Spain uses political action to drive nutrition-related issues forward internationally

Spain outlines its position regarding nutrition in its ‘Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation for 2018 to 2021’ (Master Plan), listing nutrition together with food security among its seven priority sectors. Further orientations and priorities are spelled out in the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation’s (AECID) ‘Sectoral Intervention Plan on Rural Development and Fight against Hunger’.

The new Master Plan continues to place nutrition (the goal of ‘zero hunger’ and ending all forms of malnutrition) among its top priorities. It outlines two strategic actions related to nutrition: 1) provide all people suffering from malnutrition with food supplies and 2) support developing countries to build an effective, sustainable agro-food system.

Spain strongly links nutrition-related issues to food security and the fight against hunger. It focuses on women, children, and vulnerable populations. Its interventions in nutrition aim to work on prevention and risk-management efforts by focusing on developing resilience mechanisms and crisis-management tools. The AECID places emphasis on women’s empowerment and their participation in decision-making processes within the sector.

The cross-sectoral nature of nutrition interventions makes it difficult to accurately quantify Spain’s overall engagement in this sector. Spain does not participate in the reporting framework set by the ‘Scaling Up Nutrition’ (SUN) initiative, an international initiative to track nutrition-sensitive interventions (see box). According to OECD data, funding for ‘basic nutrition’ amounted to US$7 million in 2017. Funding levels topped at US$46 million in 2008 but have declined significantly since, largely attributable to budget cuts across all sectors.

To compensate for its low funding levels to nutrition, Spain engages increasingly on a political level and pushes the issue of nutrition forward on the international scene. It did so, for instance, in the development of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, where it promoted the importance of food and nutrition security. In October 2018, Spain hosted the first World Parliamentarian Forum Against Hunger and Malnutrition to build support among the world’s members of parliament around the Sustainable Development Goal of ‘zero hunger’. Spain also hosts the World Food Program’s (WFP) logistics center on the Canary Islands, which is an important hub for humanitarian aid to sub-Saharan Africa, particularly for the Sahel region.

**MAEUEC and AECID are the key actors in policymaking**

Within Spain’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEUEC), the most relevant department for nutrition when it comes to strategic orientation is the rural development and food security division. Within Spain’s development agency, AECID, the Directorate for Multilateral and Sectoral Cooperation, as well as regional departments (i.e. Directorate for Africa and Directorate for Latin America), are in charge of programming and implementing nutrition-related programs. The AECID’s Humanitarian Office manages emergency interventions related to food security and nutrition, such as in the Sahel region.

**SECTORS**

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