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PRESS RELEASE

What is the cost of malnutrition? The Global Panel makes a compelling economic case for investing in nutrition

26th July 2016, London – Today the Global Panel launches its 3rd technical brief: *The Cost of Malnutrition: Why Policy Action is Urgent*, which calls on policymakers to invest without delay in more cost-effective nutrition initiatives.

"Stunted children today means stunted economies tomorrow", said African Development Bank President and Panel Member **Dr. Akinwumi Adesina** when looking at the appalling cost of malnutrition globally, and the many reasons for investing in nutrition.

Malnutrition, in all its forms, carries huge direct and indirect costs at every level – to individuals, families, communities and nations. The estimated impact on the global economy could be as high as US\$3.5 trillion per year. This equates to US\$500 for each one of us.

This enormous cost results from loss in economic growth and reduced or lost investments in human capital associated with preventable child deaths, as well as premature adult mortality linked to diet-related non-communicable diseases. The brief indicates that every 1% loss of potential attained height in adulthood is estimate to reduce adult earnings by 2.4%.

The brief also highlights the high costs of overweight and obesity - at least 2.6 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese.

Sustained reductions in malnutrition will significantly contribute to poverty alleviation and government budgetary savings. It is therefore vital that addressing all forms of malnutrition becomes a top policy priority. **"Although the price of addressing malnutrition can be huge, evidence shows that the cost of doing nothing is immeasurably greater,"** emphasises **Prof. K. Srinath Reddy**, President of the Public Health Foundation of India, and Panel Member.

The brief also highlights the impressive economic benefits of investments in nutrition actions. It is estimated that a US\$18 return is achieved from every US\$1 invested in reducing wasting and stunting. Investing in actions to improve food systems and diets worldwide can also accelerate nutrition gains and economic rewards.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030, the Global Panel recommends that urgent investments are needed in country-specific economic analyses of the costs and benefits associated with improvements in the quality and quantity of diets.

“The economic gains of investing in nutrition are significant and lasting. Shouldn’t we do what we can to prepare a stronger future for our children?” asks His Excellency **John A. Kufuor**, Former President of Ghana and Co-Chair of the Global Panel.

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Notes to the editors:

About the Global Panel:

The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition is an independent group of high-level, influential experts with a commitment to tackling global challenges in food and nutrition security. It works to ensure that agriculture and food systems support access to nutritious foods at every stage of life.

Funded by the UK Department for International Development and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Panel aims to stimulate a stronger evidence-base for how changes in agriculture and food systems can improve nutrition and catalyse collaboration to help provide healthy and sustainable diets for all. The Panel is chaired by H.E. John Kufuor, former President of Ghana (2001-2009) and Sir John Beddington (former UK Chief Scientific Advisor), and has its headquarters in London.

For more information on the Global Panel, visit glopan.org

To **download a free copy the brief:** *The Cost of Malnutrition: Why Policy Action is urgent*, visit: glopan.org/cost-of-malnutrition

