Co-Chairs' Outcome Statement
School Meals Coalition Priorities 2027–2028
Ministerial Meeting in Rome, Italy on October 14, 2026

The School Meals Coalition Task Force held its third ministerial meeting in Rome on October 14, 2026, to take stock of achievements and chart the course of the Coalition going forward.

Five years after its launch, the School Meals Coalition stands stronger than ever, welcoming Kenya as the fourth co-chair, uniting 113 governments, 6 regional bodies, and more than 160 partners behind one common **goal**: *ensuring that every child has access to a healthy, nutritious meal in school by 2030*. Today, school meals are widely recognized not only as a social programme but as a strategic national investment—one that boosts learning, strengthens education, health and nutrition outcomes, empowers girls, stimulates local economies and creates stable markets for local farmers, processors and small enterprises.

As global coverage has expanded—reaching at least 466 million children worldwide—these interconnected benefits have become even clearer. However, persistent gaps remain: inadequate infrastructure, fragile supply chains and growing pressure on national budgets in many countries. Addressing these challenges will be central to the Coalition's work moving forward to achieve its goal and its two main **objectives**: *1. Reach the most vulnerable children, in low- and lower middle-income countries and 2. Improve the quality and efficiency of existing school meal programmes in all countries by facilitating a healthy food environment and promoting safe, nutritious and sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food and diverse and balanced diets linking to local and seasonal production, where appropriate*.

More than 70 countries have put forward ambitious national commitments detailing how they will scale and improve their school meal programmes.

The next biennium is therefore a pivotal moment to consolidate progress and elevate governments' political leadership. The **four priorities** outlined below represent a renewed commitment to support countries, mobilise partners, strengthen systems and ensure that school meals become permanent, nationally owned policies and programmes able to withstand fiscal cycles, emergencies and future shocks.

We have agreed on the following four priorities for the Coalition (2027-2028):

The priorities for 2027–2028 outline a bold and realistic agenda to accelerate action on the ground, broaden global cooperation and cross-sectoral coordination and reinforce governments' role as the driving force behind school meals policy, implementation and innovation worldwide.

1. **Accelerating country action and delivery of national commitments, including through regional and international cooperation**

Governments will translate political ambition into sustainable, nationally owned school meal systems by strengthening evidence-based policies and laws, financing strategies, resilient

implementation systems and reporting mechanisms. Through targeted technical assistance, peer learning, research, and regional cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, countries will enhance programme quality, strengthen procurement and delivery systems and advance locally sourced approaches.

2. Elevating the role of cities and local governments

Cities and local governments will be empowered as key actors in the school meals agenda through greater engagement, stronger multilevel coordination, and targeted support for urban implementation. By fostering collaboration across governance levels and Coalition partners, cities will accelerate the delivery and impact of school meal programmes.

3. Strengthening and activating the partner ecosystem

The Coalition will strengthen its partner ecosystem to further align support with country needs and unlock expertise, partnerships, and financing. Deeper engagement with development partners, youth, philanthropies, the private sector, United Nations Rome-based agencies, Civil Society Organizations, academia, and International Financial Institutions will unlock additional support to school meals and sustainable agricultural development; will be critical to understand financial gaps and constraints and to support innovative financial instruments; will help mobilise expertise and predictable resources; and will accelerate sustainable national school meal programmes.

4. Deepening global advocacy

Through evidence-based advocacy and communications across the Coalition ecosystem and in international fora, the Coalition will sustain momentum, political commitment, and investment in school meals, particularly in fragile and fiscally constrained contexts and considering debt vulnerability. These efforts will help protect and expand access to nutritious meals while highlighting their contribution to broader development outcomes, including education, health, nutrition, social protection, agriculture, local livelihoods, and sustainable food systems.

The Initiatives[1], the Secretariat and the Coalition partners will function as the technical arms, helping governments turn their political commitments into national systems that withstand fiscal and political cycles by focusing on the following **six pillars**:

1. Sustainable financing
2. Evidence-based decision-making
3. Global progress measurement
4. Localization and regionalization
5. Technical assistance and systems strengthening
6. Advocacy and mobilization

[1] Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition; Sustainable Financing Initiative; Data and Monitoring Initiative; Cities Feeding the Future Initiative; and the School Meals Accelerator

Summary of the main outcomes of the Meeting

Progress made by Task Force members and guest countries

- **Brazil** has ensured healthier and more sustainable school meals by increasing procurement from family farming to 45% and supporting local managers to ensure that at least 85% of school meal purchases consist of fresh and minimally processed foods.
- **Finland** provides political leadership, technical expertise and financial support to both school meals programmes and the School Meals Coalition Secretariat.
- **France** has dedicated €150 million to the support of school meals internationally since 2021 and is using its 2026 G7 Presidency to advance global action on nutrition. In 2026, France has also raised the minimum threshold of sustainable and quality products in school meals from 20 to 35% in its overseas territories, including 10% organic products.
- **Guatemala**'s school meals programme reaches more than 3 million learners nationwide; approximately 40% of schools implement the programme by preparing and serving meals on-site; and over 9,200 schools have prioritized upgrading their facilities, focusing on food preparation areas.
- **Honduras** expanded school meals through ninth grade nationwide, advanced its National School Feeding Policy to the final draft stage, and is strengthening programme quality through fresh food and milk initiatives linked to health and nutrition services.
- **Japan** provides a model to advance food and nutrition education through its *Shokuiku* approach, while sharing technical expertise, supporting school feeding programmes globally through WFP, and strengthening international cooperation to improve the quality and sustainability of school meals.
- **Kenya** has become the fourth School Meals Coalition's co-chair, and has approved its National School Meals Policy, mapped more than 3.2 million children currently reached through school meals, and is advancing innovative financing and clean cooking solutions with support from the national school meals coalition.
- **Rwanda**'s investment in school meals increased by more than 50% between 2024 and 2026, reaching RWF 142 billion (USD 97 million), while it strengthened programme quality, research and regional leadership.
- **Senegal** is strengthening its legal and institutional framework. The country validated its National School Feeding Policy and Strategic Plan and is preparing a School Feeding Law based on local production and major new investments, including a USD 25 million programme to support expansion to 65% of public elementary schools by 2028.
- **Sweden** published updated National School Meal Guidelines in 2026, reinforcing its commitment to universal school meals, sustainability, nutrition and preparedness.
- **The United States of America** is a longstanding supporter of global school meals through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program which currently supports 32 active multi-year school meals projects across 28 countries (approximate value of $1 billion), benefiting approximately 3.5 million schoolchildren each year with daily school meals and related activities.

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- **Lesotho** developed a sustainable financing strategy in collaboration with the Sustainable Financing Initiative and the School Meals Accelerator to support the long-term sustainability and expansion of the national programme.
- **Ukraine** has expanded its free school meals programme to students of all age groups nationwide since September 2026, reaching around 3 million children.

Upcoming advocacy events

2026

- Zambia will host the Global Child Nutrition Forum in November.
- The Philippines will host the second School Meals Coalition Southeast Asia Regional Meeting in November.
- The 3rd Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Regional Forum for South America will take place in November in Curitiba, Brazil.

2027

- Finland will host the School Meals Coalition's Global Summit in October.
- Djibouti will host the African Union's Africa Day of School Feeding.
- The School Meals Coalition will continue to engage around key global fora, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit to be held alongside the UN General Assembly in September and the 32nd Conference of the Parties (COP32) in Ethiopia in November.

2028

- Rwanda will host the School Meals Coalition's Ministerial Task Force Meeting in Kigali.

Initiatives and partners' collaborations

- The Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition published its annual statement and the "School meals and non-communicable disease prevention across the life course" white paper.
- The Data and Monitoring Initiative announced the 2026 State of School Feeding report, building on the Government Self-Reporting System.
- The Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition (SFI) announced the publication of a new paper on the political economy of school meals financing, exploring political levers to turn financial commitments into a budget reality.
- The School Meals Accelerator announced new partnership agreements with the Research Consortium, Sustainable Financing Initiative, Cities Feeding the Future, University College London, Pijar Foundation, WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil and WFP.
- The Rockefeller Foundation announced the newly published School Garden Report.
- The Inter-American Development Bank announced a formal partnership with the Research Consortium through the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, to develop evidence in Latin America and the Caribbean and support the Data and Monitoring Initiative for the 2026 Latin American State of School Feeding report.

- The Global Partnership for Education announced Education Out Loud to be launched in three countries (Indonesia, Kenya and the Philippines) to support civil society engagement focusing on school meals.
- The Coalition's Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Network for School Meals, convened by World Vision International, will develop a CSO engagement framework to support governments and partners to strengthen effective ways for children, communities and civil society to contribute evidence, monitor progress, inform advocacy and help turn national commitments into financed implementation, including in fragile contexts.

We express our sincere gratitude to the World Food Programme as the Secretariat of the Coalition for hosting this Task Force meeting. We commit to working together to position school meals as a strategic public investment for national development. We look forward to Finland hosting the Third Global Summit of the School Meals Coalition in Helsinki, in 2027, and to Rwanda hosting the fourth School Meals Coalition Task Force Ministerial meeting in 2028.

The co-chairs of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the School Meals Coalition Taskforce, Brazil, Finland, France and Kenya.

Rome, Italy, 14 October 2026