lies with national governments** to take care of their own populations – to this end, we can help strengthen leadership of national systems, their management and strategic capacities
- In view of the magnitude of nutrition needs: crucial that there is a **clear distribution of tasks among the different actors**, in line with their **respective core strengths and comparative advantages**
- In this connection, **public-private partnerships** can make an important contribution, bringing in the specific expertise and innovation by private companies while respecting guiding principles of cooperation
- Summing up, it is clear that it takes a **strong commitment from all of us** to jointly help address malnutrition in a comprehensive and successful manner. The **Commission is ready and prepared** to contribute, as will be outlined in the policy framework that we are currently working on and which we will present in spring 2013.
- I am sure that all of the institutions and entities participating today share the common understanding of the need to tackle undernutrition through a comprehensive approach. The Commission is very much looking forward to continuing to work with you to save lives and build a resilient future for the most vulnerable.

Thank you.