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Malnutrition remains a major health problem with consequences that are too grave to be ignored. It is the single biggest contributor to child mortality and 15% of the global burden of newborn and child mortality occurs in countries of the Region. It is estimated that noncommunicable diseases in the Region accounted for 52% of all deaths and 47% of the disease burden in 2005; the latter is expected to rise to 60% in 2020.

The regional strategy on nutrition 2010–2019 was developed through a consultative process in collaboration with Member States, the American University of Beirut, WHO headquarters and the WHO Regional Advisory Committee on Nutrition. The strategy proposes approaches to address the major health and nutrition problems in the Region. It aims to support countries in establishing and implementing action in nutrition in accordance with their national situation and resources, and provides a framework to assist countries to decide which nutrition actions are appropriate for a particular context. The strategic approaches target undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, prevention and control of obesity and noncommunicable diseases.

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