### International Women’s Day Event: Women, Under-nutrition and Healthcare in Crisis

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested date and time:</strong></th>
<th>Wednesday 7th March, 14.00-15.00</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room:</strong></td>
<td>BGIPU room in Parliament, booked by Roberta Blackman Woods MP</td>
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<td><strong>Format:</strong></td>
<td>Panel discussion with teas/coffees and snacks. Last 15 mins for photos of MPs, academia and civil society with the board.</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity:</strong></td>
<td>40 people</td>
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#### Purpose and rationale of the event and expected outcomes

Around the world, women’s health is in crisis. From staggeringly high anemia rates in adolescent girls to lack of access to basic antenatal care for women during pregnancy, too many girls and women face barriers to proper health and nutrition at every turn.

Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. 99% of these maternal deaths occur in developing countries.

Nearly a quarter of women of reproductive age are underweight and 40% of pregnant women are anaemic. As well as reducing women and girls’ capacity to learn at school and work, anaemia contributes to a quarter of maternal deaths.

In humanitarian crises, heightened insecurity, displacement and the breakdown of society means that women and children are often face the greatest barriers to accessing nutritious food and medical support. Hunger statistics are getting worse: now 815 million people are going to bed hungry, up from 777 million in 2015. The reality of famines in the world today means achieving these targets, especially for wasting, will become even more challenging. Indeed, an estimated 38 million people are facing severe food insecurity in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. In Yemen, three years of brutal conflict has left 17.8 million people in food insecurity and an estimated 1.8 million children acutely malnourished.

This event aims to highlight the vital role of access to healthcare and good nutrition in improving women, adolescent girls’ and children’s opportunities and in achieving gender equality. Speakers will address the challenges to women and child nutrition from their perspectives and highlight the key policies needed to address under-nutrition and food insecurity.

#### Main objectives for this event

**Objective 1:** Highlight the importance of addressing under-nutrition and food insecurity in improving adolescent, reproductive and maternal health for women/girls.

**Objective 2:** Highlight the importance of addressing nutrition within famine relief in conflict-zones, and the impact of food insecurity on women and children during crises.

**Objective 3:** Engage parliamentarians from across the political spectrum and increase interest in women’s health, nutrition, international development and humanitarian crises.
**Objective 4:** Showcase the importance of good nutrition interventions for women’s health and empowerment.

**Objective 5:** Demonstrate UK support for nutrition and the UK’s prioritisation of women and other marginalised groups in the nutrition position paper and humanitarian relief.

**Objective 6:** Maximise social media around International Women’s Day, and promote nutrition within this.

**Proposed speakers**
- Anna Leach, development journalist and former deputy editor of the Guardian Development Network
- Marianne Haselgrave, Director of the Commonwealth Medical Trust
- Dr Naseer Nizamani, Country Director of Nutrition International Pakistan
- Stefano Battain, Food Security and Livelihoods Advisor at War Child

**Questions for panel**

How important is nutrition and food security to women and children’s health?

Why is nutrition such an under-prioritised area of a) development and b) famine relief?

What are barriers that women face to accessing good nutrition and food security?

What is the impact of under-nutrition and food insecurity on women and children, both in peace and during crisis?

What are the most effective interventions for addressing under-nutrition and food insecurity for women and children?

What steps should the UK take to address this, in light of its a) nutrition position paper and b) humanitarian reform policy?

**Concept**

To create a dynamic panel discussion around the role of nutrition and food security for women and children, and the additional barriers faced in both peace and during crises.

The event will serve as a platform to highlight the crucial, but often forgotten, role of nutrition within reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health.