

NPC launches multi-sector nutrition plan

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The plan also aims to reduce stunting in children below five years of age from 36 per cent to 28 per cent within five years. It has also set the goal of reducing the rate of stunting from 36 per cent to 24 per cent by the year 2025 and to 14 per cent by 2030.

According to Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2016, overall 36 per cent of children under five years of age are stunted, with 12 per cent severely stunted, 10 per cent wasted, two per cent severely wasted, 27 per cent underweight, five per cent severely underweight and one per cent overweight.

Similarly, the prevalence of anaemia among children under the age of five years is 53 per cent. Forty-one per cent women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia and 17 per cent from long-term energy deficiencies, as per NDHS.

"Nutrition is of paramount importance in the overall well-being of children. We must focus on adolescents and women. This requires action in the health sector along with other related sectors like agriculture, livestock development, education, water, sanitation, social welfare and local development. For the implementation of MSNP II there should be coordinated efforts from federal, provincial and local level governments," said Health Minister Deepak Bohara.

"Women and children are affected by major micro-nutrient deficiencies. Malnutrition increases the risk of mortality in the early stages of infancy and childhood, impairs cognitive function of those who survive, and hinders efforts to enhance national

social and economic development goals. This new plan related to health and nutrition aims to make a crucial contribution to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and help reap the benefits of demographic dividend by investing now to ensure a healthier and economically productive population tomorrow," said Dr Swarnim Wagle, vice-chairman of the NPC and Chairperson of the High Level Nutrition and Food Security Steering Committee.

MSNP is being implemented by the government in collaboration with various development partners. It was endorsed and approved by the Cabinet on November 19. Estimated to cost Rs 48.9 billion, the plan will be expanded in all local levels.

The government has developed this multi-sector nutrition plan to speed up improvements in the nutrition profile of Nepali people. This is expected to be instrumental in the formation of healthy and competitive human capital and to breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty and under-nutrition in the long run.