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Malnutrition Responsible for Nearly Half of All Deaths in Children Under Five

Washington, D.C. — Startling findings released today show that malnutrition is responsible for **nearly half** of all deaths in children under five. Published as part of *The Lancet* series on maternal and child undernutrition, this new research shows that malnutrition is responsible for **3.1 million** deaths annually in children under five.

Realizing the urgent need for greater action, global leaders are mobilizing on June 8 in the UK for the *Nutrition and Growth* summit to accelerate global progress on nutrition. Donor and developing countries, private foundations, non-governmental organizations, and private industry will gather to make specific commitments to invest in tackling undernutrition.

While a number of other donor countries are expected to come to the *Nutrition and Growth* summit with specific financial pledges, the U.S. has not indicated it has plans to increase investments in childhood nutrition. RESULTS and other leading humanitarian and advocacy organizations have been calling on the U.S. to increase our investment and pledge \$1.35 billion to nutrition efforts over the next three years.

“Last year the U.S. led the adoption of a critically important global goal to eliminate preventable childhood deaths,” said Joanne Carter, executive director of RESULTS. “The research released today makes clear that we will not meet that goal without significant additional investments in nutrition. U.S. leadership on June 8th will be essential to the success of global nutrition **and** child survival efforts.”

This week 17 U.S. Senators and 78 members of the House of Representatives sent bipartisan letters to President Obama calling for the U.S. to pledge support for countries that are battling malnutrition.

“Investing in nutrition for children is an idea the American people and members of Congress on both sides of the aisle will support,” said John Fawcett, legislative director for RESULTS. “Less than one percent of our foreign aidⁱ goes to basic nutrition, and we can afford to do better.”

In addition to highlighting the fact that malnutrition is responsible for 3.1 million deaths annually, *The Lancet* series reports that:

- ◆ Stunting from chronic undernutrition has resulted in serious and often irreversible physical and cognitive damage that affected at least 52 million children younger than 5 in 2011.
- ◆ Suboptimum breastfeeding results in more than 800,000 child deaths annually.

Undernutrition is a neglected issue that takes an immense toll on our world, limiting the potential of children, communities, and nations. It’s essential that the U.S. make smart, sustained investments that can end undernutrition and break the cycle of poverty.

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RESULTS and **RESULTS Educational Fund** are sister organizations that, together, are a leading force in ending poverty in the United States and around the world. We create long-term solutions to poverty by supporting programs that address its root causes — lack of access to medical care, education, or opportunity to move up the economic ladder. We do this by empowering ordinary people to become extraordinary voices for the end of poverty in their communities, the media, and the halls of government. The collective voices of these passionate grassroots activists, coordinated with grass-tops efforts driven by our staff, leverage millions of dollars for programs and improved policies that give low-income people the tools they need to move out of poverty.

i Development Initiatives, 2013. *The Aid Financing Landscape for Nutrition* [online]. Available at: <http://www.devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/Development-Initiatives-Nutrition-Report-April-2013-Mariella-Di-Ciommo.pdf>. Accessed May 2013.