



Federation of African Nutrition Societies
5th CONFERENCE
DAKAR NOVEMBER 19-24 2023

**CALL TO ACTION:
TAKING ACTION TO ADVANCE ADOLESCENT NUTRITION IN
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

Considering the unique vulnerabilities and challenges faced by adolescents, which are unevenly, unsystematically, and often unaddressed in policies and programs, limiting adolescents' ability to contribute to their own development as well as the development of their families, communities, and countries.

Considering that in West and Central Africa, one out of every two adolescent girls aged 15-19 is anemic and one out of five is underweight¹.

Considering harmful practices such as early motherhood and early marriage, which each affect one in four teenage girls, leading them to drop out of school, and consequently contributing to the transmission of malnutrition and the intergenerational perpetuation of poverty.

Considering the importance of adolescent nutrition for the proper development of human capital, a factor in the region's economic growth and well-being.

Deploring the inadequacy of funding for nutrition, particularly for adolescents, and the lack of evidence on which adolescent nutrition interventions should be prioritized, thus limiting the scope and effectiveness of specific and/or nutrition-sensitive national programs in West and Central Africa.

Commending the organization of the 5th FANUS² Conference holding in Dakar Senegal from November 19 to 24, 2023 under the theme "A multi-sectoral approach to strengthening food systems and achieving sustainable nutrition goals in Africa».

¹ Le Dain AS, Sagalova V, Sodjinou R, Tou EH, Ntambi J, Vollmer S, Zagre NM. Levels and trends of adolescent girl's undernutrition and anaemia in West and Central Africa from 1998 to 2017. *J Glob Health* 2021; 11:13006

² Federation of African Nutrition Societies, <https://fanus.org/> <https://conf5.fanus.org/>

Commending the ongoing efforts of governments and all their partners to integrate adolescent nutrition into the policies, funding and implementation of adolescent nutrition policies and programs.

Convinced that additional, multi-sectoral and multi-actor efforts are needed in all our countries to make adolescent nutrition a priority, while adapting to different crises.

With the conviction that adolescence is a window of opportunity to break the intergenerational transmission of malnutrition, which is not fully seized to invest in high impact actions.

Noting the determination of governments and their partners to support the cause of nutrition and in particular that of adolescents.

We, civil society actors, international non-governmental organizations and researchers, members of the regional maternal and adolescent nutrition group working together to improve maternal and adolescent nutrition in West and Central Africa, hereby appeal to:

An appeal to all West and Central African governments

1. **For a general mobilization** to update and effectively implement nutrition policies and programs aimed at improving the nutritional status and well-being of adolescents, a segment of the population that has long been neglected.
2. **For an increase in domestic, innovative, and adequate funding for nutrition, targeting actions with the greatest impact on nutrition and making adolescent nutrition a priority at country level, guaranteeing good governance.**
3. **For more investment in generating evidence** on the impact and implementation of innovative adolescent nutrition interventions and approaches, in order to identify and understand what works, to improve program implementation.
4. **To make available quality data on adolescent nutrition** that is specific, representative, and disaggregated, enabling informed decision-making on behalf of adolescents.

Dakar, November 22, 2023

Regional Nutrition Working Group West and Central Africa

Subgroup Maternal, School Age Children & Adolescent Nutrition

Membres: ACF, A&T/FHI, CRS, ENN, HKI, IGN, IFPRI, NI, SCI, TDH, UNICEF, WFP, CRF