

Benin's Nutrition Commitments for a Resilient Future

Benin's road to the 2025 Paris Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit

Olivia Kehl, Françoise Sayi, Aubierge Flenon

MAY 2025

Introduction to Nutrition for Growth

Prompted by the 2012 London Olympics, the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit is an international conference dedicated to global nutrition. Since its founding, N4G has traditionally been organized by the host country of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Over the past decade, the governments of the United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, and France have stepped up to mobilize greater action toward ending malnutrition.

N4G brings together governments, international organizations, philanthropies, businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders at both global and regional levels. The summit aims to elevate nutrition as a key priority in the development agenda and accelerate political and financial commitments to drive progress in the fight against malnutrition.

The first N4G Summit in 2013 brought together 100 stakeholders who endorsed the Global N4G Compact, pledging more than \$23 billion in new nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive projects. In 2017, stakeholders gathered in Milan to track progress on the London commitments and further strengthen the global nutrition coalition. This summit generated an additional \$3.4 billion in nutrition pledges, reinforcing momentum toward improving global nutrition. In 2021, the Tokyo N4G Summit expanded efforts to end malnutrition in all its forms, highlighting the crucial roles of food, health, and social protection systems in delivering good nutrition for all. Most recently, on March 27–28, 2025, France hosted the 4th N4G Summit in Paris, continuing the collective push toward a healthier and well-nourished world¹.

¹ For more information see <https://nutritionforgrowth.org/>



Background and Benin's 2021 commitments

The Government of Benin played an active role in the 2021 N4G Summit, demonstrating a strong commitment to reducing malnutrition. In 2021, through the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Food and Nutrition (SP/CAN), Benin outlined several ambitious goals aimed at ensuring optimal nutrition for all its citizens. To achieve its vision by 2030, Benin set several objectives in 2021 (**Box A**).

Box A: Benin's Nutrition 4 Growth Objectives in 2021

Strengthening Institutional Capacity by

- Establishing and sustaining quarterly national coordination sessions involving multisectoral stakeholders, including ministries, technical and financial partners, civil society, and academia. These sessions will monitor, evaluate, and ensure accountability for the budgeted multisectoral strategic plan (2025-2028).
- Mobilizing at least 275 billion CFA francs to operationalize ANAN policies.

Tackling Micronutrient Deficiencies by

- Reducing rates of anemia in pregnant women by 50%.
- Validating and implementing:
 - A national strategy for the control of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) alongside sectoral guidelines for its control
 - A strategy for food fortification and nutritional supplementation of essential micronutrients, and
 - A strategy and guidelines for the dietary and nutritional management of illnesses in hospitals.

Improving Child Nutrition by

- Reducing the prevalence of stunting in children under five to less than 30%.
- Maintaining household iodized salt usage above 90%.
- Increasing the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding from 42% to 52%.
- Maintaining acute malnutrition rates for children under five at less than 5%.

Enhancing Nutrition Governance and Program Expansion by

- Strengthening the governance and authority of CAN and SP/CAN at the national level, through law-making, policy development, and food and nutrition planning.
- Piloting and scaling up food, nutrition and health programs for pregnant women in at least 50% of Benin's communes.
- Increasing the budget allocated to nutrition by 50% and ensuring that at least 80% of the allocated funds are spent on development activities.

These commitments were set within a largely rural and traditional food system environment. Benin's agriculture, largely dependent on small-scale farms with low yields, employs around 30% of the workforce and contributes 27% of the country's GDP². While the country performs relatively well on dietary energy in the food supply³, 9.6% of the population remains food insecure, particularly vulnerable rural households that lack physical and economic access to safe, nutritious, and diverse foods.

Additionally, climate change, economic instability, and inflation, have exacerbated food insecurity in Benin. Affordability of nutritious foods is a major barrier, with an estimated 83% of the population unable to afford a healthy, diverse diet⁴. Rising food prices further limit economic access to nutritious foods.

Beyond affordability and availability, dietary quality remains a significant challenge. Many Beninese rely heavily on cereals, roots, and tubers, consuming insufficient quantities of nutrient-dense foods like vegetables, fruits, and animal-source protein. Only 26% of young children receive minimally diverse diets.

Though overweight and obesity rates in Benin are slightly lower than the regional average, with adult obesity for example at 11% in 2022⁵, the country faces a double burden of malnutrition – the co-existence of under nutrition with overweight and obesity – at the individual, household, and community levels. The nutritional status of children under five is particularly concerning, with one-third of them experiencing stunting. Moreover, over half (58%) of women suffer from anemia.

Benin's 2021 commitments highlight a comprehensive approach to transforming the country's food system, ensuring long-term improvements in public health and well-being.



² World Bank data

³ See <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/ben#dietary-energy-in-food-supply>

⁴ See <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/ben#affordability-of-a-healthy-diet-ratio-of-cost-to-food-expenditures-co-hd-fexp>

⁵ See <https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/countries/ben#adult-obesity>

Successes and Opportunities Identified Since 2021 N4G Summit

Since the 2021 N4G Summit, improving nutrition has remained a priority for Benin's government. In recent years, the country has established various nutrition policies and targets, with SP/CAN. Notably, Benin is one of few African countries to have developed food-based dietary guidelines, reflecting a strong commitment to enhancing dietary practices and nutritional outcomes.



The 2025 Paris N4G and Benin's 2025 commitments

At the Tokyo 2021 N4G Summit, the emphasis of discussions and commitments centered on three main themes: health, by integrating nutrition into Universal Health Coverage (UHC); food, by transforming the food system to promote safe, sustainable, and healthy diets that support both people and the planet; and resilience, by addressing malnutrition effectively in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. With the ambitious aims, the 2025 N4G Summit has strengthened its focus on three core areas and three cross-cutting themes, aligning nutrition with issues including health, social protection, gender equality, artificial intelligence and data, as well as finance and accountability. The goal of this summit is to tackle malnutrition through a wider lens and engage a broad range of stakeholders in finding solutions.

Ahead of the 2025 Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, the Government of Benin in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the National Agency for Food and Nutrition (ANAN), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, with academics and representatives from the UN system, and with other technical and financial partners in nutrition, has developed and updated their commitments to strengthen the country's food system as one of their priorities. Through financial support from GAIN, multiple workshops were held in 2024 to define these commitments, culminating in the announcement of 11 commitments. Of the 11 commitments, four are linked to broad food system transformation. These commitments align with and build upon Benin's ongoing 2021 N4G pledges, aiming to achieve significant milestones by 2028 and advance the broader objectives set for 2030.

Box B: Benin's Nutrition 4 Growth Commitments in 2025

Strengthen Governance and Coordination by

- Establishing and sustaining quarterly national coordination sessions involving multisectoral stakeholders, including ministries, technical and financial partners, civil society, and academia. These sessions will monitor, evaluate, and ensure accountability for the budgeted multisectoral strategic plan (2025-2028).
- Mobilizing at least 275 billion CFA francs to operationalize ANAN policies.

Enhance Food System Resilience by

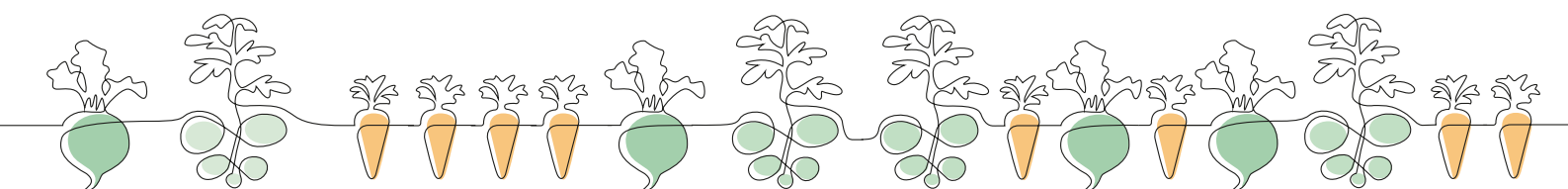
- Promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural practices to increase the production of high-nutritional-value foods. The government also aims to raise awareness among farmers about sustainable practices such as agroforestry and cover cropping and support the adoption of climate-resilient technologies while promoting the diversification of local and nutritionally rich crops.

Improve Household Healthy Food Consumption by

- Increasing consumption of nutritious and healthy foods to 70%.
- Implementing communication plans to promote awareness of nutritious and healthy foods in urban and rural communities.
- Fostering partnerships between local producers and school canteens/restaurants.
- Introducing nutrition education programs in schools.
- Piloting a fortified cereal supply program in 100 school canteens.
- Increasing the use of iodized salt among the population to above 90%.

Improve Household Healthy Food Consumption by

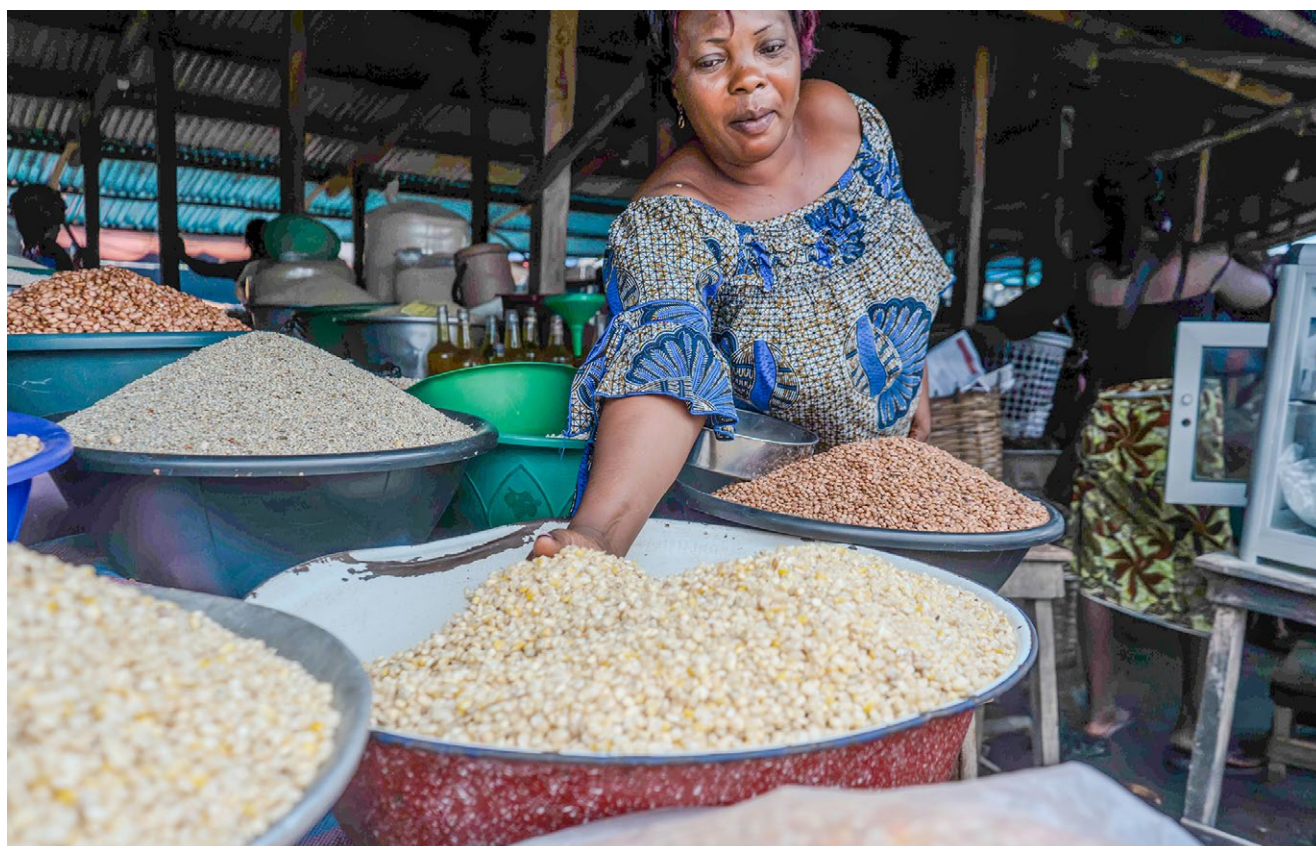
- Improving access to safe drinking water in schools with an increase of the access rate from 51% in 2024 to 75% in 2028 by facilitating school water connections or constructing new water points.
- Expanding Nutrition Recovery and Learning Homes (FARN) through the Nutrition Supplementation Program, offering 10 consecutive days of nutrition rehabilitation for malnourished and underweight children with the goal of preventing acute malnutrition in children under five.
- Providing nutritional supplements to 75% of lactating women and infants (6 to 24 months) through the Nutrition Supplementation Program (PSN) in order to work to prevent chronic malnutrition in children under five.
- Providing nutritional supplementation to 75% of pregnant women through the Nutrition Supplementation Program with the goal of reducing low birth weight in targeted health zones.
- Revitalizing the “Baby-Friendly Hospitals/Structures/Communities” (HIAB/ISSAB) initiative, deploying the “Stronger with Only Breast Milk” campaign, and enforcing regulations on infant food product marketing in order to work to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates by raising the percentage of exclusively breastfed infants aged 0-5 months from 44.9% to 52%.



Benin's 2021 and 2025 nutrition goals reflect a strong continuity in vision emphasizing improved child nutrition, strengthened governance, and the reduction of micronutrient deficiencies. The 2021 objectives laid the foundation by focusing on institutional capacity building, establishing strategies for micronutrient supplementation, and setting clear targets for stunting, anemia, and exclusive breastfeeding. Efforts to strengthen governance continue into 2025, with a focus on establishing regular meetings to guide the implementation of a strategic plan developed since 2021. This plan is now supported by a defined budget and clear financial objectives, facilitating more effective coordination and accountability. In line with their program expansion goals of 2021, the 2025 goals place greater emphasis on food system resilience, access to safe drinking water in schools, and comprehensive supplementation for pregnant women and children. While the core priorities remain aligned, the 2025 commitments demonstrate a more integrated, multisectoral approach and a stronger push for large-scale implementation and accountability. The 2021 and 2025 commitments are closely aligned, reinforcing one another in support of Benin's broader nutrition goals for 2030, such as those set out in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion

Benin's 2025 N4G commitments demonstrate a strong political will to enhance food security, nutrition, and public health. Multisectoral strategies must be integrated with financial investments, in order for these initiatives to create a sustainable, resilient food system while improving the nutritional well-being of the population, particularly children and vulnerable groups.



Healthier Diets. For all.

GAIN Benin

Haie vive C/7004
(Rue derrière la poste Cadjehoun),
Cotonou,
Bénin

🌐 www.gainhealth.org
✉ @gain_alliance
✂ [@GAINalliance](https://twitter.com/GAINalliance)
☎ +256 200 922 023

 **gain**
Global Alliance for
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