



STATEMENT TO THE 75TH WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

AGENDA ITEM: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO REDUCE THE DOUBLE BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION IN THE AFRICAN REGION (2019–2025)

World Obesity welcomes this report, however we note with concern that the Region is off track to halt the increase in Under-5 overweight. Childhood overweight tracks into adult overweight and obesity, and increases risks for a range of NCDs.

We also urge member states to recognise that childhood obesity in 5- to 19-year-olds is also rising dramatically fast in Africa, and overweight is already the dominant form of malnutrition in most countries.

Many of the same actions that tackle undernutrition also prevent obesity ie. by increasing access to affordable healthy diets. The report notes that 46 member States have adopted at least one WHO-recommended policy action, such as taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods, or front-of-pack labelling. This is promising, however, to reverse the rising tide of overweight and obesity in Africa, multiple, multisectoral policies will be needed simultaneously, including for example integrating obesity into PHC.

We call on the Committee to recognise that overweight is fast overtaking underweight in most countries as the most prevalent form of malnutrition, and call on governments to accelerate multisectoral action to address obesity, for example by joining the WHO Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity.

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