



REPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI  
MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ PUBLIQUE ET DE LA POPULATION  
UNITÉ DE COORDINATION DU PROGRAMME NATIONAL D'ALIMENTATION ET DE NUTRITION

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Port-au-Prince, May 10, 2021

**The WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines**

***Re: To express support of the application to the WHO Essential Medicines List for Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for pregnant women***

**Dear Expert Committee,**

This is to present the compliment of the Minister of Health and to express the support of the Department of Nutrition of the Haitian Ministry of Health in favor of adding *Multiple Micronutrient Supplements (MMS) – Antenatal Supplement* on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML).

Haiti's infant mortality rate is 59 per 1,000 live births and approximately 22% of children under the age of 5 experience stunting<sup>1</sup>. UNICEF estimates that there are 55,000 cases of acute malnutrition, including 18,000 severe cases, in children under the age of five<sup>2</sup>. Malnourishment among women of reproductive age remains prevalent: 49% of women ages 15-49 have anemia<sup>3</sup>. Micronutrient deficiency during pregnancy remains a major public health problem in Haiti. Evidence from clinical trials has concluded that antenatal MMS is superior to iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation in improving birth outcomes and has equivalent benefits for preventing maternal anemia.

Haiti's National Guiding Health Plan has laid the foundation for combating micronutrient deficiencies in its Strategy 2.3.6. This action plan includes micronutrient supplementation for pregnant women and nutritional surveillance for pregnant women. The plan also outlines activities used to follow through on this strategy including the strengthening of routine micronutrient supplementation services. Technical nutrition committees and sectoral groups exist in ten departments of Haiti and are regularly working with local authorities and organizations to ensure better integration of the Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation into communities.

<sup>1</sup> Institut Haïtien de l'Enfance (IHE) et ICF. 2018. *Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services (EMMUS-VI 2016-2017)* Pétiön-Ville, Haïti, et Rockville, Maryland, USA : IHE et ICF

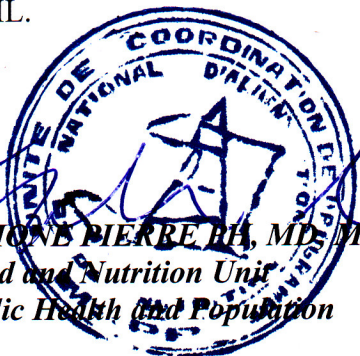
<sup>2</sup> UNICEF. Haiti Factsheets. <https://www.unicef.org/haiti/media/626/file/Fact-Sheet-f%C3%A9vrier-2019.pdf> Updated February 2019. Accessed January 18, 2020

<sup>3</sup> USAID. Haiti: Nutrition Profile. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/Haiti-Nutrition-Profile-Mar2018-508.pdf> Updated February 2018. Accessed January 18, 2020

Moreover, to inform the scale-up of the MMS program in Haiti, in partnership with Vitamin Angels, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) and a local NGO, the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF); the Haitian Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP), is conducting implementation research. The outcomes will further improve the effectiveness of the scale-up of MMS program in Haiti.

Adding MMS to the Essential Medical List will be a key step towards supporting the efforts of the Haitian government and the civil society to scale MMS in Haiti. The inclusion of MMS on the EML will particularly encourage the integration of MMS in the nutrition programming of all the stakeholders and will facilitate the importation process of the product within the national territory.

Based on the aforementioned reasons, we strongly support and urge that Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation be accepted as an item on the WHO EML.



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