



NEWS RELEASE

14 July 2019

New experts appointed to lead the Global Nutrition Report

London, 14 July 2019 - Dr Renata Micha and M.G. Ventakesh Mannar have been appointed as the new Co-Chairs of the world-renowned Global Nutrition Report.

Dr Micha is a Research Associate Professor at Tufts University, and a trained clinical dietitian, public health nutritionist, and epidemiologist. Mannar is an adjunct Professor at Cornell University. He has a strong academic record in nutrition, is a leading expert in technology to tackle micronutrient deficiencies and held the position of President of the Micronutrient Initiative in Canada for 20 years until 2014.

In their roles, the new Co-Chairs will lead the Global Nutrition Report, ensuring the publication continues to be a go-to resource for NGOs, governments, business, civil society organisations and those wanting the latest evidence on the status of malnutrition around the world. As the last report found, malnutrition remains unacceptably high in every country in the world, costing billions of dollars a year, and immediate action must be taken by all stakeholders to reduce this burden.

The Co-Chair appointments come at an important time for the nutrition community. They take over the report ahead of the Nutrition for Growth 2020 Summit in Japan, key players will come together to agree a new set of commitments to drive global efforts for eradicating malnutrition in every country.

About the Co-Chairs

Dr Micha's global research into the effects of diet on health and the cost-effectiveness of dietary food policies means she is uniquely placed to engage a wide audience of policymakers as well as health and nutrition communities at the forefront of the fight to tackle global malnutrition.

Speaking on her appointment, she said: *"Poor diet quality is the leading cause of death, suffering, and disparities worldwide. This includes major impacts of both food insecurity and undernutrition, and of diet-related obesity and non-communicable chronic diseases (NCDs) – the 'double burden'. A high-quality diet is critical to prevent micronutrient deficiencies and ensure optimal maternal health, child development, and reduced risk of obesity and NCDs.*



The global nutrition crisis we are facing also has environmental implications that need to be addressed. A unified front among governments, policy makers, the food industry and other key stakeholders is required to reverse worrying trends in the status of global malnutrition, and to safeguard our health and our planet. As a Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report, my priority will be to highlight poor diet as the leading cause of poor health worldwide and make it central to the Sustainable Development Goals.”

M.G. Venkatesh Mannar’s specialist expertise in the use of technology to enhance the nutritional quality of foods has led, among other things, to directly tackling micronutrition deficiencies in children.

In response to his appointment, he said: "In a world of immense challenges, conflicting priorities and fast-paced change, the need to address the global nutrition condition has never been greater. Based on meticulous research and analysis by leading experts, the Global Nutrition Report helps to connect the dots and determine what should be done to catalyse action and ensure impact. It provides a snapshot of overarching issues, progress made and problems that persist. It is proactive in offering solutions and a way forward to guide decision makers. The report should form the backdrop for the Nutrition for Growth 2020 Summit in Japan, elevating visibility and commitment by all sectors and creating the enabling environment for individuals to assume ownership in making positive changes in their diets and lifestyles."

Lucy Sullivan, Executive Director at 1,000 days and Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report’s Stakeholder Group was part of the appointing panel, and said: *“On behalf of the Global Nutrition Report Stakeholder Group, I am delighted to welcome Dr Renata Micha and M.G. Venkatesh Mannar as the new Co-Chairs of the Global Nutrition Report Independent Expert Group. Renata and Venkatesh bring to the Global Nutrition Report deep and complementary nutrition expertise, experience in leading teams, and a history of working with diverse stakeholders. Their perspectives and experiences can ensure that the Global Nutrition Report reflects a holistic view of malnutrition in all its forms and what is needed to leverage opportunities to improve diets and nutrition. We look forward to working closely with them, drawing on their intellectual leadership, as we look to drive action around a major global nutrition summit in Japan in 2020.”*

- Ends -



NOTE TO EDITORS

M.G. Ventakesh Mannar started on 1 July 2019; Renata Micha will start on 1 October 2019 and is currently on maternity leave.

The Global Nutrition Report is the world's foremost publication on the status of malnutrition around the world. It acts as a stock-take on the world's nutrition – globally, regionally and country by country – and on efforts to improve it. It tracks progress on global nutrition targets, ranging from diet-related non-communicable diseases to maternal, infant and young child nutrition.

Its content is led by the chairs of an Independent Expert Group of world-leading academics, researchers and government representatives. The Independent Expert Group is consulted on, inputs into and reviews the report. A wider Stakeholder Group – drawn from government, donor, civil society, multilateral and private sector organisations – provides strategic leadership of the report.

It is backed and supported, among others, by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK's Department for International Development, USAID, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Government of Canada, Irish Aid, The Eleanor Crook Foundation and the European Commission.

As Co-Chairs, both Dr Renata Micha and M.G. Ventakesh Mannar will be the lead spokespeople for the Global Nutrition Report and are available for comment on issues covered by the Report.

Previous Co-Chairs of the Global Nutrition Report were Dr Jessica Fanzo and Dr Corinna Hawkes. Dr Jessica Fanzo still serves as a member of the wider Independent Expert Group of the Global Nutrition Report.

globalnutritionreport.org

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For media enquiries, including interview requests with Co-Chairs (biographies below), and members of the stakeholder group please contact:

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CO-CHAIR BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Renata Micha

Dr Micha is Research Associate Professor in the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Dr Micha is a registered clinical dietician, public health nutritionist and epidemiologist whose research focuses on the effects of diet on health, and on population strategies to improve diet, utilising multiple research paradigms. She has a particular interest and experience in global dietary assessment among various population



subgroups, identifying causal diet-disease relationships, quantifying and modelling the impact of dietary habits on chronic diseases, and evaluating the comparative- and cost-effectiveness of dietary (food) policies.

Dr Micha has received several awards and honours, and is an ad hoc manuscript reviewer in international journals, including *The New England Journal of Medicine*. She has authored more than 100 publications on diet and health in high impact scientific journals, such as *Circulation*, *British Medical Journal*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet*, and *PLoS Medicine*. Dr Micha played a central role in the 2010 Global Burden of Diseases Nutrition and Chronic Diseases Expert Group (NutriCoDE), aiming to characterise dietary habits and trends, and model impacts on non-communicable disease burdens worldwide, and is a co-investigator of current iterations of the Global Dietary Database (GDD).

She has played pivotal roles in establishing the Fatty Acids & Outcomes Research Consortium (FORCE), aiming to elucidate the relationships between fatty acids from diet and metabolic processes, measured using biomarkers, on chronic disease outcomes. Dr Micha has also been instrumental in establishing and coordinating the work of the Food Policy Review and Intervention Cost-Effectiveness (Food-PRICE) initiative that brings together food-policy work and investigators in order to both harmonise and streamline research and dissemination efforts. As the Principal Investigator of the NIH/NHLBI R01 grant (R01 HL130735) she leads and guides components relating to modelling the health and economic impacts of food policies to improve diet and health in the US.

Dr Micha received a degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from Harokopio University of Athens, Greece, a PhD in Public Health Nutrition from King's College London, UK, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard in Nutritional and Cardiovascular Epidemiology. Prior to being appointed Associate Research Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Dr Micha was Research Associate in the Department of Epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, and Director of the Hellenic National Nutrition and Health Survey (HNNHS).

M.G. Venkatesh Mannar

Venkatesh Mannar is a leader in the use of technology to enhance the nutritional quality of foods, and who has pioneered effective international nutrition initiatives focused on the world's most vulnerable citizens. As President of Canada's Micronutrient Initiative for nearly 20 years, until 2014, he played a major role in the development and expansion of health and nutrition programmes to address hidden hunger globally.



Mannar currently divides his time between India, Canada and the United States. He serves as a Special Adviser on Nutrition to Tata Trusts and The Tata Cornell Agriculture & Nutrition Initiative.

He pursues his research and teaching interests through appointments with the Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science, University of Toronto and Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University. He has co-authored more than 100 articles in leading nutrition journals and is the co-editor of *Food Fortification in a Globalized World*. Mannar has developed cutting-edge technologies to enhance the nutritional quality of foods alongside other researchers.

Mannar has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada, one of the country's greatest civilian honours, for his leadership in the global fight against malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency. He was conferred with an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree by the University of Toronto.