

School Meals Coalition Task Force Meeting

Outcome Statement

Nairobi, 29 October 2024

The School Meals Coalition Global Task Force¹ held its second ministerial meeting in Nairobi on October 29, 2024, to take stock of achievements and chart the course of the Coalition going forward.

The Coalition was established under the shared conviction that school meal programmes meaningfully contribute to economic, social and environmental progress. Healthy school meals can support goals in education, food security, nutrition, health, social protection, gender equality and transformation of agri-food systems, and climate action. They promote social equity, human capital development and intergenerational fairness.

Since its creation three years ago, the Coalition's membership has more than doubled – from 46 countries in September 2021 to 105 in October 2024. More than 130 partner organizations have joined. This has resulted in a powerful mobilization of political will and country action towards one common goal: ensuring that every child receives a nutritious meal in school by 2030.

This meeting builds on the School Meals Coalition Global Summit held in Paris in October 2023 and the first Ministerial-level meeting of the Task Force held in Helsinki in October 2022. The meeting was Chaired by Brazil, Finland and France, and hosted by Kenya, under the patronage of His Excellency William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya.

We have agreed on the following six priorities for the Coalition (2025-2026):

1. Make school meals a political and fiscal priority globally and expand access to sustainable finance: advocate for school meals as a high-impact investment in human capital and growth, identify a set of influential champions, engage ministers of finance in this discussion, and engage the international financial institutions at the highest levels to address the challenges of positioning this agenda as a global priority. Help countries explore options to mobilize domestic and external finance to expand fiscal space, fill funding gaps and transition to self-reliance. Strengthen the Sustainable Financing Initiative to lead on this priority and ensure robust collaboration with the Global Alliance Against Poverty and Hunger.
2. Move from commitments to action at country level: encourage countries to accelerate the scale and quality of their programmes by connecting them with suitable partners, providing assistance and fostering peer-to-peer engagement. Support the launch of the new "School Meals Impact Accelerator" to provide demand-led strategic technical assistance to low- and lower-income countries for sustainable, national programmes.

¹ The Task Force of the School Meals Coalition, which is the decision-making body of the Coalition, determines the overall strategic direction, sets priorities, provides guidance and leadership to the work of the Secretariat and the initiatives, and leads on political advocacy and positioning. It meets at the Ministerial level every two years.

3. Strengthen evidence for better decision making and more cost-efficient programmes: document best practices and the value-for-money of sustainable national school meals programmes and inform government policy decisions through the annual Research Statement and Showcase of Evidence of the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition.
4. Measure results and report on progress of the Coalition: support the launch of the biennial “State of School Feeding” report which will summarize global progress; report on the new SDG4 indicator on school meals coverage for the first time, and strengthen indicators to measure progress on school meals at global level through the new Coalition database; and enhance the availability and accessibility of high-quality data on financing, national school meal programmes, school meals in urban contexts, and complementary activities through the Data and Monitoring Initiative.
5. Empower cities and municipalities to make progress: prioritize support at the subnational level, through the Cities Feeding the Future initiative, mobilizing a cohort of champion Mayors/ sub-national leaders to improve their programmes through targeted support, sharing of experiences and advocacy.
6. Prioritize high-level participation in the next Global Meeting of the Coalition in Brasilia in 2025 and support additional gatherings to support advocacy: these include South Africa’s G20 Presidency, Canada’s G7 Presidency, the 10th Africa Day of School Feeding, the Second Food Systems Stock-taking Moment, Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris, the Summit of Social Development/UNGA, COP 30 and regional coalition meetings.

Summary of the main outcomes of the Meeting

- New national commitments were received: Brazil announced its national commitments, outlining concrete actions to rapidly advance progress on school meals both at home and abroad.
- Collaboration between the School Meals Coalition and the Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty was discussed: The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty overall goal is to mobilize partners in the fight against hunger, poverty and inequality, serving as a “network-of-networks” galvanizing existing mechanisms, including the School Meals Coalition. The School Meals Coalition focuses on scaling sustainable school meal programmes to ensure every child has access to nutritious meals by 2030. Commitments (whether national, financial or knowledge-based) towards school meals programmes from countries and other entities will be recognized by both the Alliance and the Coalition to ensure alignment, avoid duplication and ensure consistency towards shared objectives. The Global Alliance, via its support and coordination team, will serve as a facilitator, connecting the School Meals Coalition membership with new prospective partners. The Coalition and its initiatives will continue to act as the primary vehicle providing school meal-specific support across the Alliance’s three pillars (national, financial and knowledge). Countries and other entities are welcome to join both the Alliance and the Coalition for enhanced and impactful collaboration.
- The Research Consortium issued its 2024 Research Statement: which highlights the growing evidence of the multi-sectoral benefits of school meals, identifies cost-efficient good practices, and proposes planning tools that can assist governments to translate these learnings into national programmes.

- Scenarios to raise the ambition for school meals financing were presented by the Sustainable Financing Initiative: in a paper titled School feeding and the Sustainable Development Goals: An agenda to combat child hunger, boost education, transform food systems and strengthen equity. Two scenarios were considered to expand school meals financing in low-and-middle-income countries. To reach an additional 162-236 million children in these countries, funding of about USD 2.7-3.6 billion is needed, respectively, an estimated \$1.2 billion of which will be needed in new and additional aid to support countries still transitioning to full funding of school meals programmes.
- International and national finance delivery mechanisms were put forward to help scale up school meals: these include a variety of tax approaches, debt relief, climate financing and other innovative financing mechanisms based on the evidence presented in a new Capitalization Strategy that was discussed. In addition, partners shared examples of long-running initiatives like the USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, recently launched initiatives like the BMZ Accelerating School Meals Program and the African Development Bank and Children's Investment Fund Foundation's End School-Age Hunger Fund, and forthcoming initiatives that include the Islamic Development Bank and World Food Programme 'Nutritious Start Initiative' and the Global Partnership for Education's School Health and Nutrition Strategic Capability. Brazil and France announced a new cooperation facilitated by the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger, starting in 2024, to advance school feeding programmes in West Africa.
- The School Meals Coalition Database was announced: the Data and Monitoring Initiative developed the database that enhances the availability and accessibility of high-quality data on national school meal programmes and complementary activities, and will be connected to the new SDG4 indicator on school meals.
- School meals and food system transformation was discussed: countries and partners such as Germany, Norway, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Novo Nordisk Foundation, have worked individually and collaboratively to drive food systems transformation through strategic technical assistance and catalytic financing. The United States has invested billions of dollars in school meal supply chains. To further these efforts, a new Coalition initiative called the "School Meals Impact Accelerator", to be hosted by the World Food Programme, was discussed and is expected to be launched in 2025.
- The work of regional and sub-regional bodies was discussed: Regional networks from African, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean have convened meetings over the last year with Honduras hosting next year's Latin America and the Caribbean forum. The Cities Feeding the Future is continuing to connect city networks.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Kenya for hosting this Task Force meeting. We commit to working together to position school meals as a game changing solution as part of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty during the G20 meeting in Rio de Janeiro. We look forward to Brazil hosting the Second Global Summit of the School Meals Coalition in Brasilia, September 2025, and to the third School Meals Coalition Taskforce meeting in 2026.

The Co-Chairs of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the School Meals Coalition Taskforce.

Nairobi, Kenya, 29 October 2024