

Republic of Armenia
School Meals Coalition
Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child
Commitment Document for the Government of Armenia

The Government of Armenia (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of the Republic of Armenia) expresses its strong support for the scale up of school meal programmes as a driver for recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We recognize that school feeding programs provide an efficient and effective method of promoting the health, nutrition, and well-being of school-age children. Such programs can significantly enhance education outcomes and empower the children to achieve their full potential. Consistent investment in these programs can lead to more inclusive, equitable education and better health and nutrition results. We believe school feeding programs can also play a role in promoting nutrition education and healthy eating habits through incorporating nutrition education and hands-on learning opportunities into school curriculums. By promoting healthy eating habits at a young age, these programs can have long-term benefits for children's health and wellbeing.

We are convinced that investing in school feeding programs can have a significant and far-reaching impact beyond the immediate increase in education quality, health and well-being of children, contributing to sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, and social development. These programs can have a positive effect on local economies by creating demand for local food production and distribution, which can generate income and employment opportunities for farmers, food processors, and other businesses. We believe that innovative and transformative school feeding models can contribute to quality of education and healthy lifestyles through sustainable agriculture and clean green learning practices.

By 2030 every school aged child in the Republic of Armenia has a healthy and nutritious school meal opportunity to enhance their ability to learn, and access to adequate nutrition knowledge contributing to the improvement of their dietary behaviour to fulfill their full potential and contribute to human capital development of the country. To achieve this vision The government of Armenia is committed to working towards the full implementation of the following:

- Commit to making School Feeding universally available to all students through different modalities (fully funded by government, self-financed from schools and communities, urban and commercial models).
- Commit to enhance the school meals programme working together with partners to expand coverage currently for 1-4 grade school students in ten regions of Armenia to include capital Yerevan schools by 2030.
- Commit to sustain and upgrade the annual budget allocation of the national school feeding programme.

- Commit to full scale institutionalization, integration of school feeding program procedures into national legislation on education (revision of staff list, job descriptions, school procedures and regulations).
- Commit to review and update the National School Feeding Standards on a regular basis to ensure it is relevant and based on recent scientific evidence. Including constant revision of menus and incorporation of new healthy food items such as whole grains.
- Commit to establishing research and learning agenda to support the national school feeding programme through building connections between national, private academic institutions and the research consortium for school health and nutrition.
- Commit to develop a national strategy for school feeding by 2025.
- Commit to implement a national educational curriculum starting January 2024 which will allow students to extensively use project-based learning linked to green and clean energy in the green houses, orchards, berry gardens, school gardens among other initiatives. The curriculum also provides healthy lifestyle education through a special course that includes sessions about nutrition to improve knowledge, attitude, and practices of schoolchildren for better health and nutrition.
- Commit to promote partnerships and coordination for complementary activities in the implementation of school feeding through training and exchange of best practices from the international, regional, and national models with schools, vocational education, and training institutions (VET), and universities.
- Commit to strengthen the school feeding environment by improving infrastructure and developing the capacity of the actors engaged in school feeding (e.g., renovations, kitchen venues and utilities, staff training).
- Commit to develop self-reliant and adaptive capacities/resources of schools to run school feeding on their own regardless of crises and challenges (solar energy, greenhouses, intensive orchards, berry gardens and other facilities).
- Commit to implement educational training to improve knowledge, attitude, and practices of the schoolchildren's parents, caregivers and teachers for better health and nutrition.

These commitments will ensure that every child receives a healthy and nutritious meal at school, leaving no one behind.

Name: ZHANNA ANDREASYAN

Title: MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT

Country/Organization: REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT

Signature: _____



14.09.2023