

## **WaterAid Statement at 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly**

### **Agenda item 12.1 – Maternal, infant and young child nutrition**

DG, honourable delegates and colleagues, WaterAid welcomes the report of the secretariat and commends efforts to accelerate progress on tackling maternal, infant and child malnutrition. We welcome the leadership of WHO and member states on this issue.

WaterAid calls for a greater recognition that cross-sectoral action in 'nutrition-sensitive' sectors will be central to achieving an end to malnutrition. Health and nutrition are fundamentally interconnected with water, sanitation and hygiene. In 2008, the WHO estimated that 50% of undernutrition is associated with infections directly resulting from poor water, sanitation and hygiene.

It is clear that the Global Goal to end malnutrition by 2030 cannot be achieved without equally urgent action to achieve the Global Goal and targets of universal access to clean water, adequate sanitation and hygiene.

Learning the lessons from the MDGs, we must break down the silos between sectors and address the underlying determinants of health, finding new ways of implementing integrated approaches.

We therefore make 3 recommendations:

- 1) Water, sanitation and hygiene should be embedded in national nutrition strategies and plans with relevant targets and indicators to measure progress and outcomes.
- 2) Joint multi-sector action by governments, nutrition experts, healthcare providers, WASH practitioners, academics, donors and civil society is critical. This also requires strengthened accountability for nutrition-sensitive commitments, including WASH, made by governments and development partners.
- 3) Prioritise improving the evidence base of the links between water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and health, as well as documenting and sharing good practice in the implementation of integrated programming.

We urge the WHO and member states to ensure the Decade of Action on Nutrition sees ambitious and sustainable progress in a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition.

Thank you for your attention.