

## **Being the Voice to Improve Maternal and Child Nutrition: ENGINE Supports National Nutrition Advocacy Workshop for Parliamentarians and Policy Makers**

**Date: March 14-15, 2014 Location: Adama**

For the first time in the history of Ethiopia, 58 parliamentarians and policy makers from eight standing committees came together in one room to discuss the magnitude of childhood stunting and its devastating impact on the health, education and economy of the country. ENGINE, USAID's flagship multi-sector nutrition project, led by Save the Children, played a critical role in supporting the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) to reach this highly influential target group to bring nutrition high on the national agenda.

The FMoH along with UNICEF, FANTA-III and other nutrition partners organized this two-day nutrition advocacy workshop to encourage key decision makers to invest in nutrition for national development and to identify specific actions that policy makers can take to improve nutrition. ENGINE developed a flyer, a banner and an information packet with key messages for parliamentarians to use as tools to advocate for increased resources and legislation to reduce stunting. ENGINE also presented on the magnitude of the under-nutrition problem in Ethiopia using data from ENGINE's baseline survey report.



*Left: ENGINE provided banners and other communication materials for the event*

By the end of the workshop, parliamentarians had developed clear action plans to leverage the nutrition agenda using their election platforms such as increasing awareness of the consequences of under-nutrition; involving the media in nutrition campaigns; lobbying to advocate for more nutrition from each sector implementing the National Nutrition Program; and supporting the enforcement of laws to promote exclusive breastfeeding and fortification of local foods.

In his closing remarks, Mulugeta Damtew (Member of Parliament), Social Affairs Standing Committee expressed his deep appreciation to the organizers for an enlightening workshop that truly opened their eyes to the devastating consequences of under-nutrition and its impact on their constituents. He emphasized that making nutrition a part of the national agenda would contribute toward the achievement of the National Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which is the responsibility of all parliamentarians.

**“We need to take this day as a start of achieving tangible results against malnutrition; I urge all of you to make this a priority.”**

**“We parliamentarians are responsible for policy making – we can bring about many results through applying what was discussed here on nutrition.”**



*Left: Mulugeta Damtew (MP), Social Affairs Standing committee making a closing statement*