



2nd Africa Maternal Nutrition and Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) Technical Meeting

Nairobi, Kenya | 16-18 October 2024

November 2024

CALL TO ACTION

This 'Call to Action' reflects the collective expertise, experiences, and recommendations of delegates from across Africa, developed during the 2nd Africa Maternal Nutrition and MMS Technical Meeting, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2024. Grounded in evidence-based discussions and enriched by diverse regional perspectives, it charts a shared path for accelerating the adoption and scale-up of maternal nutrition interventions, notably MMS as a part of essential antenatal care services to improve maternal and child health outcomes in Africa.

PROGRESS AND MOMENTUM

MMS is widely recognized as a high-impact, cost-effective intervention that significantly improves maternal health and birth outcomes, making its adoption an urgent priority.

While countries are at various stages of introducing MMS, significant progress has been made since the 2023 Regional meeting in Addis Ababa. The Nairobi meeting marked a pivotal shift, with countries driving their own MMS agendas and seeking additional opportunities to engage in a community of practice to learn from one another. The African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and key philanthropic donors and delegates expressed strong commitment to maternal nutrition and MMS.



It's from the 2023 meeting in Ethiopia that we kickstarted implementing MMS on the ground...from the evidence presented and discussed at the meeting, we gained a lot of buy-in from stakeholders.

Phoster Chimbizgani Kachali
Deputy Director Nutrition
Ministry of Health, Malawi

This growing momentum offers a unique opportunity to commit to improving the nutrition, health and lives of the mothers and their babies in Africa by adopting and scaling up MMS.



MMS is a game-changer in reducing undernutrition, and given its low cost and high impact, countries should move quickly to adopt MMS.

Sir Christopher Hohn
Co-founder
CIFF

Recognizing the benefits of MMS and leveraging available tools and resources to support its introduction and scale-up, many countries are transitioning to integrate and scale MMS within maternal health services. As countries move beyond proof of impact, implementation science approaches remain important for informing effective implementation and scale-up. With support now available, access to financial resources, technical assistance, and product supply should no longer be barriers for governments striving to develop long-term, sustainable plans to improve maternal nutrition.



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African countries are urged to seize this opportunity to improve maternal health and birth outcomes, advance gender equality, and ensure that women and children reach their full potential by introducing and scaling up MMS programming.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopting Context-Specific Approaches

The scale-up of MMS is an iterative, non-linear process that must be tailored to each country's unique context, including delivery methods, production capacity, and policy requirements while adhering to global best practices.

2. Building Government Ownership and Advocacy

The foundation for MMS success lies in government ownership, strategic partnerships, and advocacy from start to scale. Early-stage efforts, such as establishing a Technical Advisory Group and including MMS in national Essential Medicines Lists (EMLs), are critical for sustained scale-up. High-level advocacy from regional leaders can amplify these efforts, creating the political will necessary for long-term integration.

3. Integrating MMS into Antenatal Care (ANC) Services and Community-Based Delivery Platforms

MMS is an opportunity to improve maternal nutrition services within ANC, complementing existing frameworks rather than being introduced as a stand-alone intervention. Delivery strategies should leverage both health center- and community-based platforms to maximize reach, particularly in underserved areas. Experiences and lessons learned must be documented on an ongoing basis.

4. Strengthening Supply Chain

Since the July 2023 meeting in Addis, MMS supply chain capacity has increased significantly. Today, the global production capacity for MMS is sufficient to meet the current demand for MMS product, and efforts to boost regional and local manufacturing to meet anticipated future demand are ongoing. Continued investment in local manufacturing and logistics infrastructure is critical. Strengthening regional supply chains will ensure that MMS availability aligns with national strategies and demand forecasts.

5. Sharing Knowledge and Resources

Comprehensive tools and funding mechanisms for MMS, such as [UNICEF's Maternal Nutrition Acceleration Plan](#), the [Child Nutrition Fund](#), the [Global Investment Roadmap](#), R4D's MMS [Roadmap Costing Tool](#), Nutrition International's [MMS Cost-Benefit Tool](#) and [Cost of Inaction Tool](#), are now available to provide critical support for countries navigating scale-up challenges. A growing array of resources, including [evidence-based advocacy materials](#) by HMHB and [FurtherWith15](#), can accelerate learning among countries by exchanging evidence and implementation science research, delivery strategies, and insights on demand generation.

6. Leveraging Global Advocacy Opportunities

The [African Union Regional Nutrition Strategy](#) and the upcoming [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#) (N4G) offer important opportunities to elevate maternal nutrition and MMS on global and national policy agendas and increase financial investments towards improving maternal health. The [SUN Global Gathering](#) will serve as an important moment to reflect on the commitments to MMS and maternal nutrition made at N4G while assessing areas that may require course correction.



There are many challenges ahead, but the unquestionable benefits of MMS, coupled with the current commitment of the global community to support its introduction and scale-up, presents a unique opportunity and momentum to collectively improve the health, and nutrition of mothers and babies in Africa.



MMS is not just a supplement – it is a statement of our values.

It affirms our commitment to giving every child the best start in life.

George Ouma
Coordinator
African Leaders For Nutrition
African Development Bank Group



About HMHB

The **Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Consortium (HMHB)**, hosted by the **Micronutrient Forum**, is a growing collective of more than 300 organizations and individuals dedicated to improving maternal nutrition. We work collaboratively to accelerate the availability and effective use of affordable multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS) and other nutrition interventions, such as balanced energy and protein (BEP) dietary supplementation during pregnancy, in low and middle-income countries.

HMHB also hosts global Technical Advisory Groups (TAG) on MMS ([MMS TAG](#)) and BEP ([BEP TAG](#)). These TAGs, comprising experts in nutrition, maternal health, and public health, interpret evidence, address knowledge gaps, and provide high-fidelity practical guidance to governments, NGOs, foundations, multilateral organizations, and the private sector.

Visit our [website](#) for the latest knowledge, evidence, guidance, and tools on maternal nutrition. Explore the [World Map on MMS](#), [Knowledge Hub](#), [Advocacy Resource Center](#), [Women's Voices](#) short films, and [Knowledge Byte](#) videos. Join us in powering women's nutrition for promising futures. [Become a member.](#)



hmhbconsortium.org



HMHB@micronutrientforum.org



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