

# Healthier Pregnancies and Brighter Futures for Mothers and Babies:

## *A global investment roadmap for multiple micronutrient supplementation*

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*NEPAL: Maheshwori Devi Bishwokarma pregnant with her second child*

### Maternal Malnutrition: A Global Crisis

**Malnutrition is a persistent and growing threat to the well-being of women and girls worldwide.** Currently, 1 billion women do not have access to the adequate nutrition and healthy diets they need to survive and flourish through every stage of life — and two out of every three women of reproductive age worldwide have micronutrient deficiencies.<sup>1</sup> Climate change poses a particular risk to the health of pregnant women, their children, and other vulnerable communities that are already more susceptible to undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

**Malnutrition not only limits a woman's ability to meet her full potential; it threatens the health and well-being of future generations.** Malnourished mothers are more likely to have serious pregnancy complications, including giving birth to infants who are born too soon and too small. More than half of all newborn deaths are attributed to being small and vulnerable. Malnourished babies who survive infancy are more likely to experience developmental setbacks and chronic health conditions that pose challenges in adolescence and adulthood.

While a comprehensive approach is needed to fully address the causes and consequences of malnutrition in women, there are cost-effective interventions that, if deployed today, can save and improve lives. **One small but mighty intervention is multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) — an improved prenatal supplement that can deliver transformational impact.**

### MMS: A Best Buy in Global Development

MMS is widely recognized as a high-impact, safe, cost-effective, and affordable intervention to meet the nutritional demands of pregnancy. Because these demands are often not met through diet alone, high-quality prenatal supplements play an important role in preventing malnutrition in pregnant women and supporting a healthy pregnancy for a woman and her child.

**With a cost of less than two cents per daily tablet, MMS is one of the best buys in global health and nutrition.** When taken daily during pregnancy, it can prevent anemia, support a healthy pregnancy, and reduce the risk of babies being born small and vulnerable or stillborn. Despite its proven effectiveness, in low- and middle-income countries where the prevalence of maternal malnutrition and risk of child mortality are high, most women receive an inferior supplement with only two ingredients (iron and folic acid, or IFA) — if they receive any supplement at all.

### Key Facts

- » Globally, 1 billion women and girls are undernourished.
- » Malnutrition causes one in five maternal deaths and nearly half of all child deaths under age five.
- » MMS is a prenatal supplement that contains 15 essential nutrients that improve the health and nutrition of mothers and their babies.
- » MMS is widely recognized as one of the best buys in global health and development with a return of \$37 for every \$1 spent.
- » A new report shows that, at a cost of just over \$4 per pregnancy (a total cost of \$1.1 billion over seven years), we can save more than half a million lives, improve birth outcomes for more than five million babies and prevent anemia in over 15 million pregnant women by 2030.

<sup>1</sup> For full citations, please see the global investment roadmap: <https://hnhbconsortium.org/knowledge-hub/mms-global-investment-roadmap/>

## Now is the Time to Invest in MMS

This investment roadmap presents an opportunity to reach at least 260 million women with MMS by the end of 2030. The roadmap models the cost and impact of scaling MMS in 45 low- and middle-income countries, which account for 85% of the burden of stunting, stillbirths, and neonatal deaths.

At an average cost of \$4 per pregnant woman<sup>2</sup> reached (a total cost of \$1.1 billion over seven years),<sup>3</sup> we can impact two lives — mother and baby — and deliver life-saving and life-changing impact including:

- » 618,000 million lives saved
- » Improved birth outcomes for more than five million babies
- » 15 million cases of maternal anemia averted

## Mobilizing Resources to Drive Impact

Country demand and readiness for MMS scaling has never been

greater. Dozens of country governments worldwide are taking the first steps to introduce and scale MMS and strengthen health systems to deliver it. For the first time, this global investment roadmap sets out guidance for a range of stakeholders to invest in transitioning and scaling MMS in partnership with country governments, with clear funding targets and associated impacts.

Donor support in the short term can accelerate progress towards fully sustainable, government-led programs. In the long term, sustainable impact relies on country governments strengthening and financing their antenatal care programs to distribute MMS at scale. International donors should act urgently and decisively to mobilize resources to support these efforts. Coordination with country governments at every step is critical to driving impact.

Bilateral donors, private philanthropies, multilateral development banks, and the private sector can leverage multiple funding channels to support MMS transition and scale-up including:

- » **Direct support to governments** in alignment with their MMS scale-up goals and in response to their interest in scaling MMS.
- » **Bilateral funding of programmatic partners** already working in coordination with country governments to conduct research and support the scale-up of MMS.
- » **Pooled funding mechanisms** such as the Child Nutrition Fund led by UNICEF, which allows for donors to support a range of geographies.
- » **Funding to MMS suppliers** to help scale up manufacturing capacity to meet growing demand.

## Meeting the Moment with MMS

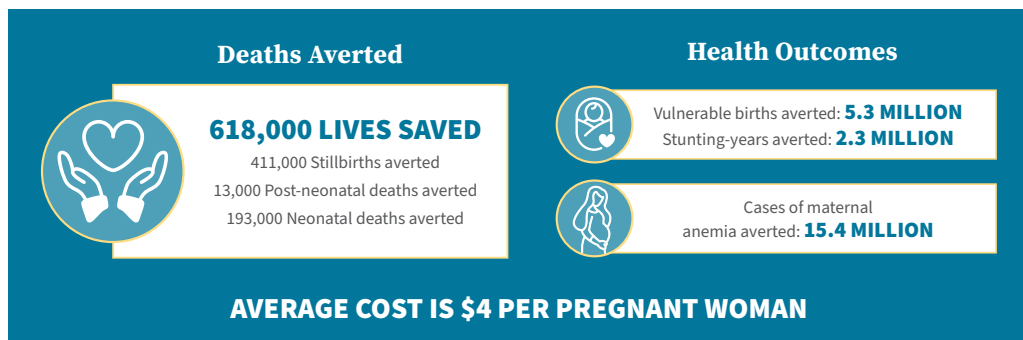
To accelerate progress toward our global goals and save more lives, we must make greater investments in nutrition for women and children. MMS is an intervention that is ready to scale — and one that helps mothers, children, and communities not only survive, but thrive.

More than two decades of research has demonstrated that MMS significantly improves birth outcomes compared to the current standard of care. Now is the time for all stakeholders to invest in MMS and ensure women everywhere can utilize its power for healthier pregnancies.

To access the full investment roadmap and learn how you can get involved, visit:

<https://hmhbconsortium.org/knowledge-hub/mms-global-investment-roadmap/>

### Delivering Impact for 260 Million Mothers and Their Babies



<sup>2</sup> \$4 per pregnancy represents an average cost to introduce and scale MMS per pregnant woman (i.e., \$1.1 billion divided by 260 million pregnant women reached). Individual costs presented in this document are not applied equally to all pregnant women reached and therefore may not total \$4 per pregnancy.

<sup>3</sup> Of this overall cost, this roadmap estimates that \$720 million will need to come from public and private donors, complementing \$380 million from domestic resources. Costs are broken down into transition, scaling, and supply.