

Co-hosted by the Governments of Bangladesh, Chile, Egypt, Pakistan, and the Philippines.



Accelerating Action on Micronutrient Deficiencies and Their Consequences, Including Spina Bifida:

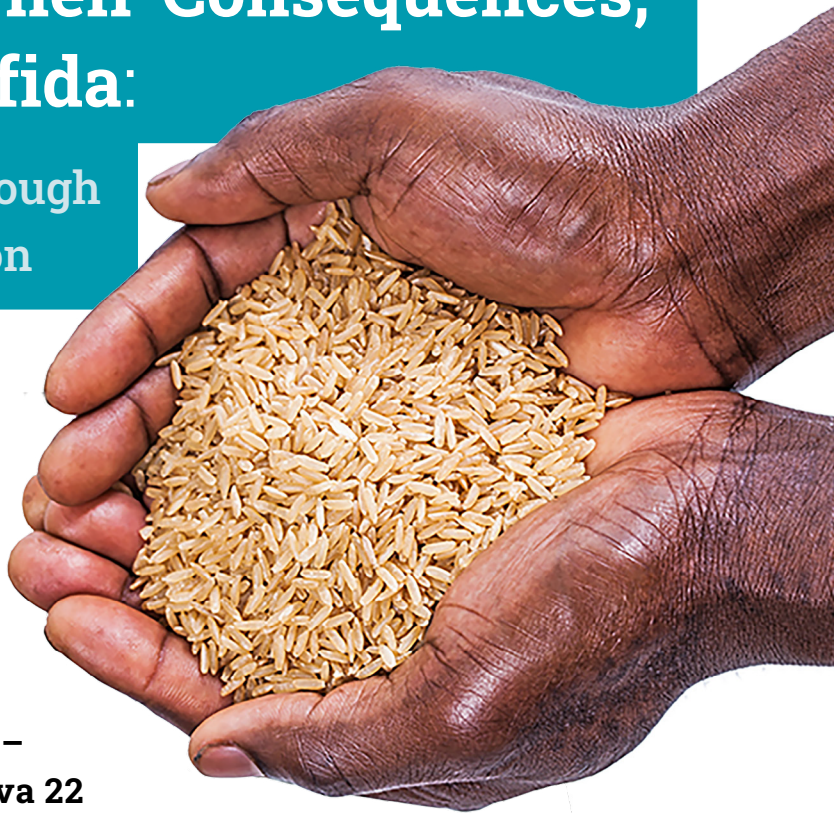
Delivering on WHA 76.19 through Large-Scale Food Fortification

WHA78

May 20, 2025 18:00-20:30

Please join us for small bites, drinks, and an opportunity to connect with fellow attendees following the conclusion of the program.

**UNICEF's offices in the ILO building –
4 Route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22**



Masters of Ceremony

- **Dr. Jeffrey Blount, MD, MPH, FAANS**, co-founder Global Alliance for the Prevention of Spina Bifida
- **Dr. Sylvia Roozen**, Secretary General, International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

Welcoming Remarks

- **Ms. Annalies Borrel**, Senior Adviser for Nutrition and Social Protection, UNICEF
- **Dr. Luz Maria De Regil**, Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO



High-Level Roundtable – Member State Co-Hosts

- **Professor Dr. Md. Abu Jafor**, Director General (Grade-1), Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, People's Republic of Bangladesh
- **Prof. Dr. Abba Alalfy**, Deputy Minister of Health and Population, Chairperson, National Population Council, Arab Republic of Egypt
- **Dr. Azucena M. Dayanghirang**, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health, and Executive Director IV, National Nutrition Council, Republic of the Philippines
- **Dr. Malik M. Safi**, Adviser, Ministry of Health, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Testimonial

Nothing About Us Without Us: Advancing Food Fortification Through a Human Rights Approach

- **Ms. Victoria Sandoval**, President, International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

Panel 1: Mapping Micronutrient Needs and Maximizing LSFF Impact

- Modelling, Mapping and Predicting Micronutrient Intake Gaps & Leveraging Social Protection for where Impact is needed most – **Dr. Saskia de Pee**, Senior Advisor, Analytics and Science for Food and Nutrition, World Food Programme
- The Global Fortification Data Exchange – **Dr. Shruthi Cyriac**, Senior Program Manager, Micronutrient Data Innovation Alliance at the Micronutrient Forum
- Estimating the potential impact of LSFF programs on micronutrient inadequacies – **Svenja Jungjohann**, MSc Senior Technical Specialist, Knowledge Leadership, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- The Promise of Double Fortified Salt – **Dr. Anastasia Smith**, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Testimonials from the Fortification Journey – Member States Share their Experiences

- **Dr Salima Al Maamari**, Director of Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman
- **Ms. Mary Multhoni Muriuki**, Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Health and Professional Standards, Ministry of Health, Republic of Kenya

Panel 2: Driving Impact Together: Donor, Public, Private, and Civic Collaboration to Advance Food Fortification

- **Caitlin Smethurst**, Senior Officer for Nutrition Advocacy and Communications, Gates Foundation
- **Colin Healy**, Managing Director, Capwell Industries, Nairobi
- **Dr. Yakob Ahmed**, Country Director, Reach Another Foundation, Ethiopia and member, Rotary club of Addis Ababa West

Closing remarks

Accelerating Action through Large-Scale Food Fortification in the year ahead

- **Prof. Kemel Ghotme**, MD, PhD, Pediatric Neurosurgeon and Translational Scientist

Speaker Bios:



Prof. Abla Al-Alfy

**MBBch-DCH, MRCP, FRCP, FRCPC, IBCLC,
Mother of the Egyptian Children**

She is the deputy minister of health and population for population and family development. and the Chair, of the national population council. She was a member of the "Egyptians parliament", since 2021. She is an international expert neonatologist, and certified international lactation consultant.

Dr. Abla is an expert in nutrition, she innovated a gap filling culturally driven holistic approach for the golden 1000 days from the Egyptian context which was launched as a Presidential initiative titled " the golden 1000 days of family development" promoting 7 rights for the child to optimize his start namely: intact empowered family, preparation for pregnancy for at least one year, safe pregnancy, safe normal labor, baby friendly neonatal care, optimal care during first 2 years alone(nutrition, developmental care, positive parenting, inclusion of handicapped) which mandate spacing of pregnancy for 3-5 years. She shared the WHO team, to develop a model Chapter for textbooks for medical students and allied health professionals, worked with the USAID-funded SMART project for reduction of stunting. She launched the national program for making Egypt health facilities mother and baby friendly, and updated Egyptian code for marketing BM substitutes on 2024. She worked with the Healthy Children Project (US)'expert group to develop the clinical guidelines for "Skin-to-Skin Care".

She was the Regional Adviser of Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health for the MENA region (12 years). She is the chief host for RCPCH examinations in Egypt since 2008, International examiner in paediatrics, and designed a One-year Diploma for postgraduate in child health, "Fundamental Postgraduate Diploma in Child Health," accredited by the American Academy of Continuing Professional Development. She is a member of the scientific council of the Egyptian Paediatric Board of the EMMA. She designed and shared many Neonatology, Lactation, Pediatrics, Midwifery, and Soft Skills courses, has 116 papers, supervised 22 theses and contributed to many books on lactation and pediatrics. She is a member of the scientific board of the Egyptian fellowship in pediatrics (12 years), Egyptian Neonatal Fellowship(9years) and she led the national screening program for hypothyroidism in three governorates She is an expert entrepreneur, founder her association "the Egyptian Members Association of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health".

She started her career internationally till head of the neonatal department ten years and Assistant Professor at Kuwait University for ten years. She served as head of the pediatric department at Mansoura Insurance Hospital, head of the neonatal department at Benha children hospital for 14 years, and senior consultant at Galaa Military Compound for seven years



Yakob Seman Ahmed [MPH, MBA, PhD]

is a health policy expert with over 15 years of experience strengthening health systems in low- and middle-income countries through government and nonprofit sectors. As a country director of Reachanother Foundation Yakob is a leading advocate for the prevention, treatment, and aftercare of Spina Bifida in Ethiopia and beyond. Yakob spearheaded the Rotary International High-Risk Prevention Project implementation and actively promotes large-scale food fortification as a key public health intervention in Ethiopia.



Dr Jeffrey Blount is a Pediatric Neurosurgeon at UAB/ Children's \of Alabama with an interest in Spina Bifida. This led to the formation of GAPSBIF which is neurosurgical centered organization dedicated to science based advocacy in preventing neural tube defects via folic acid fortification. GAPSBIF has partnered synergistically with critical partners in nutrition like GAIN, FFI and Rotary International to impact the global challenge of attaining optimal fortification and improving the shameful 23% of global prevention of Spina Bifida.



Annalies Borrel

has over 30 years of work experience in Africa, Balkans, Europe, Middle East and south Asia, and has held senior leadership positions with UNICEF and other UN agencies, donors, Red Cross, Governments, NGOs and academia working in countries affected by fragility, crises and development. Annalies is a former faculty member of Tufts University and has held senior advisory positions with the Governments of Afghanistan and Zimbabwe to support food and nutrition policy and programme development. Annalies places

emphasis on a systems approach to improving maternal and child nutrition, leveraging the food, health and social protection systems. Systems strengthening is central to all the work she does to achieve sustainable results at scale. She is currently a Senior Adviser for Nutrition and Social Protection with the Child Nutrition and Development team at UNICEF. She lives in Geneva with her three sons.



Shruthi Cyriac

is a Senior Program Manager at the Micronutrient Forum, where she leads global initiatives to improve nutrition and health outcomes through stronger data and evidence-based insights. With over 14 years of experience in global health, nutrition, and international development, she has worked with leading organizations including GAIN, IFPRI, and various national institutions. Her work focuses on advancing research, policy, and implementation strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies, with a focus on large-scale food fortification. Shruthi holds a PhD from Emory University and a master's from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India.



Dr. Azucena Milana-Dayanghirang, MCH, CESO III

**Assistant Secretary, Department of Health, and Executive Director IV,
National Nutrition Council, Republic of the Philippines**

Dr. Azucena Milana-Dayanghirang is an experienced public health leader for more than 30 years and has been a prime mover, team leader and player, facilitator and trainer of various health programs particularly on Maternal Child Health and Nutrition and other Communicable and Non-communicable diseases.

She has served the people of Davao as City Nutrition Action Officer of Davao City Nutrition Office from 1991-1995; Chief of the Technical Services Division and Medical Officer VI of the Davao City Health Office from 1996 to 2005; as well as the Provincial Health Officer II and Provincial Nutrition Action Officer of Davao del Sur from 2008 to 2016. During her service in the local government, she was able to impact the health and nutrition of the people of Davao through proper planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of health and nutrition programs, including the Fresh Milk Supplemental Feeding Program, which led to the reduction of protein-energy malnutrition among 0-6-year-old children.

In 2016, she was elected as the National President of the Nutrition Action Officers' of the Philippines Association, Inc. Shortly after, she was appointed as Deputy Executive Director of the National Nutrition Council (NNC), an attached agency of the Department of Health, Philippines. In August 2019, Dr. Dayanghirang was promoted as the Executive Director of the NNC Secretariat. Currently, she is the ASEAN Health Cluster I Chairperson, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Philippines Country Focal Point, Co- Chair of the Inter-agency Task Force on Zero Hunger, and Project Manager of the Philippine Multisectoral Nutrition Project DOH component.



Dr. Kemel A. Ghotme, MD, PhD,

is a pediatric neurosurgeon, professor, researcher, and global health advocate with expertise in clinical neurosurgery, academic leadership, and translational research. He is internationally recognized for spearheading initiatives in large-scale food fortification, knowledge translation, and advocacy to combat micronutrient deficiencies and prevent neural tube defects. Dr. Ghotme has a proven track record in policy implementation and multi-stakeholder engagement, effectively bridging the gap between science and policy.

His work drives sustainable, evidence-based public health interventions at national and global levels, contributing to improved outcomes for vulnerable populations and shaping the global agenda on nutrition and child health.



Colin Healy,
Capwell Industries

Managing Director/Operations Specialist with 30+ years of leadership experience across Europe, Australia, Asia, the US and Africa in the Medical Device (20+ Years) Engineering and FMCG sectors. I am a result orientated, hands-on individual with a management style that strongly emphasises teamwork and engaging the workforce through the principles of lean manufacturing. A track record of driving results and

performance in large, complex and dynamic Plants in highly regulated and unionised environments. Known for implementing significant cultural & process change and quickly realising benefits.



Professor Dr. Md. Abu Jafor,

Director General (Grade 1) Directorate General of Health Services
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Bangladesh

Professor Dr. Md. Abu Zafar, born on December 31, 1965, in Bangladesh is a renowned paediatric surgeon and healthcare administrator. He has been serving as Director General (Additional Secretary) of the Directorate General of Health Services, Bangladesh since October 16, 2024. A graduate of Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, he holds MCPS, FCPS, and MS in Pediatric Surgery. He is a member of the 13th BCS

batch, he began his career in 1994 and held key academic roles, including Professor and Head at Sir Salimullah Medical College. Dr. Zafar has significantly advanced care for marginalized communities and published extensively in medical journals.



Svenja Jungjohann

holds a Master in Nutrition Science and Economics with over 20 years of experience in design, implementation and performance management of nutrition programs to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and impact of invested resources. She has worked with managers and technicians in governments and the public (UN, NGO) and private sector in a range of interventions from design of pilot projects to scale up of proven concepts in a various geographical areas (particularly Africa and Asia). She specializes in large-scale

food fortification, Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition, and nutritional supplement development, with expertise in results-based management, monitoring, evaluation, and operational research for impactful nutrition programs.



Dr. Salima Al Maamari,

is a consultant family physician and the Director of the Nutrition Department at the Ministry of Health in the Sultanate of Oman. With a medical degree from Sultan Qaboos University and certification from the Royal College of General Practitioners (UK), she brings over two decades of leadership in public health services and nutrition policy.

With over nine years of experience in the field of nutrition, Dr. Al Maamari has dedicated her career to advancing nutrition research and implementing evidence-based interventions to improve public health.

A passionate advocate for nutrition, Dr. Al Maamari played a key role in developing Oman's National Nutrition Strategy for 2020-2030, along with a comprehensive action plan to support its implementation. Dr. Almamary has spearheaded national campaigns and surveys, including the Oman National Nutrition Survey, and has led initiatives to reduce salt, sugar, and fat consumption, as well as to address anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies through strategic fortification programs.

Dr. Al Maamari's work continues to drive impactful change, underscoring her commitment to improving nutrition and health outcomes across the Sultanate.



Saskia de Pee

is Senior Advisor Analytics & Science for Food & Nutrition at the Nutrition and Food Quality service of the World Food Programme in Rome. She is also Adjunct Associate Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston. She has worked in public health nutrition for more than 25 years, focusing on science as well as practical applications, policies and strategies. Her areas of expertise include food and nutrition security, diet & climate, micronutrients, fortification, and nutrition in the context of social protection, HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. She holds a PhD in Human Nutrition from Wageningen University, the Netherlands.



Dr Luz Maria De Regil

Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, World Health Organization (WHO), Switzerland

Dr Luz María De Regil is the Director of Department of Nutrition and Food Safety in the World Health Organization. She is responsible for the strategic and managerial work of the Department with Member States and partners to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate multisectoral efforts to ensure universal access to effective nutrition actions, safe food and healthy diets, through strengthening

health systems and building forward better food systems which recognize the interdependence of the health of humans, animals and the wider environment.

Dr De Regil is an Epidemiologist with 20 years of experience in the public, private, non-for-profit and intergovernmental sectors. Her expertise spans from research in basic science to large scale public health programming and policy. Prior to her current position, she was the Unit Head of Multisectoral Actions in Food Systems at WHO, the Vice-President of Global Technical Services at Nutrition International, in Canada, Epidemiologist at WHO, and Researcher in Mexico and USA.

Luz Maria has authored more than 150 peer-reviewed and policy publications, and has served in multiple international advisory bodies in public health and in the Boards of Non for Profit organizations.

Luz Maria De Regil holds a Doctorate in Sciences of Public Health, a Master's Degree in Sciences, Postgraduate studies in International Negotiation and Policy Making, and a Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition and Food Sciences.



Sylvia Roozen, PhD

Dr. Sylvia Roozen is Secretary General of the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, based in Brussels. With extensive experience in the non-profit sector, she leads global efforts to support the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Community. She works closely with WHO and UN bodies on health, nutrition, and disability and played a key role in the adoption of WHA Resolution 76.19 on food fortification, advancing maternal health, health literacy, and human rights. She also collaborates with IF members, leading global partners and academic institutions to promote inclusive health policies and disability rights worldwide



Victoria Sandoval

Victoria Sandoval is the President of the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus and a lawyer in Guatemala. Born with Spina Bifida, she specialised in Human Rights and Family law. In 1995, alongside her mother, she founded the Asociación Guatemalteca de Espina Bífida. She also collaborated with the Spina Bifida multidisciplinary clinic to help children and their families access multidisciplinary healthcare. As a passionate advocate for disability rights and folic acid food fortification, Victoria continues to inspire many. As she says “our disabilities do not define us, it is what we think of ourselves that defines us”.



Anastasia Smith,

DrPH, MPH is a Clinical Research Manager of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She is a recent graduate of the School of Public Health at UAB. Dr. Smith's work is centered on preventing spina bifida through salt fortification with folic acid and iodine. Her work focuses on assessing the effectiveness of using salt as a staple for food fortification with folic acid, potentially benefiting vulnerable populations worldwide without access to enriched grains. Her career goal is to advocate for folic acid fortification as a safe and effective global public health strategy.

Her current work is assessing the feasibility and effectiveness of double-fortified salt in Lusaka, Zambia.

Dr. Smith actively participated in the development of the WHA76.19 resolution in 2022-2023 as a member of the Global Alliance for Prevention of Spina Bifida. She had the privilege of contributing to the resolution's creation and witnessing the diplomatic collaboration involving the Ministry of Health of Colombia, the WHO liaison, and the civil/scientific community. Dr. Smith has also actively participated in the development of three side events held at the World Health Assembly in 2022, 2023 and 2025, raising awareness about the need for this resolution to prevent health conditions like spina bifida, which result from micronutrient deficiencies, particularly folate.



Caitlin Smethurst,

is a Senior Officer for nutrition advocacy and communications at the Gates Foundation. She supports the policy, financing and agenda setting objectives for nutrition, and is the advocacy lead for Large Scale Food Fortification and Ag/Nutrition campaigns. She joined the foundation's Agricultural Development program in 2009 before transitioning to the policy and advocacy team in 2014. Caitlin previously managed the labor compliance program for Cutter & Buck, a global apparel brand. She also worked for the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town, South Africa. She has a Bachelor of Arts in International Development and a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Washington.