



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

School Meals Coalition: Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

We, the Heads of State and Government and Leaders of the United Nations, civil society, academia, philanthropy and the private sector express our strong determination to scale up school meals programmes to bolster recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We underscore the urgency to act now to protect the most vulnerable children from hunger and malnutrition leaving no one behind.

We recognize that school meals play an important role in food system s transformation as they combat child hunger, poverty and multiple forms of malnutrition. They attract children to school and support children's learning, long term well-being and health. School meals promote gender equity by supporting girls and boys to attend and graduate from school and reducing the risk of child marriage, early pregnancies and gender-based violence. They also contribute towards a holistic approach to child well-being through the integration of education, nutrition, health, and social protection interventions, and serve as platforms to teach children about healthy diets and sustainable lifestyles.

Children and their families are not the only ones who benefit Scaled up higher quality school meals programmes strengthen national and local food systems, markets and economy, by using locally grown food where appropriate and expanding opportunities for smallholder farmers and local catering businesses, many led by women. Overall, we recognize school meals as impactful and efficient interventions, bringing significant social returns for the resources invested in them.

We envisage a world where every child has the opportunity to enjoy a healthy and nutritious meal in school by 2030, supporting the full realization of their human potential. To achieve this critical goal, we commit ourselves to working together towards the full implementation of the following:

1. Set out a long-term plan with the aim to restore access to school meals for children who lost them during the pandemic and reach those previously left behind, especially in countries most vulnerable to poverty and climate change
2. Improve our approach in a collaborative way, sharing best practices and lessons learnt tailored to national and local contexts.
3. Invest in scaling up progress through a research consortium, multi sectoral financing taskforce, advocacy and outreach taskforce and

initiatives around best practice and accountability; and mobilize the means required to implement this agenda through partnerships

4. Work collaboratively with all stakeholders across the sectors and at regional, national and subnational levels to realize these goals.

5. Specific to the Philippines:

- a. provide of Iron Fortified Rice in school feeding program;
- b. apply the concept of home-grown School Feeding where schools are linked to the community and the small-scale farmers for sustainable, gender-transformative and income-generating food production and supply;
- c. continue efforts to strengthen the convergence of school feeding and other health and nutrition initiatives toward a comprehensive school nutrition program;
- d. implement social and behavior change communication initiatives to improve knowledge, attitude and practices of the schoolchildren, their parents and caregivers, and teachers and school leaders for better health and nutrition;
- e. implement existing and advocate for stronger policies to promote healthy food choices among schoolchildren, including those that provide guidance on foods and beverages sold or marketed in schools or to schoolchildren, and those that regulate food industry advertisements and sponsorships targeting schools;
- f. implement existing and advocate for stronger policies on food safety, quality, and nutritional standards of school meals;
- g. increase fiscal support to school meals;
- h. strengthen institutionalization initiatives that ensure national and local government prioritization of school feeding and other health and nutrition programs;
- i. improve the quality and coverage of the program towards universal feeding;
- j. increase, strengthen, and streamline human resource complement and organizational structure to effectively support program implementation and ensure success.

These objectives will accelerate action on the Sustainable Development Goals as we head toward 2030 and improve the lives of our children.


LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES
Secretary