

[DR Congo's economy loses over \\$1 billion to child undernutrition, finds UN-backed study](#)

7 July 2017 – The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is losing as much as 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the effects of child undernutrition, according to a United Nations-backed study released today.

The social and economic costs of undernutrition are estimated at 1.637 billion Congolese francs, or more than \$1 billion a year.

“These results call on all of us to act now to avoid future losses caused by hunger,” [said](#) UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) Country Director Claude Jibidar in a news release.

“I’m convinced that with the understanding we now have of the terrible economic and social impact of malnutrition on children, we and our partners can work with the Government to make a real difference to this alarming situation.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study was undertaken by the Government of DRC in collaboration with WFP, the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([ECLAC](#)).

The study shows that the losses are incurred each year through increased healthcare costs, additional burdens to the education system and reduced workforce productivity.

According to the report, DRC could save up to around \$383 million by 2025 if the prevalence of underweight children is reduced from 11 to 5 per cent, and if stunting – low growth for age – is reduced from 43 to 10 per cent.

“Africa has the potential to reap a demographic dividend from a young, educated and skilled workforce,” said Kefilwe Moalosi, speaking on behalf of AUC and NEPAD. “But this potential can only be harnessed if we continue to invest in the health and nutrition of its people, particularly its women and children, and secure the necessary economic growth.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study has been conducted in 11 African countries. Their economies suffer an estimated annual loss associated with child undernutrition that is equivalent to between 1.9 per cent and 16.5 per cent of GDP. Results are due to be released soon in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The study is being planned for Mali and Mauritania.