

Delegation of Plurinational State of Bolivia

Position Paper for UNESCO

Food and nutrition are one of the main concerns of all the states and nations in modern world and are visible by its forms such as hunger, stunting, malnutrition, deficiency, obesity, anemia, under-nutrition, anorexia etc. Even though each region and country is affected at a different level by this issue, it is a global problem and the delegation of Bolivia believes that UN system is the most suitable ground to contribute to the actions that could be taken in order to improve the situation all over the world

❖ **Education and awareness on nutrition problems: How to mobilize commitment to solve them.**

The commitment of the Bolivian government in the nutritional education has been evolving in the past years. Nearly one in three children under the age of five in Bolivia suffers from stunting - a result of chronic malnutrition - the second highest rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. The causes are not only poverty and healthcare problems, but also lack of awareness and behavioral issues related to nutrition. As a matter of fact, malnutrition is not a strictly medical issue, so government takes a multisectoral approach, focusing on social and economic factors of malnutrition.

This issue is one of the major concerns of the Bolivian government and of its president Evo Morales, who started a presidential program called Zero Malnutrition. The program perfectly suits Millennium Development Goal 1: “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” and contributes indirectly to MDG 4: “Reduce child mortality”. As a result of Zero Malnutrition Program the percentage of children's deaths due to severe malnutrition has reduced from 9% in 2008 to 6.9% in 2009; and in 2013 the Bolivian government reduced chronic malnutrition among children to less than 10%. Moreover, 69.9% of pregnant women received a complete iron supplement treatment, compared with 50.8% in 2008, helping to reduce the incidence of mental impairment; 75% of children aged 6-11 months were provided with Vitamin A supplementation, helping to reduce the incidence of measles, blindness, and death.¹ The Bolivian government also supports small farmers through low-interest loans and incentivizes food production in the Andean nation.

The delegation of Bolivia would like to use this opportunity to thank international community for substantial foreign food aid implemented in Bolivia, which include initiatives from the USAID, FHI (Food

¹ <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/cpo.nsf/projen/A033957003>

Health International), the Global Food for Education Initiative and the World Food Program, that in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities for School Feeding, assists every year 40,000 children of Bolivian rural areas. In three departments, Chuquisaca, Tarija y Pando, WFP gives one meal (breakfast or lunch) which is complemented by second meal that is provided by the municipal government. The purpose of the initiative is that children, especially girls, attend classes, reduce hunger in the short term and focus on their lessons.

In 2014 the government of Bolivia approved Alimentation and Nutrition Policy of the country till 2025 which underlines each person's right for water and healthy alimentation. It also states the actions to be taken in order to eradicate the malnutrition of children under age of 5.²

UNESCO was established with motto proclaiming "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed". The delegation of Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that the same approach shall be applied in case of food and nutrition concerns. As a country which following UNESCO standards was declared free of illiteracy³ and has a long and proud schooling history, we believe that in order to minimize the percentage of people affected and suffering from food and nutrition problems, all schools and universities should have the special sessions on nutrition. Also, as the places of concentration most young people, all educational premises should follow nutritional standards and promote healthy lifestyle. In order to reduce malnutrition it is fundamental to consider the use of information and communication technologies to improve monitoring and implementation. Mass media and the school system should improve nutrition knowledge and health education using various methods, depending on region, area or target group. Bolivia also sustains that regional cooperation is fundamental in order to contrast the food crisis and to raise awareness on the importance of nutrition

According to president Morales, who said that "A world with dignity is a world without hunger" fighting hunger is essential for achieving a sustainable development. Nowadays there are over 800 million people worldwide still lacking access to healthy, nutritious food, and one in three young children is malnourished. However, we believe that by cooperation and commitment, the global community is capable to improve the situation and we are proud to contribute to achievement of this goal.

² <http://www.cambio.bo/?q=aprueban-pol%C3%ADtica-alimentaria-y-nutrici%C3%B3n-de-bolivia-al-2025>

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7794293.stm>