



## Press Release

### **Italy and WHO together to tackle malnutrition in Sudan: signature of the technical agreement**

On September 14<sup>th</sup> in Khartoum, Italy, represented by H.E the Ambassador of Italy Fabrizio Lobasso and WHO represented by, Dr Imadeldin Ismail, on behalf of the WHO Representative in the Sudan, Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, have signed the technical agreement of the project approved last July 2019. The project, funded by the Italian cooperation, focuses on fostering nutrition counselling and practices at primary health care level to reduce and prevent stunting and wasting in Red Sea, Kassala, Gedarif and Khartoum.

The project – equal to 1.5 M Euro with a duration of three years – aimed at preventing and managing wasting and stunting while promoting and enhancing monitoring and surveillance systems in support to the Federal Ministry of Health Plan. The very precarious food insecurity situation requires an extensive response by the health system to address a large caseload of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and active role in halting SAM. Dr Naeema Al Gasseer reaffirmed WHO's commitment to promote the right to access to safe and diverse food and to quality of local nutritious food for families to feed their children as an effective way to prevent malnutrition in vulnerable groups and communities. The project contributes in strengthening Ministry of Health staff's capacities through technical guidance according to WHO Standards, coaching and mentoring, supporting infrastructure development, and providing supplies.

The Italian Ambassador – Fabrizio Lobasso - recalled that Italy is playing an important role in the fighting against malnutrition in the country in line with its role of SUN donor converner. All the efforts will be in line with the Sudan National nutrition strategic plan 2014-2025 in order to achieve SDG #2 “Zero Hunger by 2030”. With 2.5 million of malnourished children below the age of 5 it is urgent to take immediate action to ensure an adequate level of nutrition and working on social and cultural prevention in order to tackle the root of the causes.

At the end of the ceremony, the Representative of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Vincenzo Racalbutto - added that Italian Cooperation is committed in a number of initiatives in poverty alleviation and nutrition for a total of 12.5 M EURO, both at bilateral and multilateral level with the active participation of WHO, UNIDO, UNICEF and UNWOMEN. The Director recalled the Italian involvement in fighting the Double Burden of Disease characterized by the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity, or diet-related noncommunicable diseases and in the support of the earliest 1.000 days of life that have a profound impact on a child's ability to grow, learn and thrive — and a lasting effect on a country's health and prosperity.