

## **Statement by NEPAD Agency at the 2<sup>nd</sup> African FFI meeting**

**Cape Town; November 26, 2010. Bibi Giyose**

Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to share some thoughts with you today on this momentous and extremely important day for many of our countries in Africa; the **2<sup>nd</sup> African Flour Fortification Initiative meeting**. You will recall that two years ago when this group met for the first time, a lot was planned, and I am happy to recognize that a lot – even more - has been achieved in the area of flour fortification. These positive developments and milestones without doubt gives a lot of hope, energy and encouragement to nutrition practitioners, private sector and policy makers alike to soldier on and deliver fortified products to all the people across the continent. Of course we could not do this without the generous support of our development partners, but more importantly, the commitment of national governments to take on these initiatives. We are truly witnessing Private-Public- Partnership in action!

As you all are aware, hitherto, much emphasis has been placed on food security only, without adequate attention to the condition of the millions of Africans, who although may be consuming sufficient quantity of food to meet their energy requirements, have poor-quality diets with insufficient or unbalanced levels of minerals and vitamins to assure healthy, productive lives. For Africa, the continuing human costs of inadequate nutrition are enormous and must not be allowed to continue unchecked.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development is a pledge by African leaders based on a common vision, to develop a program of action for the redevelopment of the African continent. The goals of NEPAD are to promote accelerated growth and sustainable development, to eradicate widespread and severe poverty, and to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process.

The 14<sup>th</sup> African Union Assembly, held from 31 January to 2 February 2010, endorsed the decision of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee establishing the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) as a technical body of the African Union whose mandate is to:

1. Facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the continental and regional priority programs and projects
2. Mobilize resources and partners in support of the implementation of Africa's priority programs and projects
3. Conduct and coordinate research and knowledge management
4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of programs and projects
5. Advocate on the AU and NEPAD vision, mission and core principles/values

NEPAD therefore offers a unique opportunity to reaffirm international commitments and rededicate Africa to improving nutrition, reducing the burden of disease and protecting precious human capital. NEPAD recognizes that improved nutrition security is a prerequisite for sustainable development in Africa. However, focusing exclusively on food supply will not be enough to stem the rising tide of malnutrition in Africa. Within this context, there is increasing recognition that

malnutrition, especially due to lack of essential vitamins and minerals, is both an indicator and determinant of poverty.

NEPAD's *Pan African Nutrition Initiative* nested within the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) offers a promising approach for capitalizing on the natural synergy of increased food production and improved nutrition. African leaders have all committed themselves to CAADP and already many countries have adopted CAADP as the framework for agriculture's renewal and engine for economic growth and are implementing it. CAADP is meant to catalyze a multi-sectoral process of investment planning, facilitating capacity building and mobilizing resources to address the burden of malnutrition.

If the Flour Fortification activities by all stakeholders are to create the necessary impact on the African population, there is need for a platform where public awareness is generated and where Food and Nutrition security within the context of CAADP retains its visibility. This is one such crucial platform, which must be nurtured and sustained into the future. Nutrition is not a single sector issue but a multisectoral-multidisciplinary issue. Solutions therefore always lie in multiple sectors and actors pulling together with one vision and singular intention of the best human growth, improved livelihoods, and visible economic development.

In order to end hunger and malnutrition, **the African Union has initiated accelerated actions from two crucial perspectives;**

**Firstly,** ensuring access to food and nutrition security; this requires government investment in agriculture, food production and nutrition

security. The implementation of these programmes include communities especially the poorest and most vulnerable. This will enhance their capacity to adequately feed their families. In fact this is a core objective of CAADP, which is further articulated in the CAADP Pillar III Framework for African Food Security.

**Secondly**, working across all key sectors to deliver on nutrition and building up and strengthening health systems and social protection systems with the aim of addressing constraints to eliminating hunger and malnutrition. These objectives are articulated in the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy and anchored in the Health Strategy and Social Policy Framework of the AU.

Even more importantly, to evidently support the above, The NEPAD *Ten Year Strategy for the Reduction of Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies* developed four years ago remains an important tool in tackling these problems. The Ten Year Strategy emphasizes multiple approaches including Dietary Diversity, and Food Fortification amongst others. Therefore effective implementation of the Ten Year Strategy is imperative; and making sure that flour fortification remains a priority goes without saying.

Last but by no means has least; to solve the scourge of hunger and malnutrition, requires well coordinated food and nutrition management systems that are inclusive, cross sectoral, accountable and which recognize that investing in nutrition cannot be substituted or postponed. Therefore annually commemorating the Africa Food and Nutrition Security Day on 30<sup>th</sup> October presents the best opportunity to keep the fires burning towards realizing an Africa free of hunger and

malnutrition. We intend to include Flour Fortification activities as part of this movement, and encourage all of you to be a part of this new dawn in Africa. We must also capitalize on other exciting global initiatives around nutrition. This is the DECADE for Nutrition, we must seize the opportunity!

I thank you all.

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