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Ethiopia Brief

## GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

20 YEARS OF TRACKING PROGRESS: TIME TO RECOMMIT  
TO ZERO HUNGER (SDG 2)

March 2026



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#GHI2025



Ethiopia's pursuit of sustainable economic growth and transformation over the past decade has yielded significant results, with an 8.1 percent growth rate recorded in 2023/24, alongside rapid urbanization and population growth of 2.7 percent (World Bank 2026). Despite this progress, poverty reduction remains incomplete: 5.3 million people were acutely food insecure in 2025 (Humanitarian Action 2024). There also remain notable disparities between regions and between urban and rural populations. Additionally, the Gini index indicates a rising trend in inequality (World Bank 2024c). These complexities arise from multiple crises (World Bank 2024a). About 91 percent of the population experienced droughts, locust infestations, floods, conflicts, or a combination of these factors, which significantly impacted the country despite their localized nature. Lowland areas faced severe droughts for three consecutive years amid escalating conflicts (World Bank 2024a). Additionally, economic shocks, including food inflation exceeding 12 percent and land degradation affecting 85 percent of arable land, compounded the challenges (Solomon et al. 2024; World Bank 2024b).

These drivers exacerbate persistent food security challenges that undermine national development and human well-being. From 2022 to 2024, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity reached 61 percent (affecting 79.1 million people), severe food insecurity stood at 19 percent (24.5 million people), and undernourishment affected 20 percent of the population (25.4 million people). In 2024 alone, 54 percent of Ethiopians could not afford a healthy diet, underscoring the structural barriers to access to nutritious food amid recurring shocks such as conflict, climate variability, and economic pressures (GAFS n.d.). There are also subnational disparities; stunting rates, for example, vary from 15 percent in Addis Ababa to 51 percent in Benishangul-Gumuz (ESS and ICF 2026). Moreover, according to the food and nutrition strategy baseline survey, 47 percent of children are living in severe food poverty. Among the regions, Somali has the highest proportion of children in severe food poverty (75 percent), while Addis Ababa reported the lowest (16 percent). Children in rural areas are more likely to live in severe food poverty than those in urban areas (53 percent versus 35 percent) (EPHI 2023).

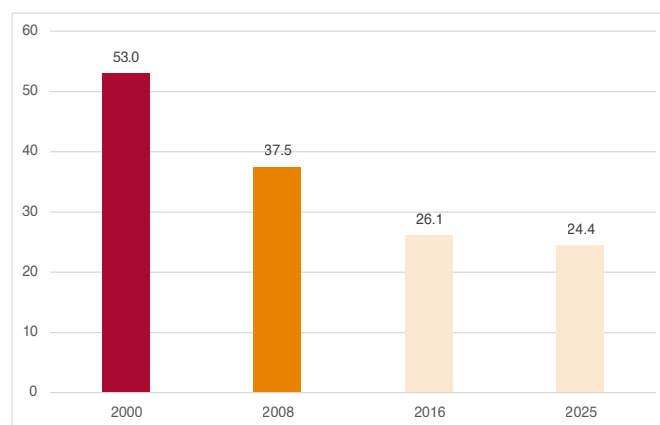
Although the Government of Ethiopia has made significant efforts to address these pressing challenges, food insecurity and malnutrition persist. It is therefore imperative for the government to critically evaluate its progress over the past two decades, identify persistent barriers, and renew its commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.

This brief examines recent advances and challenges in light of the 2025 Global Hunger Index (GHI) report. The GHI is an annual peer-reviewed report jointly published by Alliance2015 members Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe as well as the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict. It comprehensively assesses and tracks food insecurity and malnutrition at global, regional, and country levels, serving as an important reference for evidence-based policy dialogue and action.

## Methodology

This report employs a rigorous mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's progress in combating food insecurity and malnutrition. Central to this approach is the integration of Global Hunger Index (GHI) data with the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Surveys (EDHS) (2000–2026) and the Food and Nutrition Strategy (FNS) survey 2023 (EPHI, 2025), complemented by insights from 20 key informant stakeholders across key government institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI), the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), and the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI). The analysis is further enriched by insights from development partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Alliance2015, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Save the Children, and the private sector, reflecting the range of collaborative engagement. Contributions from leading agricultural academic institutions, including Haramaya, Bahir Dar, and Hawassa Universities, provide additional depth and scholarly rigor. Drawing on an extensive review of existing studies, this method synthesizes diverse sources of information to enhance the robustness of the analysis of Ethiopia's progress over the past 20 years and the assessment of the effectiveness of policies and programs in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition. One limitation of this brief is that it considers only federal-level organizations, such as the Food and Nutrition Office of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and other organizations.

FIGURE 1 TREND IN GHI SCORES FOR ETHIOPIA



Source: WHH, Concern, and IFHV (2025)

# ETHIOPIA AND THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

The GHI is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking food insecurity at global, regional, and national levels. To capture the complex and multidimensional nature of malnutrition, the index combines four indicators (undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality) that reflect not only calorie availability but also the quality and utilization of food. Based on the values of the four indicators, the GHI determines food insecurity and malnutrition on a 100-point scale, where 0 is the best possible score and 100 is the worst. Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from low to extremely alarming. The GHI, which draws on data from the preceding five years, is best suited to measure food insecurity and malnutrition over recent years and decades and is complemented by other tools, such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), which offer real-time assessments and short-term projections of food insecurity and malnutrition (WHH, Concern, and IFHV 2025).

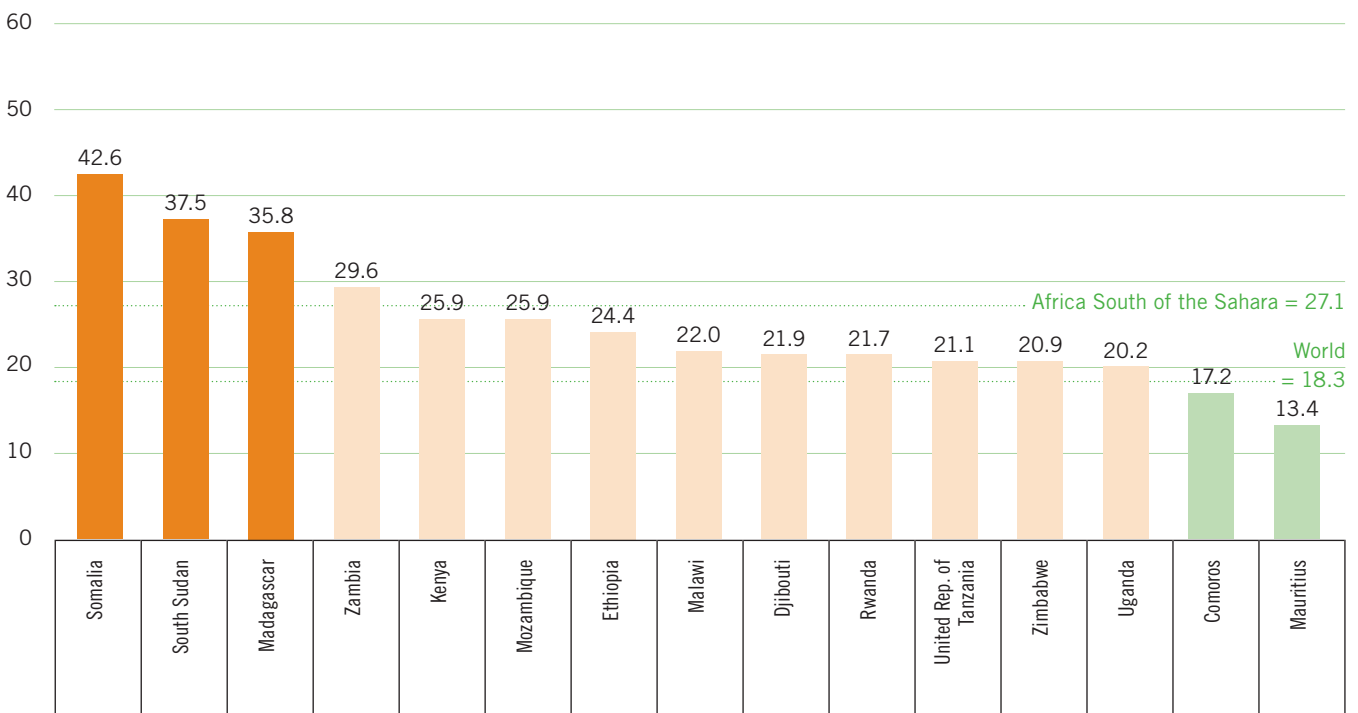
## GHI Results for Ethiopia

According to the 2025 Global Hunger Index, Ethiopia's multidimensional food insecurity and malnutrition are reflected in its four component indicators as follows: Undernourishment affects 19.7 percent of the general population (2022–2024), indicating that nearly one in five Ethiopians still lacks sufficient caloric intake amid recurrent shocks. Stunting stands at 35.5 percent among children under five

(2024), the highest contributor to the national GHI score and a sign of chronic undernutrition with lasting impacts on growth and development. Child wasting is recorded at 6.0 percent (2020–2024), signaling acute malnutrition that remains elevated in drought- and conflict-affected regions. The under-five mortality rate is 4.6 percent (2023), underscoring persistent vulnerabilities in child survival closely linked to inadequate nutrition and health services.

Together, these values produce Ethiopia's 2025 GHI score of 24.4, which is categorized as serious (Figure 1) and results in a rank of 100 out of 123 countries. The 2025 score reflects only modest improvement since Ethiopia's 2016 score of 26.1 and is well above the global average of 18.3 (moderate hunger). Ethiopia is in a more favorable position than Africa South of the Sahara as a whole, which has a 2025 score of 27.9 (serious). Hunger levels in the region are the highest worldwide, and progress has largely stalled since 2016 amid conflict, climate shocks, and economic pressures affecting the continent. Within East Africa, Ethiopia outperforms several neighboring countries (Figure 1.1). Its score is lower (better) than Kenya's (25.9), Somalia's (42.6), and South Sudan's (37.5) but lags behind Uganda (20.2), Tanzania (21.1), and Rwanda (21.7). Overall, Ethiopia sits in the midrange among East African countries, demonstrating fragile gains while underscoring the region's and continent's broader vulnerability against a backdrop of near-stagnant global progress that leaves the 2030 Zero Hunger target increasingly unachievable.

FIGURE 1.1 GHI SCORES FOR EAST AFRICA

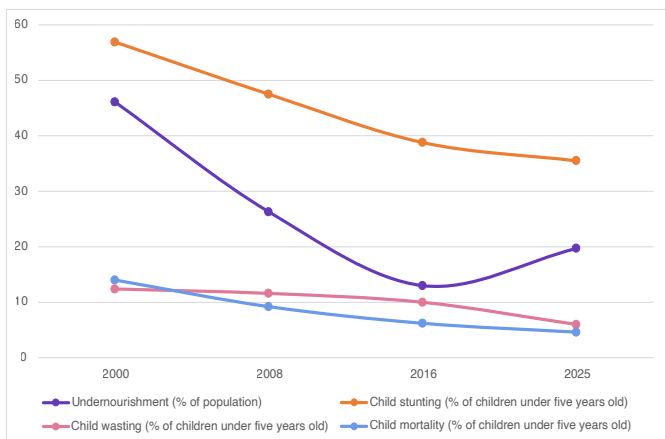


Source: WHH, Concern, and IFHV (2025)

## Ethiopia's Progress over Time

Over the past few decades, Ethiopia has significantly improved its food security and nutrition levels. In 2000, the country's GHI score was 53.0, categorized as extremely alarming. Ongoing efforts have reduced this score to 24.4, classified as serious, for 2025 (Figure 1). Between 2000 and 2016, the country achieved substantial improvements, but since then progress has stagnated, primarily because of rising undernourishment (Figure 1.2).

FIGURE 1.2 TRENDS IN GHI VALUES



Source: WHH, Concern, and IFHV (2025)

**Undernourishment** in Ethiopia stands at 19.7 percent (2022–2024), classified as medium in the 2025 GHI (Figure 1.2). This reflects long-term progress from 46.1 percent in 2000–2002 to a low of 13.0 percent by 2015–2017, but the trend reversed after 2016 owing to conflicts, climate shocks, economic instability, and aid disruptions. It rose to 20.6 percent around 2023 before a slight decline. This fragility shows how external pressures can quickly undermine gains in caloric availability.

**Child wasting**, an indicator of acute malnutrition, has improved from 12.4% in 1998–2002 to an estimated 6.0% (2020–2024), shifting from high to medium levels (Figure 1.2). This halving highlights the effects of emergency responses, public works, and resilience efforts in affected areas.

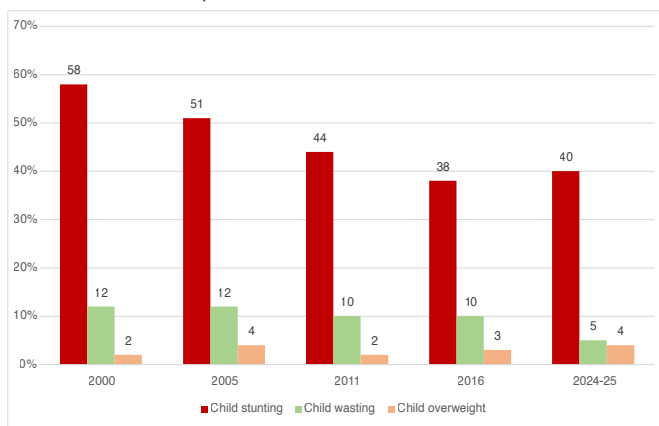
**Child stunting**, the main contributor to Ethiopia's *serious* GHI score and a marker of chronic malnutrition, remains very high, at 35.5% in 2024. It dropped 21.4 points from 56.9% in 1998–2002, with sharp declines until around 2020, but it has stagnated since then, despite multisectoral initiatives. This plateau underscores structural barriers, poor dietary diversity, shocks, and uneven coverage, limiting broader progress.

**Under-five mortality** has declined steadily from 14.0 percent (2000) to 4.6 percent (2023), moving to medium severity and reflecting better health coverage, nutrition interventions, and maternal and child care. Risks persist where food insecurity meets poor sanitation and disease.

## Comparing Results from the GHI and the EDHS

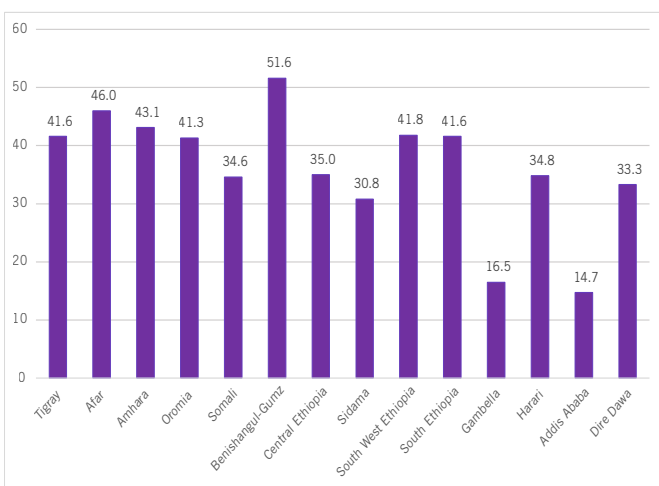
The 2025 GHI data align closely with the data from the 2024–25 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) on child mortality and child wasting, despite minor methodological differences. For child mortality, the GHI reports 4.6 percent (46 deaths per 1,000 live births) based on 2023 data, while the EDHS estimates 51 deaths per 1,000 for the prior five years; this similarity reflects progress from health care expansions, and variances likely reflect the difference between the EDHS's retrospective average and the GHI's snapshot in time. For child wasting, the GHI's modeled 6.0 percent for 2020–2024 and the EDHS's comparable rate of 5 percent highlight the effectiveness of emergency responses like the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) in curbing acute malnutrition amid shocks.

FIGURE 1.3 TRENDS IN NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE FIVE, ACCORDING TO THE EDHS



Source: ESS and ICF (2026)

FIGURE 1.4 PREVALENCE OF CHILD STUNTING BY REGION



Source: ESS and ICF (2026)

EDHS trends show child stunting declining from 58 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2024–25 (Figure 1.3), aligning with the GHI's 35.5 percent for 2024; it also, however, indicates post-2016 stagnation, as the EDHS rate for 2016 was 38 percent. The Food and Nutrition Strategy (FNS) baseline reports 41 percent child stunting, 11 percent child wasting, and 23 percent underweight (EPHI, 2025) (EDHS: 18 percent underweight, 4 percent overweight); FNS's higher

child wasting rate may reflect the timing of shocks and poor dietary diversity, signaling double burdens in urban areas.

Discrepancies stem from the scope of data collection for each source: the EDHS uses broad, cluster-sampled surveys with direct anthropometrics, vulnerable to seasonality; the FNS emphasizes nutrition metrics for vulnerable groups; the GHI models for global consistency, potentially smoothing peaks. EDHS regional data shows higher stunting in rural lowlands—for example, > 45 percent in Afar versus < 15 percent in Addis Ababa—supporting the existence of urban-rural gaps identified by the FNS (Figure 1.4).

## Contributors to Progress

### Economic Growth

Ethiopia's rapid economic growth between 2005/06 and 2015/16 served as a powerful engine for reducing food insecurity and malnutrition, directly supporting the steep declines in undernourishment and child mortality seen in the GHI indicators up to 2016. Over that decade, real GDP expanded at an average annual rate of 10.3 percent (World Bank 2018), one of the fastest sustained growth episodes in Africa, fueled by massive public investments in roads, hydropower, telecommunications, and industrial parks under the first and second Growth and Transformation Plans (Moller and Wacker 2017). This economic expansion lifted household incomes, expanded nonfarm employment opportunities, and strengthened market access, enabling the national poverty headcount to fall sharply from 55.5 percent in 1999 to 23.5 percent in 2021 (Planning and Development Commission 2021). The resulting increase in purchasing power allowed millions of households to afford more calories and diverse foods, pushing undernourishment from 26.3 percent (2007–2009) down to 13.0 percent (2015–2017) and halving child mortality over the same period (WHH, Concern, and IFHV 2025). While growth was pro-poor in aggregate, rural-urban and regional disparities remained, underscoring that economic gains alone were insufficient without complementary sectoral policies.

### Agricultural Development

Agriculture plays a crucial role in Ethiopia's economy, contributing 32 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), 64 percent of employment, and 79 percent of exports (National Bank of Ethiopia 2025). The sector benefited from sustained public investment in agricultural extension, input subsidies, small-scale irrigation, and rural roads, alongside prominent programs such as the Agricultural Growth Program, wheat initiatives, the nutrition-sensitive agriculture strategy, and the PSNP. These interventions raised staple-crop yields, diversified production toward nutrient-rich foods, and generated public-works income that enabled households to smooth consumption during lean seasons. The PSNP, in particular, demonstrably increased calorie intake, boosted household assets, and built environmental resilience through soil and water conservation—directly supporting the long-term reduction in child wasting from 12.4 percent (1998–2002) to 6.0 percent (2020–2024 estimate) and contributing to stunting declines until the mid-2010s (Hailu and Amare 2022). Nutrition-sensitive approaches within agriculture reinforced these gains

by linking farm production to dietary diversity and maternal and child feeding practices.

### Improved Health Services

Enhanced access to health services has been a critical complementary driver of Ethiopia's progress against food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly in terms of reducing child mortality and chronic malnutrition. The nationwide scaling of the Health Extension Program since 2003, combined with massive increases in health posts, trained community health workers, immunization coverage, and integrated management of childhood illnesses, dramatically improved preventive and curative care in rural areas. These services delivered nutrition counseling, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, and timely treatment of acute malnutrition, while also addressing underlying determinants such as sanitation, safe water, and maternal health. The result was a continuous decline in under-five mortality from 14.0 percent in 2000 to 4.6 percent in 2023, moving the indicator from “very high” to “medium” severity, alongside measurable reductions in stunting through the early phases of the Seqota Declaration (launched in 2015). By integrating health with agriculture and social protection, Ethiopia demonstrated how multisectoral coordination can amplify the food insecurity- and malnutrition-reducing effects of economic and agricultural growth achievements that remain foundational even as recent shocks have slowed further advances.

## Challenges

Ethiopia's persistent food insecurity and malnutrition are driven by a complex interplay of factors:

- > **Conflict and displacement:** Armed conflicts have disrupted agriculture, displaced millions, and destroyed infrastructure, triggering acute malnutrition and reversing GHI gains since 2016. The northern conflict (2020–2022) intensified food crises, undermining years of investment in extension services, roads, and nutrition programs (Ayele 2025; World Bank 2024a).
- > **Economic and inflation challenges:** Despite strong GDP growth, job creation and equitable distribution have lagged. Persistent inflation has eroded purchasing power, exposing households to high living costs and deepening food poverty (Planning and Development Commission 2021).
- > **Climate shocks:** Recurrent droughts—especially the El Niño–induced crisis of 2015–2016 and the prolonged 2020–2023 Horn of Africa drought—have devastated rainfed agriculture, depleted assets, and reversed nutritional progress (FEWS NET 2019–2023 ; Oxfam 2016). These events highlight the urgent need for climate-adaptive agriculture and shock-responsive safety nets.
- > **Nutritional deficits:** Diets remain dominated by starchy staples with limited diversity, leading to chronic undernutrition (Trübswasser, Genye, and Bossuyt 2020). In 2024, stunting still affected 35.5 percent of children under five. Low intake of fruits, vegetables, and animal-source foods, combined with poor feeding practices and high maternal workloads, has led to persistent hidden hunger and vulnerability to shocks.

- **Structural vulnerabilities:** Chronic poverty, rapid population growth, gender disparities, and marginalization of remote areas compound food insecurity. Weak postharvest systems, market volatility, and inadequate dietary diversity reinforce the cycle.

## Nutrition and Food Security Policies and Initiatives

Ethiopia has advanced a suite of high-level policies and initiatives to strengthen food security and nutrition, emphasizing multisectoral coordination, livestock and crop diversification, social protection, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture to tackle both chronic undernutrition and acute shocks. The flagship National Food and Nutrition Strategy (2021–2030), launched in August 2021, provides the overarching costed framework for ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030 through integrated nutrition-specific interventions (e.g., micronutrient supplementation, breastfeeding support, management of severe acute malnutrition) and nutrition-sensitive interventions across the sectors of health, agriculture, education, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (Ministry of Agriculture 2025). It builds directly on the 2018 National Food and Nutrition Policy and aligns with the broader Food Systems Transformation Pathway (developed through national dialogues in 2021), which identifies 24 game-changing solutions clustered around nutrient-dense production, value chains, dietary guidelines, market access, resilience, and policy coherence to promote diverse, nutrient-rich food systems (ATI 2024).

Central to this architecture is the Seqota Declaration (launched in July 2015), Ethiopia’s bold high-level commitment to end stunting in children under two by 2030. The declaration is being executed in three phases: innovation (2016–2020, implemented in selected woredas in Amhara and Tigray with evidence generation), expansion (2021–2025, now covering over 300 woredas), and national scale-up (2026–2030). It delivers coordinated nutrition-specific, nutrition-sensitive, and infrastructure interventions (including PSNP public works and WASH) through an interministerial steering committee and has achieved measurable annual stunting reductions of approximately 3 percent in pilot areas from 2016–2020).

The Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP Phase 5, 2021–2025) remains the government’s largest and longest-running social protection instrument, providing predictable cash or food transfers to approximately 8 million chronically food-insecure rural households annually, combined with public-works activities that build community assets (such as irrigation and soil and water conservation infrastructure) and intensive livelihood support to enhance resilience, prevent asset depletion, and improve dietary diversity and nutrition outcomes. Building directly on these foundations, Yelemat Tirufat (Bounty of the Basket), launched on 3 November 2022 as a nationwide four-year campaign, focuses on accelerating livestock, poultry, and honey productivity to achieve “nutritional opulence” and food self-sufficiency at household and national levels. The program aims to achieve dramatic increases in dairy, egg, chicken meat, fish, and honey production through improved breeds, artificial insemination, cooperatives, youth entrepreneurship, market linkages, and climate-smart household production systems, while creating rural jobs,

substituting for imports, and diversifying diets. Early implementation has already shown rapid gains in cross-bred livestock coverage and commodity outputs.

Together, these interconnected initiatives illustrate Ethiopia’s shift toward a more nutrition-sensitive, shock-responsive, and production-focused approach that directly supports GHI indicators, particularly undernourishment, child stunting, and child wasting, while addressing dietary quality gaps through diversified animal-source foods and homestead production. Their success in reversing recent stagnation will depend on sustained domestic financing, private-sector engagement, effective coordination across ministries (such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs), and adaptive scaling amid climate, conflict, and economic pressures, with ongoing monitoring through annual joint reviews to ensure measurable improvements by 2030.

## Efforts to reduce Food Insecurity and Malnutrition

The Ministry of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Office has made significant progress in strengthening Ethiopia’s nutrition and food security system through policy development, capacity building, and the promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Its work has been central in embedding nutrition within national agricultural frameworks. The Office developed and aligned the National Nutrition Sensitive Agri-Food Systems Strategy with national priorities and contributed to revisions of the Agriculture and Rural Development Policy, the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, the Food and Nutrition Policy, and the Food and Nutrition Strategy. These efforts positioned Ethiopia among the few African countries with a comprehensive national dietary guideline system and strengthened initiatives to improve dietary diversity using locally available foods. The Office has also produced key operational tools, including model village guidelines, training materials, and nutrient-dense crop packages, which support the mainstreaming of nutrition across agricultural programs.



**Mrs Alemtsehay Sergawi, Head, Food and Nutrition Office, Ministry of Agriculture**

Capacity building has been a major component of the Office’s work, reaching a significant number through an extensive, multilevel training approach. More than 346 trainers were capacitated at federal and regional levels, alongside a significant number of agricultural experts who received hands-on training. Additionally, a large number of community members were engaged in nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices. Improved extension systems have enabled millions of households to benefit from better awareness, improved production techniques, and more diversified food consumption. Institutional capacity has also been strengthened through the establishment or support of Regional Food and Nutrition Directorates, contributing to enhanced coordination, planning, and accountability for nutrition outcomes.

Increased production and consumption of nutrient-dense foods is another major achievement. Through widespread promotion campaigns, dissemination of food safety and postharvest technologies, and targeted distribution of nutrient rich crop varieties—such as quinoa, camelina, iron- and zinc-rich beans, quality protein maize, and orange-fleshed sweet potato—national production of nutrient-dense foods significantly grew within a year. These interventions significantly improved household access to diverse and nutritious foods, while the continued promotion of underutilized forest and wild foods further supported dietary diversification and resilience.

The Office also made substantial contributions to the implementation of the Seqota Declaration. During the expansion phase, nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions reached a significant number of households. Independent assessments found that improvements in complementary feeding and household food security driven partly by these interventions contributed to as much as 90 percent of averted stunting cases. More than 75 percent of households in targeted districts received at least one nutrition-sensitive agriculture intervention, demonstrating both high program coverage and strong effectiveness.

A central pillar of the Office's work is its food-based approach to improving nutrition. This approach emphasizes dietary diversity, food safety, postharvest management, value addition, and increased consumption of nutrient-dense, culturally appropriate foods. Key activities include conducting nationwide dietary diversity assessments, promoting diversified and nutrient-rich food production and consumption, delivering nutrition education, and reducing food loss and waste. The Office also establishes nutrition demonstration centers and model nutrition-sensitive agriculture villages to showcase best practices and innovative technologies.

In addition to its programmatic work, the Office leads policy dialogue, research, and innovation aimed at embedding nutrition within Ethiopia's agri-food system. It actively promotes the national food-based dietary guidelines, supports value addition and food safety initiatives, and scales up nutrient-dense local foods. Through its national and regional coordination roles, the Office fosters strong partnerships with government institutions, development partners, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to ensure that nutrition-sensitive interventions are effectively implemented across all levels of the food system.

Consistent with these efforts, the Ministry of Agriculture has mainstreamed nutrition into several national initiatives and sectoral strategies. These include Yelemat Tirufat (Bounty of the Basket), the Green Legacy Initiative, the Avocado Initiative, and subsectoral strategies and roadmaps in crop production, horticulture, and natural resources (including agroecology). Nutrition considerations have also been integrated into major programs and projects such as the Food Systems Resilience Program, Participatory Agriculture and Climate Transformation and the Sustainable Land Management Program. Collectively, these achievements reflect a comprehensive and sustained effort to improve nutrition outcomes and strengthen Ethiopia's food system.



**Sisay Sinamo Boltena, Senior Programme Manager, Seqota Declaration, and SUN Focal Person at Ethiopia's Ministry of Health:**

Focal Person at Ethiopia's Ministry of Health, one of Ethiopia's most successful initiatives in the fight against malnutrition is the Seqota Declaration—a high-level commitment by the government of Ethiopia to ending stunting among children under two years old by 2030. The Declaration follows a learning-by-doing approach, and we have seen significant progress since its launch in 2015. The Seqota Declaration is divided into three phases: the Innovation Phase (2016–2020), the Expansion Phase (2021–2025), and the Scale-up Phase (2026–2030). It prioritizes high-impact, low-cost nutrition interventions that are implemented through the health, agriculture, water, education, women, and social protection sectors and supported by high-level governance and financial investment. Here is what we have learned so far about the key factors behind its success: First, the government developed a clear 15-year roadmap, guided by a strong and coherent vision of Ethiopian children free from malnutrition. Second, the multistakeholder initiative is led and owned at the highest level of government. At the federal level it is chaired by His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister, Ato Temesgen Tiruneh, and at the regional level by Excellencies, the Regional Presidents and City Mayors. Third, the government has allocated domestic resources from its treasury, and regional governments match this funding. Technical assistance and investment to operationalize the innovations have been mobilized from development partners. This is crucial. A strong plan alone, without investment, is not enough—and it will not succeed. Fourth, we established a robust accountability framework to track progress and measure results. We use performance scorecards to monitor the work of different sectors and regions. These scorecards are regularly reviewed at multiple levels and help us make timely course corrections. Our impact study shows that our investment has prevented about 110,000 children from being stunted, with an annual average rate of stunting reduction of around 3 percent. We have also learned that programming must prioritize community engagement, community ownership, and women's empowerment. The Community Lab and the First 1,000 Days Plus Public Movement innovations are the main tools we use to mobilize the stakeholders at all levels. Gender mainstreaming was one of the success factors for the Seqota Declaration Innovation Phase. Without addressing gender inequality, lasting improvements in food and nutrition security are not possible. We are sharing these insights with other countries interested in replicating the Seqota Declaration. Our core message is this: A country must have a clear vision and multiyear roadmap for ending stunting. The initiative must be owned by the highest level of political leadership. Domestic investment is essential. And every program must be adapted to the specific national context.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1 Strengthen Agricultural Policies and Systems

- > **To ensure long-term food security and climate resilience, agricultural systems must be strengthened.** Future actions should focus on increasing investment in sustainable agricultural practices that help farmers adapt to climate variability and reduce vulnerability to shocks. Strengthen the systems from the federal to kebele level by developing a more nutrition-sensitive extension system and implementing comprehensive training programs for extension personnel and farmers. These measures will contribute to a more resilient and nutrition-sensitive agricultural system while enhancing the implementation capacity of the agricultural system.

## 2 Enhance Nutrition Programs

- > **Improving nutrition outcomes requires community-driven, targeted interventions.** Expanding community engagement programs, particularly those focused on women and children, will be essential for promoting healthy dietary practices. Moving forward, interventions must address the root causes of child stunting and wasting, ensuring that both preventive and therapeutic measures reach the most vulnerable populations. A stronger focus on changes in behavior like the food-based dietary guideline and local-level ownership will be critical.

## 3 Increase Investment in Health Services

- > **A healthier population depends on stronger, more accessible health systems.** Future priorities should include expanding access to quality healthcare and strengthening nutrition education to reduce child mortality and improve overall well-being. Partnerships with CSOs will further improve service delivery at the community level, ensuring interventions are context-specific, sustainable, and responsive to emerging health needs.

## 4 Strengthen Policy and Governance Frameworks

- > **Effective governance is foundational for reducing food insecurity and malnutrition.** There is a need to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track the performance of food insecurity reduction and nutrition programs. This will enable timely adjustments and improved accountability. Policymakers should also champion integrated, multisectoral approaches that align health, agriculture, education, and social protection sectors to address malnutrition holistically.

## 5 Promote Stability and Peace

- > **Food and nutrition security cannot be achieved without peace and social stability.** Future efforts should prioritize dialogue, reconciliation, and conflict mitigation to prevent disruptions in agricultural production and reduce displacement. Building social protection systems that enhance community resilience will help buffer vulnerable populations from crises and promote long-term stability.

## 6 Scaling the available Best Fit Practices

- > **The best practices and good lessons learned from government initiatives and other organizations that reduce malnutrition and improve food security should be scaled up to other areas to maximize their impact and benefit a larger segment of society.** Implementing these recommendations will strengthen Ethiopia's capacity to address food insecurity, malnutrition, and health challenges in a sustainable and integrated manner. A coordinated, multisectoral approach rooted in resilience, community engagement, and strong governance remains essential for securing a healthier and more food secure future for all Ethiopians.

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