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## News Release

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### **Bayer launches The Nutrient Gap Initiative to Expand Access to Vitamins and Minerals for 50 Million People Annually Worldwide by 2030**

Primary Focus will be on Most Vulnerable – Pregnant Women and Children in Underserved Communities

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**Basel, Switzerland, February 2, 2021** – As a part of the company’s vision of “Health for All, Hunger for None,” Bayer is launching “The Nutrient Gap Initiative” which expands access to vitamins and minerals for underserved communities to help combat malnutrition. The program’s goal is to reach **50 million people in underserved communities per year by 2030** through direct action and in partnership with critical non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a focus on intervention, education, and advocacy. The Nutrient Gap Initiative is the first program which will impact Bayer’s Consumer Health division [sustainability commitment](#) to enable access to everyday health for 100 million underserved people, by 2030.

Access to the right nutrients during the first 1,000 days of life – during pregnancy and through the first two years – is critical to a mother’s health as well as the healthy growth and development of a baby. Unfortunately, vitamin and mineral deficiencies are a major public health problem in underserved communities, with women and children being particularly vulnerable. Almost 50% of young women and adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries have inadequate vitamin and mineral intake<sup>1</sup> and at least half of children worldwide under age 5 suffer from this deficiency<sup>2</sup>. The consequences of vitamin and mineral deficiencies worsen gradually over time, resulting in significant health consequences across the lifespan and ultimately exacerbates the cycle of poverty.

“As a leader and expert in supplemental nutrition, we know how important these nutrients are to help ensure health for all, particularly for vulnerable populations who need it most, like underserved women and children,” said Heiko Schipper, President of the Consumer

Health Division of Bayer AG and Member of the Board of Management. “Having a healthy baby is a concern for every parent and parent-to-be everywhere around the world and through The Nutrient Gap Initiative, we plan on creating programs that will help give babies the best start in life today and for generations to come.”

The company’s work will begin with a focus on pregnant women and babies, given they are among the most vulnerable and need even more support due to the impact of COVID-19. Preventing vitamin and mineral deficiencies early in pregnancy can help mitigate poor pregnancy outcomes, such as stunted growth and impaired neurological development, which lead to long-term health and economic consequences for individuals and societies. As the global leader in prenatal supplements, Bayer is committed to helping all parents and parents-to-be have a happy and healthy baby and is working with several partners to bring prenatal interventions to underserved communities:

### **Intervention**

- Reaching up to **4 million underserved pregnant women and their babies annually** with a daily Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) intervention in partnership with global non-governmental organization [Vitamin Angels](#) and its partners. MMS is a formulation of essential vitamins and minerals that women need to help ensure their health, a healthy pregnancy, and a healthy baby. Programs will be implemented to ensure high adherence and acceptance by the population, and to encourage the inclusion of this prenatal intervention into regular local antenatal health services to help impact the first 1,000 days of life (during pregnancy and through the first two years). Interventions will begin in Indonesia, Mexico, the United States and Vietnam and will roll-out to other countries in subsequent years.
- This partnership is in addition to the work Bayer is already doing to make vitamins and minerals more affordable and accessible around the world.

### **Education**

- Developing a **nutrition education curriculum** with Vitamin Angels and other partners to empower healthcare professionals and pregnant women in underserved communities. This program will effectively introduce and scale MMS for pregnant women.

- Our leading prenatal brand **Elevit™**, which is committed to helping more babies have a healthy start in life, has created “**Every Beginning**,” an initiative to build global awareness for prenatal nutrition deficiency and helping parents and parents-to-be connect through universal experiences and gain access to vital nutrients.
- Advancing support for women and girls **in driving their own healthcare in partnership with the White Ribbon Alliance**. In Indonesia, programming will focus on health education focused on maternal anemia; in the United States, programming will focus on helping pregnant women and new moms confidently navigate the healthcare system, self-care practices and maternal nutrition.

## Advocacy

- Partnering with leading NGOs across sectors to launch a **cross-industry collaboration to support the global movement around maternal health**. The goal is to drive collective action and scale access of MMS. Currently, only 70% of low- and middle-income communities have access to iron-folic acid (IFA) during pregnancy<sup>3</sup>, which is no longer considered sufficient, based on recent World Health Organization guidelines. Through this work, Bayer will aim to help close this gap.

The Nutrient Gap Initiative begins immediately and will be focused on communities that need access to life-changing vitamins and minerals most, in keeping with our vision, “Health for all, Hunger for none.”

## About Bayer

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. Its products and services are designed to benefit people by supporting efforts to overcome the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. At the same time, the Group aims to increase its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development, and the Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2019, the Group employed around 104,000 people and had sales of 43.5 billion euros. Capital expenditures amounted to 2.9 billion euros, R&D expenses to 5.3 billion euros. For more information, go to [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com).

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**Forward-Looking Statements**

This release may contain forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by Bayer management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. These factors include those discussed in Bayer's public reports which are available on the Bayer website at [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com). The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to conform them to future events or developments.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SightandLife\\_SpecialReport\\_MMS\\_2020.pdf](https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SightandLife_SpecialReport_MMS_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/micronutrient-malnutrition/micronutrients/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Data on file with Vitamin Angels; Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program [STATcomplier](#)