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REPORT OF H.M. LETSIE III, KING OF LESOTHO
AND CHAMPION ON NUTRITION

REPORT OF HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III OF LESOTHO AND AFRICAN UNION CHAMPION FOR NUTRITION

Excellences

Distinguished Guests

1. As the current African Union Nutrition Champion a role I have held since 2014, I have the honor to present the summary of my activities and progress made in my role as nutrition champion which is in fulfilment of the Malabo Declaration on Nutrition Security for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in Africa (Assembly/AU/Decl.4 (XXIII), endorsed in June (2014), in Equatorial Guinea. African Union member states in Malabo committed to accelerating the efforts to end hunger and bring down stunting to 10 per cent and underweight to 5 per cent by 2025.

2. This summary report will focus mainly on my activities that have taken place since the endorsement of the African Union Nutrition work plan for the period 2017 to 2019 by the AU department of Social affairs, endorsed by the Assembly/AU/Dec.589(XXVI)for the period of my mandate 2017 to 2019.

Continental Activities,

- a) At the Continental level the Africa Leaders for Nutrition Initiative (ALN) was launched, by my Right Honorable Prime Minister, of the Kingdom of Lesotho Motsoahae Thomas, during a side event at the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly in January 2018 in Addis Ababa. The initiative which was subsequently endorsed by the 30th Ordinary Assembly (Assembly/AU/Decl.681.(XXX) is an imitative between the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank. . The ALN Initiative is a platform for high-level political engagement to advance nutrition in Africa. The initiative will place special focus on the first 1,000 days of a child's life, and aims to influence and generate innovative investments towards nutrition and food security, and build a foundation for productive human capital in Africa.
- b) Following, an exhaustive process of consultations, a Continental Nutrition Score Card is under development in close partnership with the African Leaders for Nutrition. The score card is intended to improve accountability for nutrition and will also serve as an advocacy tool for nutrition across the continent. It is expected that the score card will improve the monitoring of the progress of African Union Member States in the area of nutrition and also provide a high-level snapshot of overall continental progress towards reaching global and continental nutrition targets that have been set for nutrition.
- c) In September 2018, I received a mission from the African Union Commission and African Development Bank who came to the Kingdom of Lesotho to brief me on the proposed areas of collaboration between the African Leaders for Nutrition, the African Union Commission and

myself as Africa Union nutrition champion. We discussed key collaborative areas and a proposed work plan for 2019 that was presented to me for my considered. Key activities for 2019 include; my participation in the African Development Annual Meetings, Tokyo International Conference of African Development (TICAD June and August 2019 respectively).

- d) I conducted three visits to member states, Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia, the Republic of Malawi and Republic of the Gambia, in my capacity as African Union Champion for Nutrition and FAO Ambassador for nutrition. In all three countries I met with senior Government Officials, relevant stakeholders in nutrition, food security and agriculture, including Members of Parliament, NGOs, Development Partners, and the United Nations. I encouraged all actors to embrace multi-sectorial approaches in nutrition with greater coordination. My visit to Malawi focused on resilience building, in Ethiopia it was to promote the critical importance of eradicating malnutrition through nutrition-sensitive agriculture food systems and in the Gambia on national nutrition programmes as a contribution towards the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger within the least developed countries.
- e) I also had discussions with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Commissioners during which I discussed the fact that in some regions of Africa there are highest levels of food insecurity in the world. An estimated 220 million people lack adequate nutrition and the nature of the problem is shifting rapidly, with overweight status and obesity emerging as new forms of malnutrition in the region. We discussed global and continental efforts towards hunger and malnutrition elimination in Africa.
- f) I am therefore pleased to report that 14 member states have completed the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study (COHA) and in November 2018 a workshop was held as a collaborative effort between the African Union, World Food Program, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to discuss and analyse the outcome recommendations of the completed COHA studies, and to develop a way forward to support countries to meet the targets that were set in the Malabo Declaration of reducing child stunting to 10% and underweight prevalence to 5% by 2025. The recommendations of this workshop shall be made available to member states following due process

Global Activities

- a) At the Global Level I had a number of engagements that provided an opportunity for advocacy for nutrition In October 2018, I attended the World Food Day high-level event in Rome, where I joined Heads of States and Rome based agencies to discuss efforts to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. The events brought together high-level representatives from the private sector and civil society and discussions focused on inter

–related topics such as climate change, conflict, migration, poverty and the double burden of hunger and obesity

- b) During the same month I also attended the World Bank Annual Meetings during which the World Bank launched its new Human Capital Project to emphasize the need for increased and more effective financing for human capital development through advocacy, analysis, and service delivery. I was appointed in an advocacy role to champion the World Bank's Human Capital Development Project, a role that shall provide me the opportunity to reinforce the obvious linkage between nutrition security and Human Capital Development
- c) In November 2018, I addressed the opening ceremony of the 2018 Kellogg Fellows Leadership Alliance Global Summit on Food Security and Equitable Communities. The event focused on *How our communities can better tackle the root causes of hunger and malnutrition in a world of plenty? And how skill sets, diverse experiences and passion for social justice towards developing effective global strategies can be applied locally?*

Regional Activities

3. In October 2018, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) held a high-level forum on Early Childhood Nutrition in Southern Africa, with a focus on nutrition and early childhood education. The event aimed at building an investment case to accelerate action by governments and partners to improve early childhood nutrition in Southern Africa. Also during this forum, governments and development partners were encouraged to invest in nutrition programmes to ensure that issues of food and nutrition are promoted for healthier living of all people.

Kingdom of Lesotho

4. I would like to highlight a few activities that have also taken place in the Kingdom of Lesotho, In March 2018 the Kingdom of Lesotho in partnership with the United Nations launched the Zero Hunger Strategic Review Report in Maseru. This review aims to define the food and nutrition situation in Lesotho, consolidate progress that has thus far been made by national food and nutrition policies and programmes, identify gaps in the response, and propose priority actions required to accelerate the target of no hunger in Lesotho by 2030.

Excellences

Distinguished Guests

5. As we begin the year on “*Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa*”, permit me to highlight that Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced person are vulnerable populations that should not be left behind. Available evidence indicates that persons who are Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced can spend up to 20 years or more in these situations. Situations that consist of the most critical and formative years of the human life cycle.

6. Allow me to recognize the leadership of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Commission, in his support to address nutrition in areas of conflict and with humanitarian needs. This is evidenced through his generous contribution of USD One Hundred thousand to South Sudan in 2017 to fight the plight of under-nutrition in children.

7. I therefore urge for Political and Community Level Action, appropriate legislation, Increased Investment in areas of nutrition that brings in the Private Sector, stronger partnerships and increased accountability that is inclusive leaving no one behind particularly the most vulnerable and for those who are refugees, returnees and internally displaced.

8. I thank you for your attention

DRAFT
DECISION ON THE CONTINENTAL SCORECARD FOR NUTRITION
Doc. Assembly/AU/15(XXXII)

WE, African Heads of State, gathered at the thirty-second session of the African Union held in Addis-Ababa from 8 to 9 February 2019, adhere to the launch of the nutrition dashboard on the continent to multiply our efforts to fight against malnutrition in all its forms in collaboration with all development partners.

1. **RECALL** Statement Assembly/AU/Decl.4 (XXIII) on nutrition security for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in Africa; Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XXIII) Declaration of Malabo on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Living Conditions; and the endorsement of the African Leaders Initiative for Nutrition under the resolution number (Assembly/AU/Dec.681);
2. **REAFFIRM** our commitments on the three main global and continental consensus groups on nutrition: the targets of the World Health Assembly, the targets of the Malabo Declaration and the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (ODD2);
3. **CONGRATULATE** Member States that have made progress in ending stunting among children under five and **ENCOURAGE** others to strengthen their efforts;
4. **CONSCIOUS** that food security without improved nutrition of populations will not bring the expected socio-economic effects; since the number of people affected by hunger and malnutrition is increasing in the African continent alone in recent years;
5. **APPROVE** the launch of the Annual Assessment Scoreboard of the African Leaders' Accountability for Nutrition by the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission (as stipulated in the concept paper note) in favor of investments sustainable for nutrition. This continental scorecard will highlight the progress of each country and provide a high-level overview of the continent's progress towards reaching agreed targets at continental and global levels;
6. **RECOGNIZE** that multi-sectoral nutrition indicators, data collection and analysis capacity, and sectoral accountability need to be improved in countries to contribute to more effective nutrition surveillance;
7. **TAKE NOTE** that the dashboard will use data from the Global Nutrition Report, the World Bank and UNICEF estimates with country validation to measure progress in interventions yet on specific and sensitive needs for nutrition at the continental level;

8. **REQUEST** the African Union Commission to include each year, on the side-lines of the AU Summit, the Continental Nutrition Scoreboard updated by the African Leaders Initiative for Nutrition Secretariat;
9. **RECOMMEND** to African Heads of State to redouble efforts to invest more, sooner and better to improve nutrition policies and interventions through a multi-sectoral national approach by 2025, and in particular by focusing on First 1000 days of life of children, the only opportunity to avoid irreversible physical and mental damage beyond 2 years;
10. **RECOMMEND** that the champions continue the dialogue with African governments and leaders on new and sustainable financial commitments to nutrition through evidence-based policies and programs, to strengthen human capital and generate social development spin-offs. -economic of the continent;
11. **RECOMMEND** to the African Heads of State to instruct the decision-making bodies of their governments to effectively take into account the recommendations of the dashboard meeting at the 32 and Session of the African Union at Addis Ababa, 2018;
12. **AUTHORIZE** the African Leaders Initiative for Nutrition Secretariat to finalize the scorecard taking into account the various recommendations arising from the meeting on the scoreboard at the 32nd session of the African Union in Addis Ababa, 2018;
13. **AUTHORIZE** the African Leaders Initiative for Nutrition Secretariat to strengthen the capacity of governments in the implementation of national scorecards taking into account the specificities of each country;
14. **AUTHORIZE** the African Leaders Initiative for Nutrition Secretariat to deploy the Continental Scorecard to consult with governments and stakeholders for better ownership and awareness.

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