

Accelerating Anaemia Reduction: the WHO Comprehensive Framework for Action and the Anaemia Action Alliance

September 12, 2023

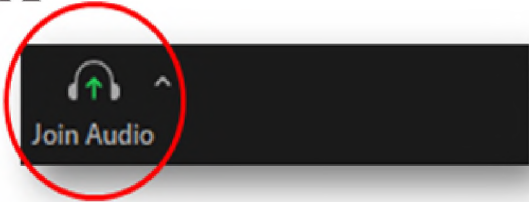
9:00 – 10:30 AM EDT (GMT -4)



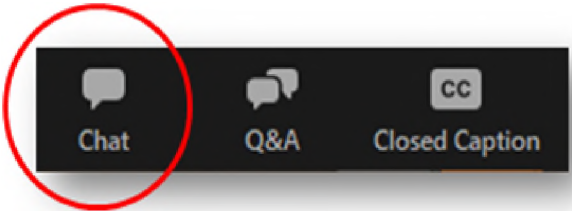
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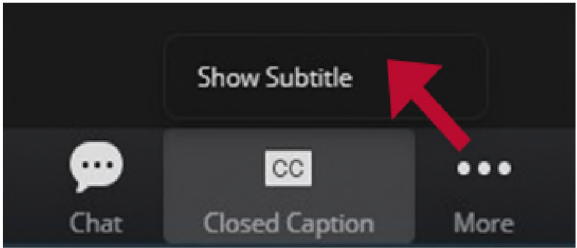
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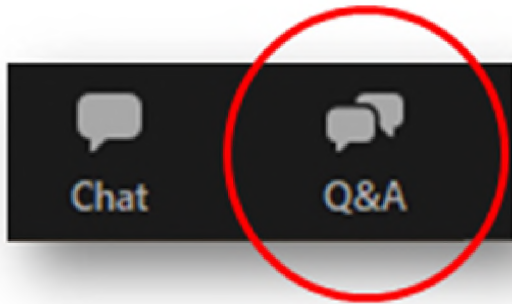


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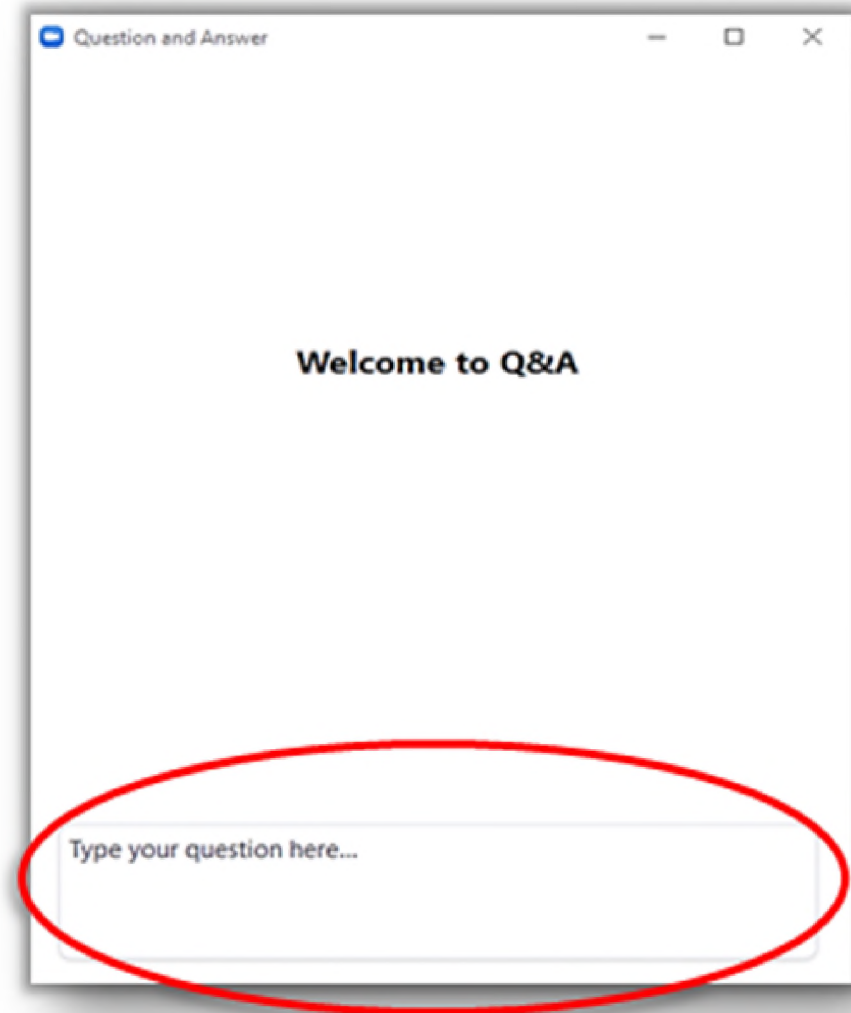


Q&A Box

Please submit your questions for the panelists in the Q&A box.



Panelists may reply to your question via text in the Q&A box or will answer your question during the live Q&A discussion portion of the webinar.



Welcome and Opening Remarks

Maria Elena Jefferds

Team Lead, International Micronutrient Malnutrition Prevention and Control Program (IMMPaCt)

Agenda

- Overview of global commitments to reduce anaemia
- Anaemia Action Alliance
- WHO Comprehensive framework for action
- Panelists presentations
- Q&A session
- Closing

Overview of global commitments to reduce anaemia

Francesco Branca

Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety
World Health Organization

Resolution 65.6 endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2012

- Set Global Nutrition Targets for 2025
- Target 2: **50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age**
- Urged Member States to put into practice the comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition



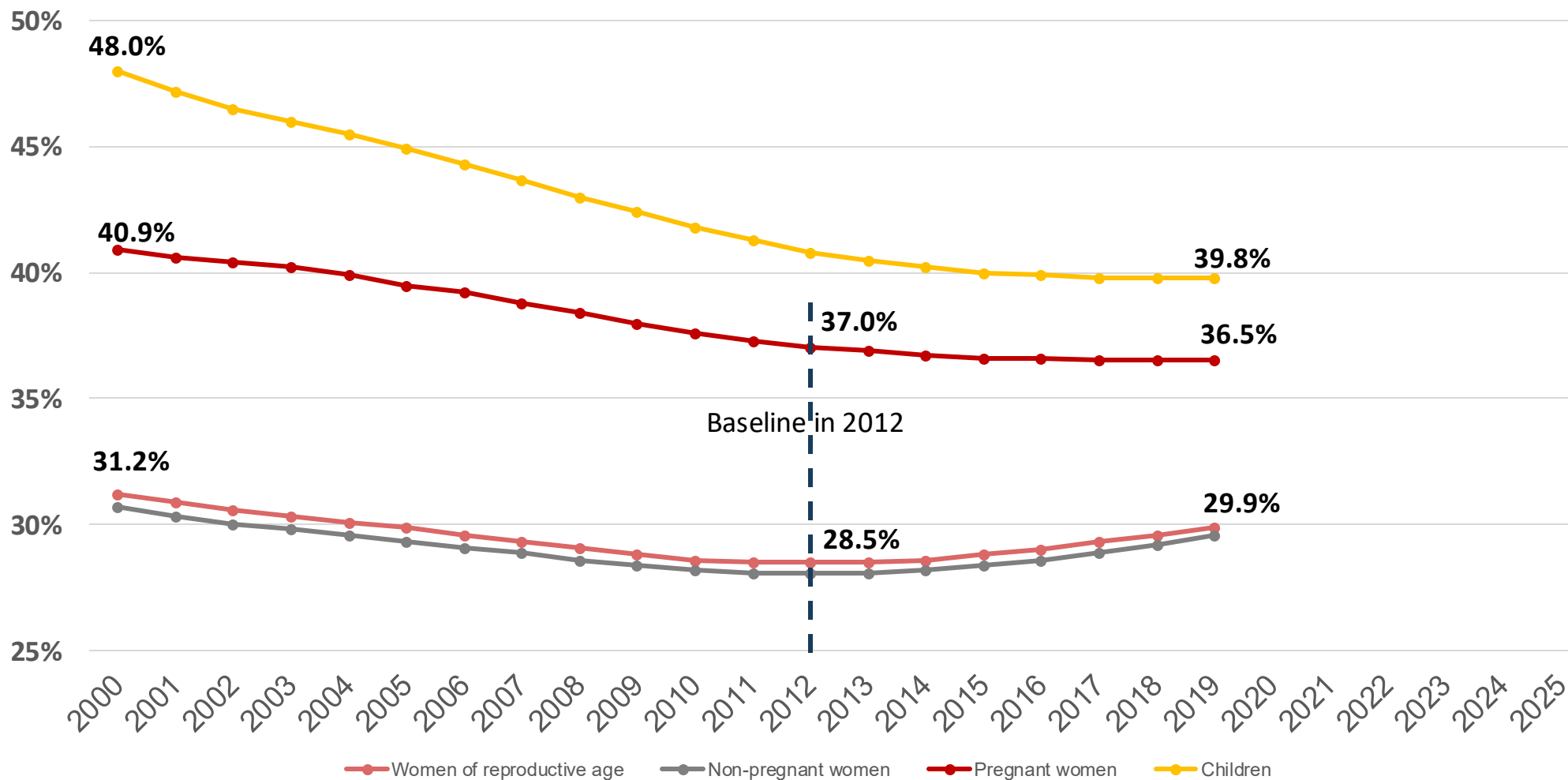
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by Member States

- Set out a plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- Target 2.2: Ending all forms of malnutrition
- Indicator 2.2.3 (adopted in 2019): **Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years, by pregnancy status**



Global trends in the prevalence of anaemia

2000-2019



Anaemia defined as haemoglobin concentrations below:
 <110 g/L for children and pregnant women
 <120 g/L for non-pregnant women

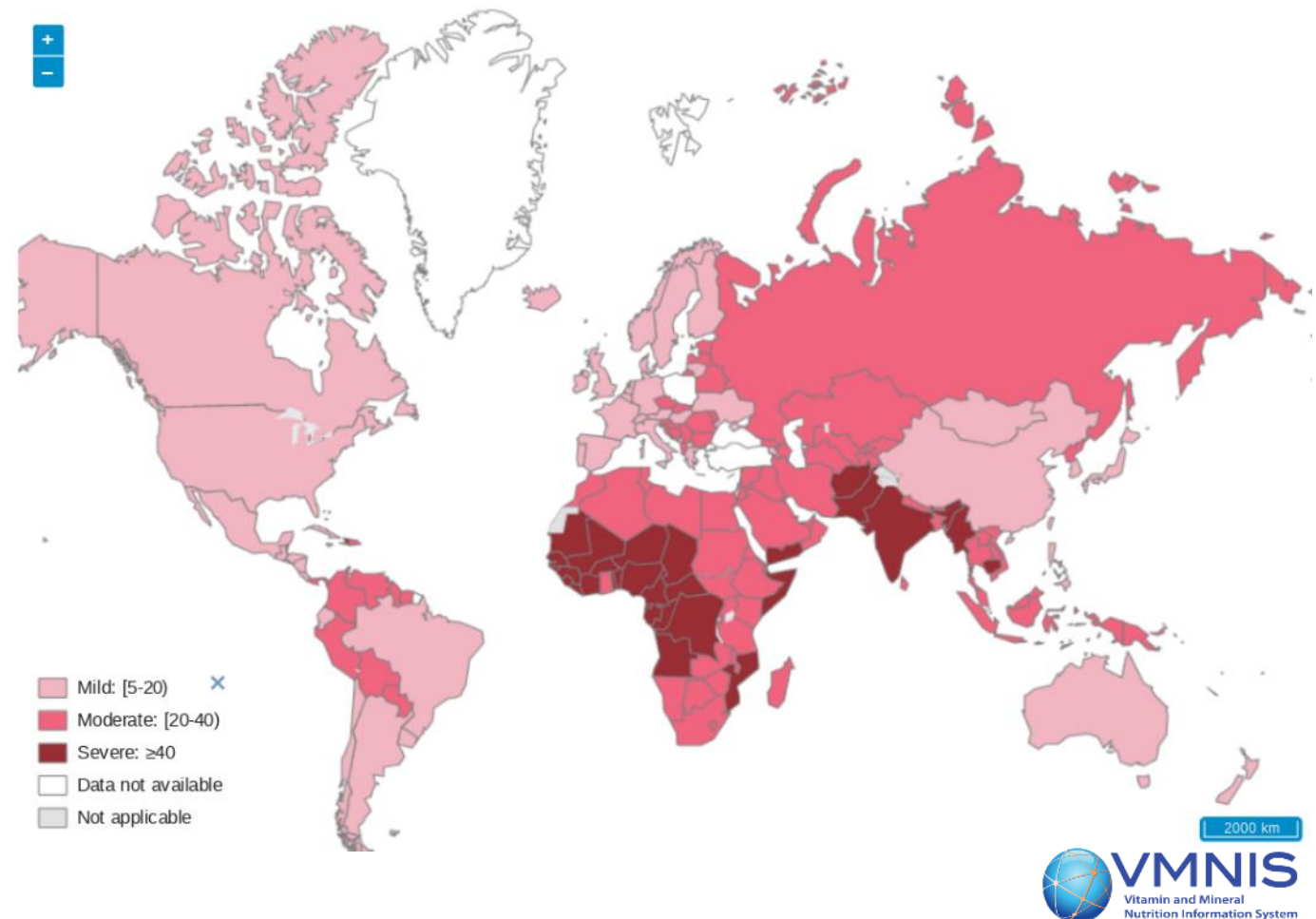


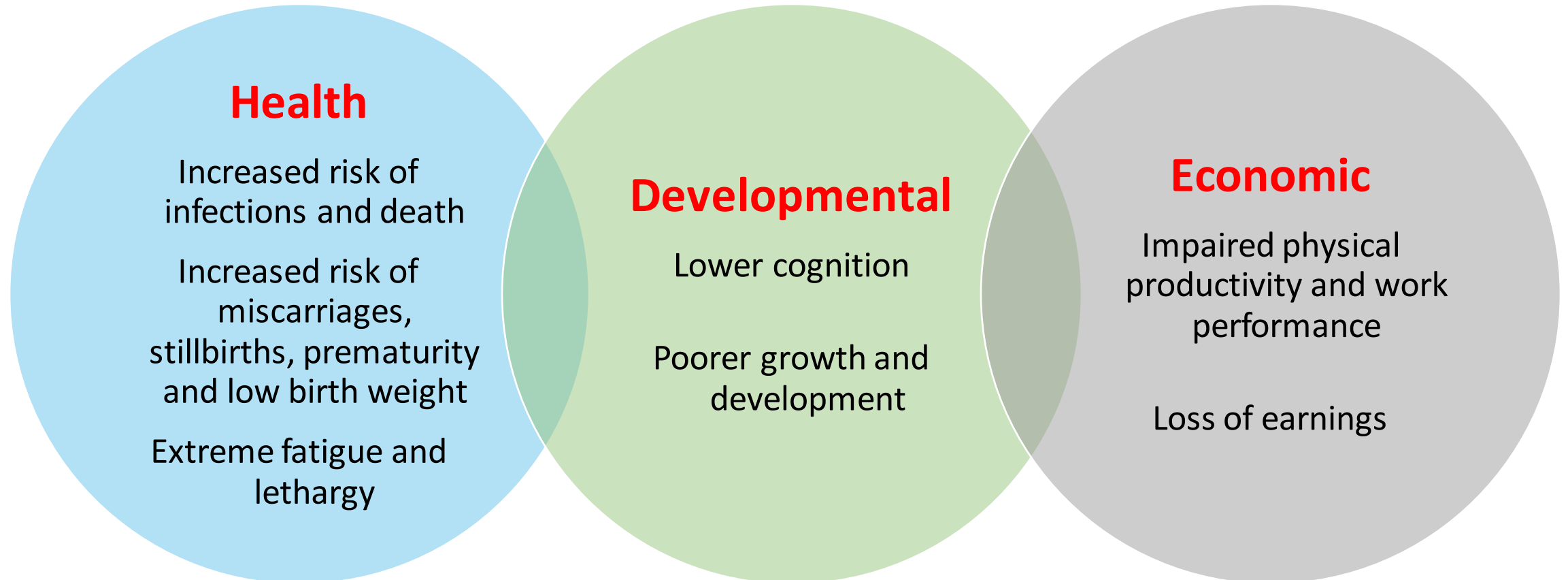
The anaemia problem

2019 Anaemia estimates

- children 6-59 months of age
40% (269 million)
- pregnant women
37% (32 million)
- women of reproductive age
30% (571 million)

Prevalence of anaemia in women 15-49 years of age, 2019





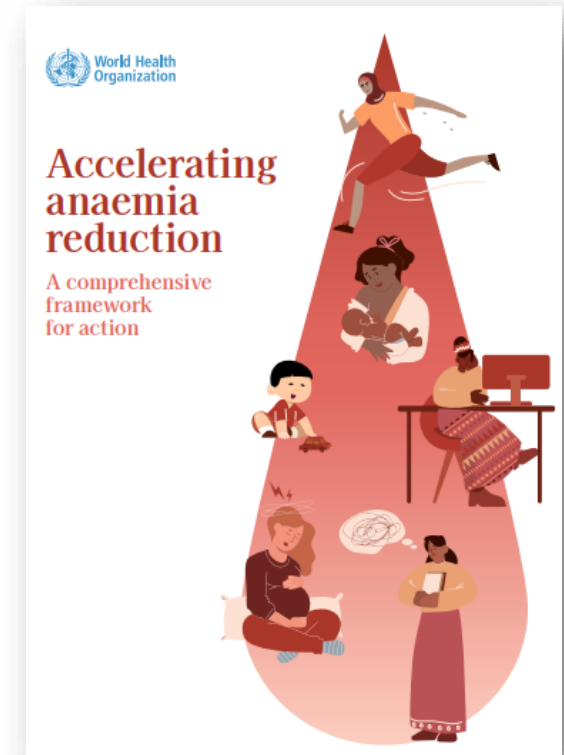
N4G Commitments



TOKYO
**NUTRITION
FOR GROWTH**
SUMMIT 2021


Food, Health, & Prosperity for All

December 7-8, 2021
#InvestInNutrition



World Health Organization

Accelerating anaemia reduction
A comprehensive framework for action



**ANAEMIA
ACTION
ALLIANCE**

Anaemia Action Alliance

Victor Aguayo

Director, Nutrition and Child Development, Programme Group, UNICEF

- We must all **work together** to ensure that women, adolescent girls and children affected by anaemia receive the care and support they need and deserve.
- The **Anaemia Action Alliance** is being established to foster accelerated and coordinated efforts to reduce anaemia, supporting implementation of WHO's Comprehensive framework for action.
- **Inclusive platform** bringing together relevant stakeholders across disciplines, sectors, and geographies who are committed to improving the health of populations to achieve a collective vision.
- **Collective vision:** A world where all women, adolescent girls, and children are empowered and enabled to benefit from appropriate and timely actions for the prevention, diagnosis and management of anaemia.



Photo credit: WHO / A Bhatiasevi

- **Goal:** Significant reduction of anaemia in women, adolescent girls and children.
- **Intermediate outcome:** More LMIC implement context-specific, multi-sectoral anaemia reduction plans and increase effective coverage of relevant multisectoral interventions.
- **Immediate outcomes:**
 - Stronger collective leadership;
 - Improved enabling environment; and
 - Increased investments and action to accelerate anaemia reduction



Photo credit: WHO / Christine McNab

- 1. Provide a roadmap and tools** to support countries in developing, financing, and implementing a context-specific, evidence-based multisectoral anaemia reduction plan
- 2. Mobilize global and domestic investments** and develop mechanisms that enable the estimation, tracking, and monitoring of financial resources towards anaemia prevention and reduction
- 3. Consolidate existing research and foster generation of new research** that addresses evidence gaps that constrain progress towards better guidance, policy, and programme design and delivery
- 4. Drive a global paradigm shift** that elevates anaemia as a key indicator of development that reflects its multisectoral causation and solutions

- Participants
 - Representatives of government organizations including technical institutions, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, and academic institutions
- Stakeholder forum and Core group
- Working groups based on 4 priority workstreams
 - Integrated research agenda
 - Investment strategy
 - National integrated anaemia actions
 - Programmatic implementation

WHO Comprehensive framework for action on accelerating anaemia reduction

Lisa Rogers

Technical Officer, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety
World Health Organization

Accelerating anaemia reduction: the WHO comprehensive framework for action

WHO Interdepartmental working group on anaemia

Nutrition and Food Safety

Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research

Global Neglected Tropical Diseases Control Programme

Global Malaria Programme



WHO thanks the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for financial support in developing the framework

Background papers

Published March-September 2023

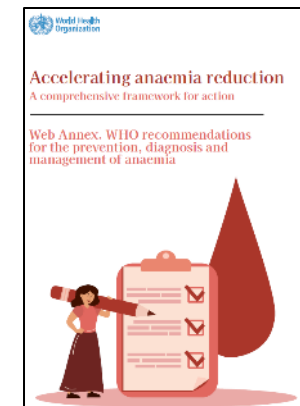
- Comprehensive framework for integrated action on the prevention, diagnosis and management of anemia: [an introduction](#) (Wilson et al)
- Accelerating action to reduction anemia: [review of causes and risk factors](#), and related data needs (Hess et al)
- [Diagnosing anemia](#): challenges selecting methods, addressing underlying causes, and implementing actions at the public health level (Garcia-Casal et al)
- Review of [intervention products](#) for use in the prevention and control of anemia (Lopez de Romaña et al)
- Integrating and coordinating [programs](#) for the management of anemia across the life course (Mildon et al)



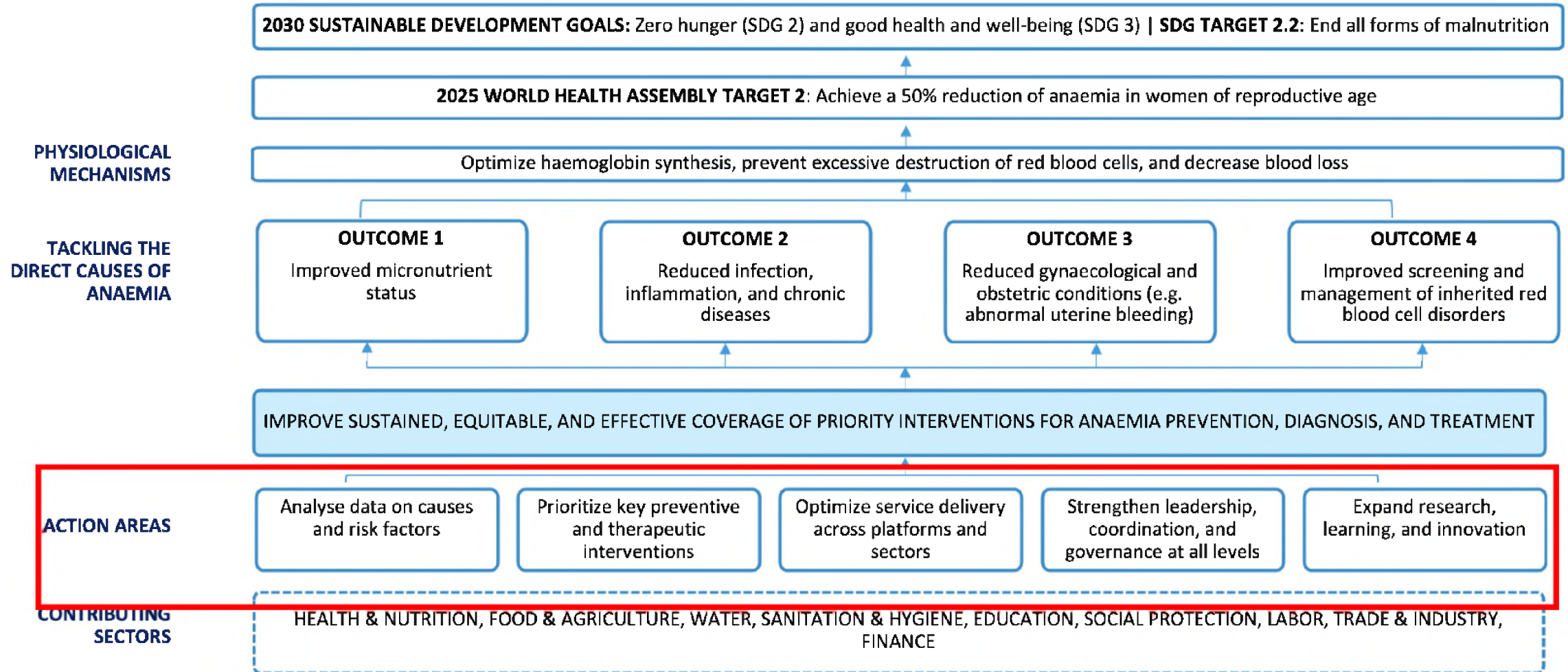
- **Objective:** Translate current evidence for effective action leading to anaemia reduction and improved health
- **Purpose:**
 - Address persistent issue of anaemia through country-specific interventions and available delivery platforms; and
 - Create shared understanding and build commitment among leaders to strengthen the multisectoral response to reducing anaemia.
- **Target audience:** Countries—specifically, political and health leaders responsible for their populations' health

Added value:

- Based on core principles of primary health care
- Covers all causes of anaemia
- Consolidates evidence
- Addresses coverage and equity
- Co-developed and co-designed by stakeholders across disciplines and geographies



WHO Comprehensive framework



Action areas for accelerating anaemia reduction

1. Analyse data on causes and risk factors for anaemia

- Ensure diagnostics tools available for collection of data, and appropriate analysis and interpretation to understand context-specific causes and risk factors of anaemia

2. Prioritize key preventive and therapeutic interventions

- Use of data to select effective interventions for reducing anaemia in that context

3. Optimize service delivery across platforms and sectors

- Collaboration among implementing sectors to drive effective coverage of the relevant package of interventions
- Build on existing platforms to reduce fragmentation across sectors as address causes, risk factors and improve quality and coverage of interventions

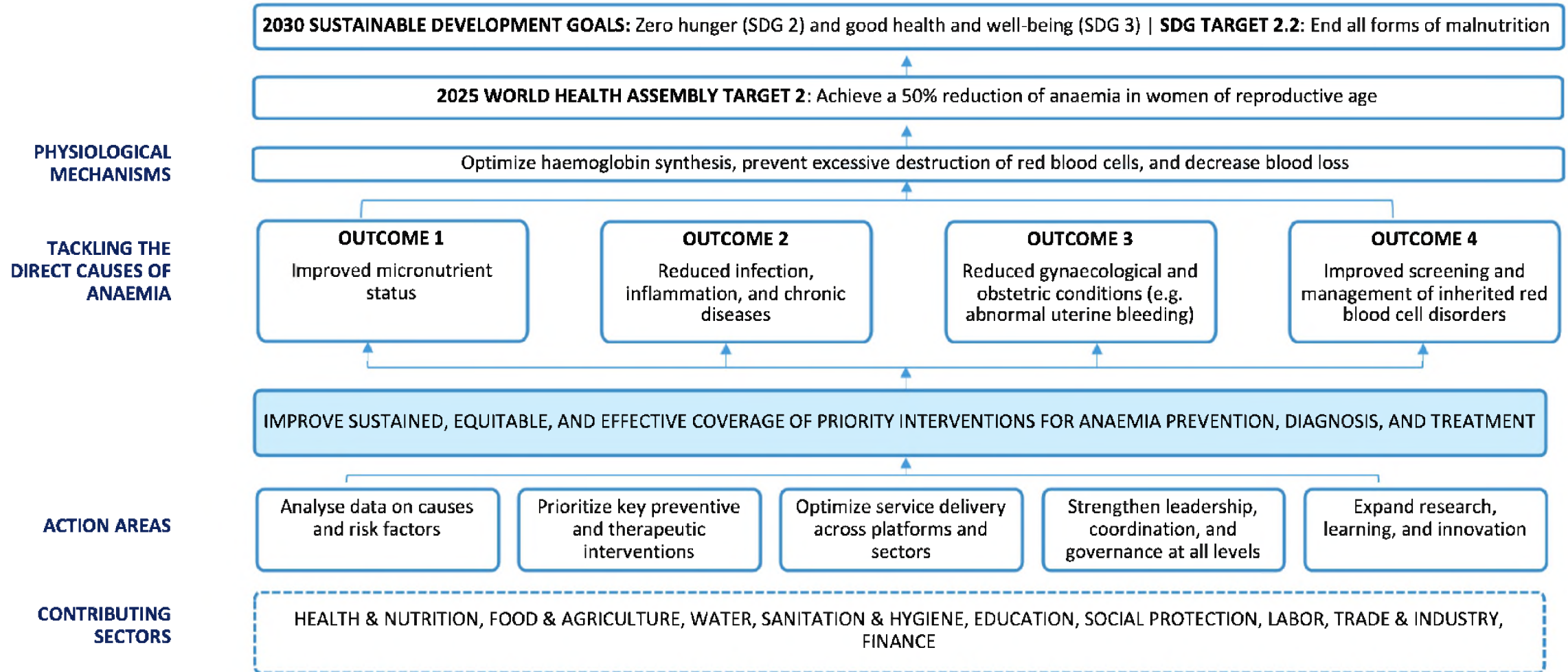
4. Strengthen leadership, coordination, and governance at all levels

- Incorporate shared tasks and indicators into workplans across sectors, to hold leaders accountable

5. Expand research, learning and innovation

- Implementation research needed for addressing how best to improve the design and delivery of interventions to enhance their reach, effectiveness in different contexts, and return on investment

WHO Comprehensive framework



Actions to reduce anaemia by sector

Labor, Trade & Industry

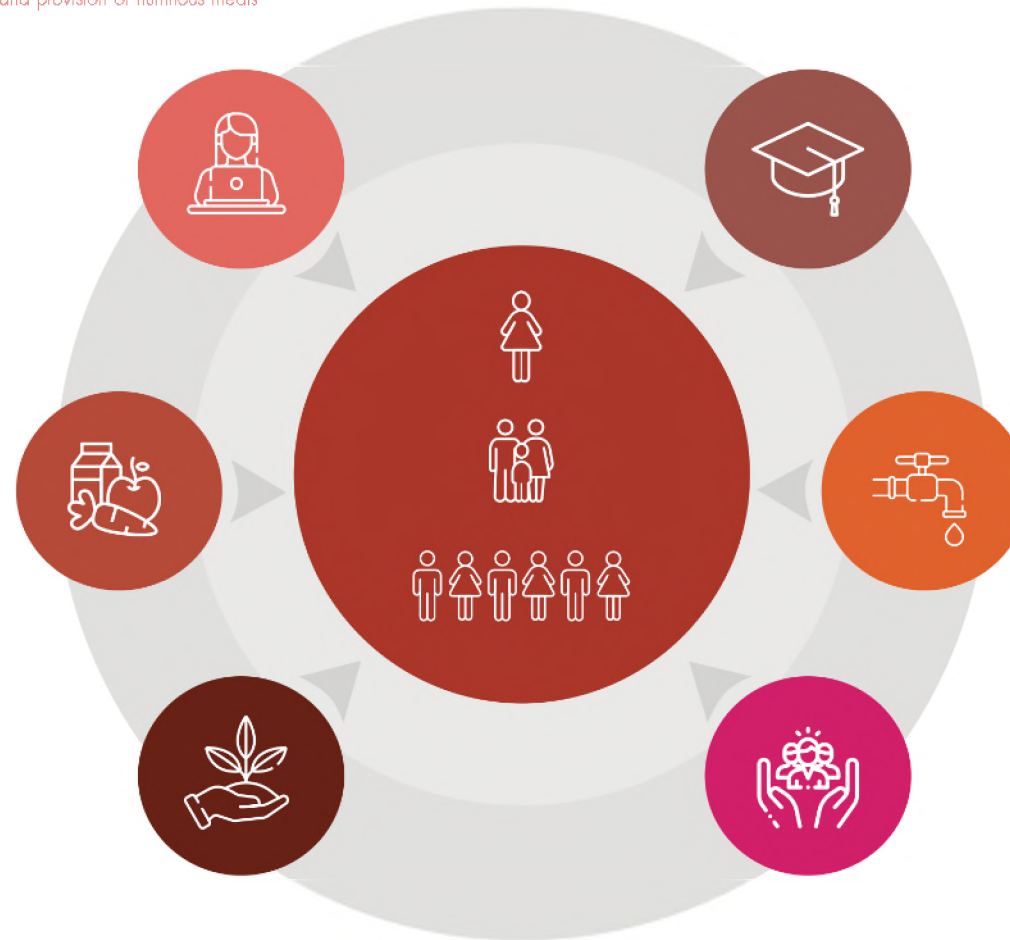
- Promote girls' and women's economic empowerment
- Workplace screening for anaemia, nutrition education and provision of nutritious meals
- Raise public awareness about anaemia

Health & Nutrition

- Promote healthy diets through behaviour change communication
- Improve micronutrient intakes (micronutrient powders and supplements)
- Improve menstrual health
- Screen for and manage haemoglobinopathies
- Prevent, diagnose and treat malaria, HIV, TB, and other infections
- Prevent, diagnose and treat soil-transmitted helminths and schistosomiasis
- Manage heavy menstrual bleeding
- Promote birth spacing, access to and voluntary use of modern contraceptives
- Prevent and treat antenatal and postpartum haemorrhage
- Reduce unnecessary caesarean section
- Delay umbilical cord clamping following childbirth
- Improve access to safe blood and blood products for transfusion in the treatment of severe anaemia
- Prevent, screen and treat for chronic diseases

Food & Agriculture

- Increase production and promotion of nutrient-rich foods
- Create an enabling food environment for healthy dietary practices
- Fortify staple foods with micronutrients
- Promote safe food production and handling



Education

- Promote girls' and women's general education and education on nutrition and reproductive health
- Public health and health care provider messaging about causes and consequences of anaemia
- Public awareness about inherited red blood cell disorders
- Social and behaviour change communication strategies
- Provision of nutritious school meals

Water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH)

- Improve access to safe drinking water
- Promote hand hygiene
- Strengthen safe sanitation systems and practices (access to and use of toilets that safely contain excreta; access to safe systems along the entire sanitation service chain)

Social protection

- Promote gender equality and women's empowerment (including education and income-generating activities, cash or food transfers with behaviour change communication)
- Improve access to quality health care services and interventions
- Promote core components of the right to health (availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality)
- Provide vouchers for nutritious foods

Actions to reduce anaemia by outcome and sector

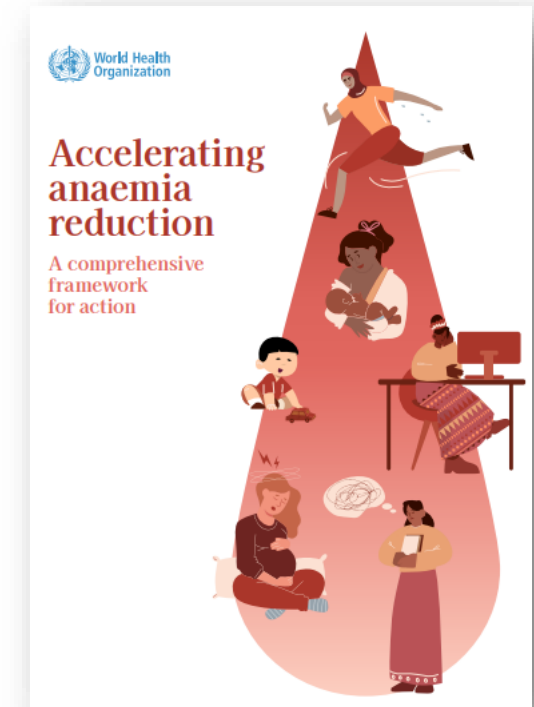


Reduced gynaecological and obstetric conditions (e.g. abnormal uterine bleeding)

| SECTOR | ACTIONS |
|-----------------------------|---|
| SOCIAL PROTECTION | Promote gender equality and women's empowerment Support income-generating activities for women (poverty alleviation) & early childhood development |
| EDUCATION | Promote girls' and women's reproductive health education Social and behaviour change communication for anaemia and relevant interventions |
| WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE | Improve hand hygiene practices Safe sanitation systems and practices |
| HEALTH & NUTRITION | Assess and manage anaemia Prevent, screen and manage chronic diseases Improve menstrual health, including prevention and treatment of heavy menstrual loss Prevent early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents Promote birth spacing, access to and voluntary use of modern contraceptives Prevent and treat antenatal and postpartum haemorrhage Reduce unnecessary caesarean section |

Key messages

- The framework recognizes anaemia as a **cross-cutting** issue and suggests **essential action** areas and interventions to address it, based on country-specific data and available delivery platforms.
- Anaemia has primarily been addressed through the **nutrition** lens, which is **critical but not sufficient alone**; rather, **all causes must be addressed** to effectively prevent and treat anaemia.
- **Effective coverage** of a **package of interventions** to address anaemia at **key moments in the life course** is foundational for improving health and well-being, and for preventing the irreversible consequences of anaemia.
- Addressing the complex condition of anaemia demands **strong leadership** and **collective action** among multiple sectors.



Stakeholders have different roles to play

- **Member States** can be champions for optimizing the health and well-being of every woman & adolescent girl
 - Prioritize the prevention and reduction of anaemia
 - Design rigorous research studies
 - Collect and use data to inform action
 - Develop, finance and implement policies, plans and strategies that are equitable
 - Mobilize investments
- **Civil society** can advocate, mobilize communities, and monitor commitments
 - Contribute to national discourse on topics related to anaemia reduction, including health, education, environment, food and agriculture, labour and trade
- **Academia, researchers and funding agencies** can work together to generate evidence and to ensure it is produced in a way that makes it easy to use in making decisions
 - Include policymakers in research design
 - Offer a more nuanced understanding of how risk factors for anaemia interact dynamically
 - Advocate for advancing innovation in diagnostics for anaemia and its underlying causes as well as promoting implementation science

Stakeholders have different roles to play


- **International organizations** can support Member States' leadership in developing national and sub-national strategies to accelerate anaemia reduction
 - Foster innovation in people-centred and culturally appropriate tools and services
 - Support implementation research
 - Support the development of the economic argument for investment in accelerating anaemia reduction
- **Professional associations and societies** (obstetrics, midwifery, paediatrics, educators, nutrition, labour, etc) can educate association and society members, professionals (for example, clinicians and teachers), and the public about the importance of coming together to address anaemia comprehensively
- **Media** can inform the general population by telling human interest stories and reinforcing a more comprehensive narrative on anaemia
 - Influence social norms
 - Promote the use of health services
 - Strengthen demand for public accountability



PREVENT AND MANAGE ANAEMIA

Choose foods rich in iron, folate, vitamins A and B12.



- 
- Anaemia symptoms:**
- tired
 - dizzy or lightheaded
 - cold hands and feet
 - shortness of breath
 - pale skin (check your lips, eyelids, and under your fingernails)
 - bruise more easily



Thank you for your time and attention

Dr Lisa Rogers

rogersl@who.int



Anaemia Action Alliance Working Groups

**Denish
Moorthy**

National integrated
anaemia actions
working group

**Mandana
Arabi**

Programmatic
implementation
working group

**Kajali Paintal
Goswami**

Anaemia investment
strategy working
group

**Lynnette
Neufeld**

Integrated research
agenda working
group

National integrated anaemia actions working group



- **Support countries** committed to a comprehensive approach for accelerating anaemia reduction, using policies and program actions based on context-specific causes and risk factors
- **Build on existing knowledge** and efforts in implementing multisectoral interventions— WHO’s Comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction, decision tree by UNICEF, USAID Anemia Task Force’s Ecological Approach to Anemia
- **Build on existing regional and country examples**
 - UNICEF’s West and Central Africa (WCA) initiative
 - USAID investments in East & West Africa, HEME, and Learning Network for Nutrition Surveillance (LeNNS)
 - Exemplars in Global Health Project – Anaemia in Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, and Uganda, India’s Anemia Mukht Bharat programme
- **Think globally, act locally**—(1) Knowledge products – landscape analysis, regional decision tree, and mapping maternal anaemia guidance; (2) Development of a peer learning network in UNICEF’s West and Central Africa (WCA) region; (3) Regional Consultation

Programmatic implementation working group

- **Support countries and implementing agencies** to design and enhance programmes to deliver proven interventions, nutritional and non-nutritional, and identify opportunities in existing platforms and programmes across and within sectors for integration of such interventions.
- **Move beyond single interventions towards comprehensive programming** with an optimal mix of interventions, harmonizing programmatic approaches, integrating anaemia actions.
- **Convene multi-stakeholder and multisectoral expert consultations in regions** to discuss challenges in interpreting, adapting, and implementing global guidance on the prevention and management of anaemia, in line with recommendations in the Comprehensive Framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction.
- **Operational guidance** that will elaborate on how to **strengthen systems and implement actions in a coordinated way**, so they can comprehensively and effectively prevent, diagnose, and manage anaemia in women, children, and adolescents.

Investment working group

- Support global- and country-level activities to develop mechanisms that **enable the estimation, tracking, and monitoring of financial resources** towards anaemia reduction.
- **Estimate global costs to address anaemia**, planned under the World Bank's update of the Investment Framework for Nutrition, including a comprehensive list of anaemia reduction activities (health sector and beyond).
- **Engage with countries to estimate current funding allocations and expenditures** for anaemia at a national level (resource mapping).
- **Support countries to track, analyze, and monitor financial resources** used for anemia prevention and treatment within the national and donor financial systems. **3-5 'best practice' country case studies** on resource mapping and tracking.
- **Guidance documents** on (i) estimation of costs related to anemia reduction at national level, (ii) budget tagging and tracking mechanism, (iii) analysis of national budget data to improve efficiency of anemia spending, and (iv) mobilise additional investments for anemia.

Support efforts to reconcile data

- Venous vs. Capillary blood
- Upcoming new guidelines

Contextual research to enhance effectiveness

- Contextually appropriate package of interventions
- Remaining biological questions, e.g., Intervention sequencing?
- Means to enhance implementation effectiveness
- Common methodological approaches

Panel Discussion

- **Andreas Hasman**, UNICEF
- **Lynnette Neufeld**, FAO
- **Kajali Paintal Goswami**, World Bank
- **Tanuja Rastogi**, Micronutrient Forum
- **Mandana Arabi**, Nutrition International
- **Lisa Rogers**, WHO
- **Maria Elena Jefferds**, CDC
- **Omar Dary**, USAID

Call to Action

- We must all **work together** to ensure that women, adolescent girls and children affected by anaemia receive the care and support they need and deserve.
- The Alliance is being established to **foster accelerated and coordinated efforts to reduce anaemia**, supporting implementation of WHO's comprehensive framework for action.
- By **aligning our efforts**, we can get on track to reduce anaemia.



AnaemiaAlliance@who.int

Closing Remarks

Daniel Raiten

Program Director - Nutrition

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)