

Bending the Curve in Africa's Nutrition Transition

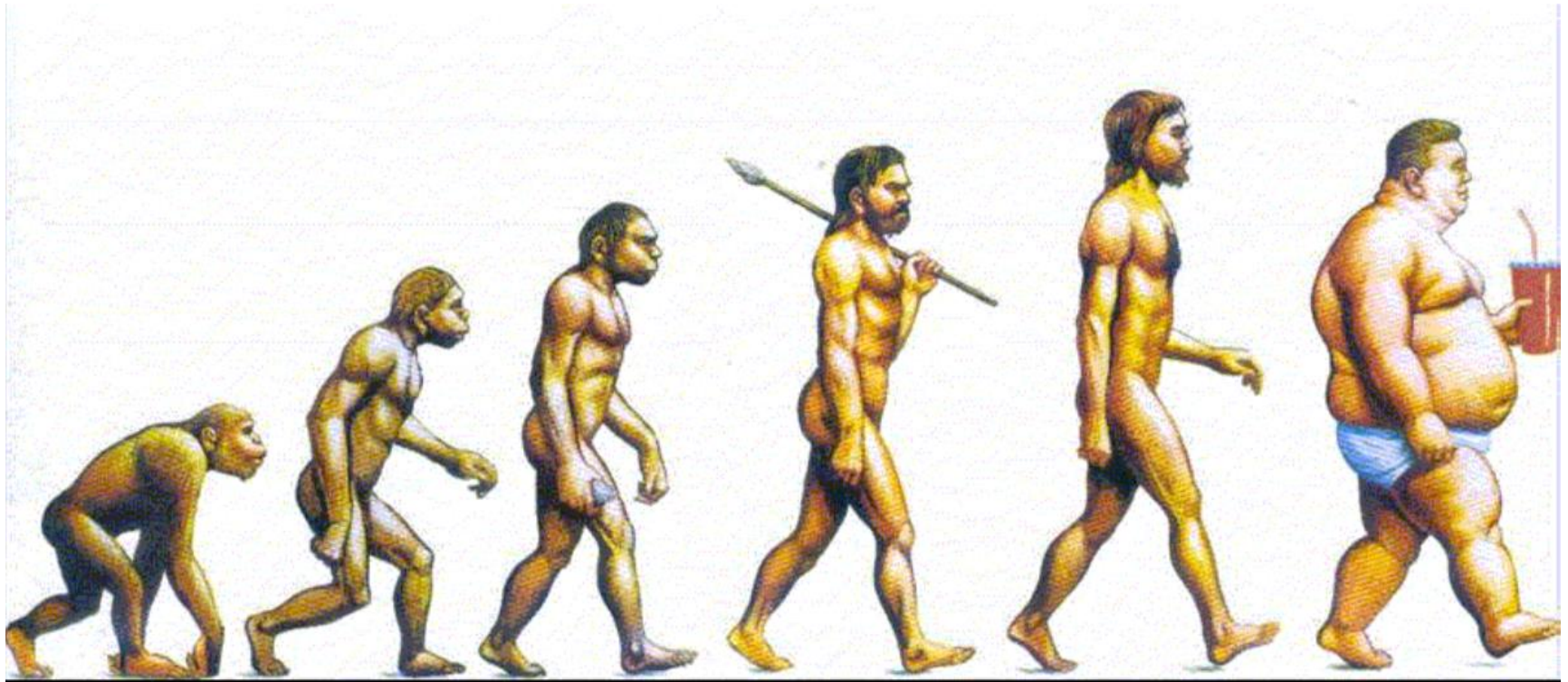
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Worldwide nutrition transition

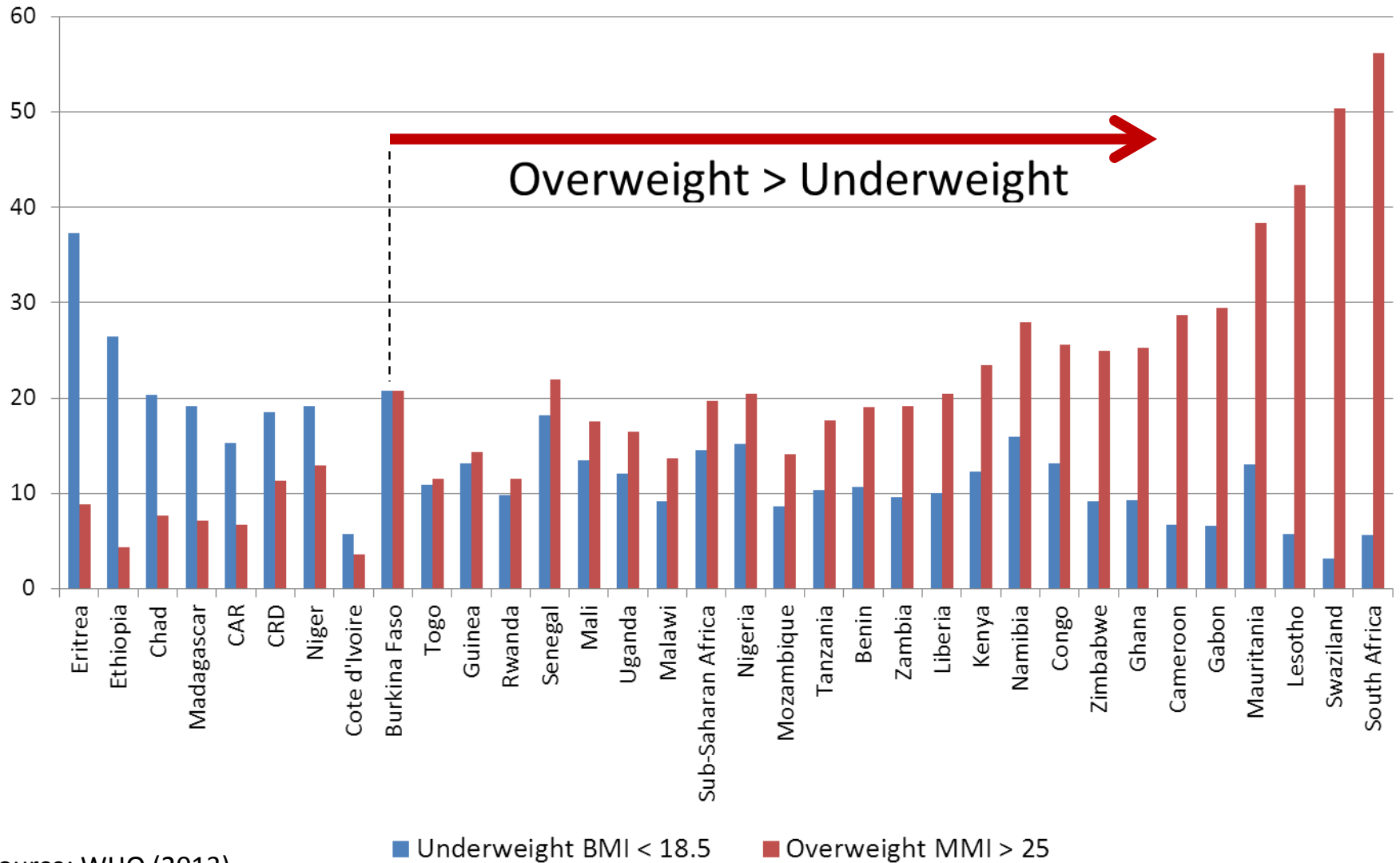


Worldwide nutrition transition

- 1 billion undernourished, 1 billion overweight
- Since 2007, overweight > underweight
- Undernutrition and overnutrition coexist.
- Even in Africa!

Africa's double burden:

Percent of Adult Females Under- and Overweight

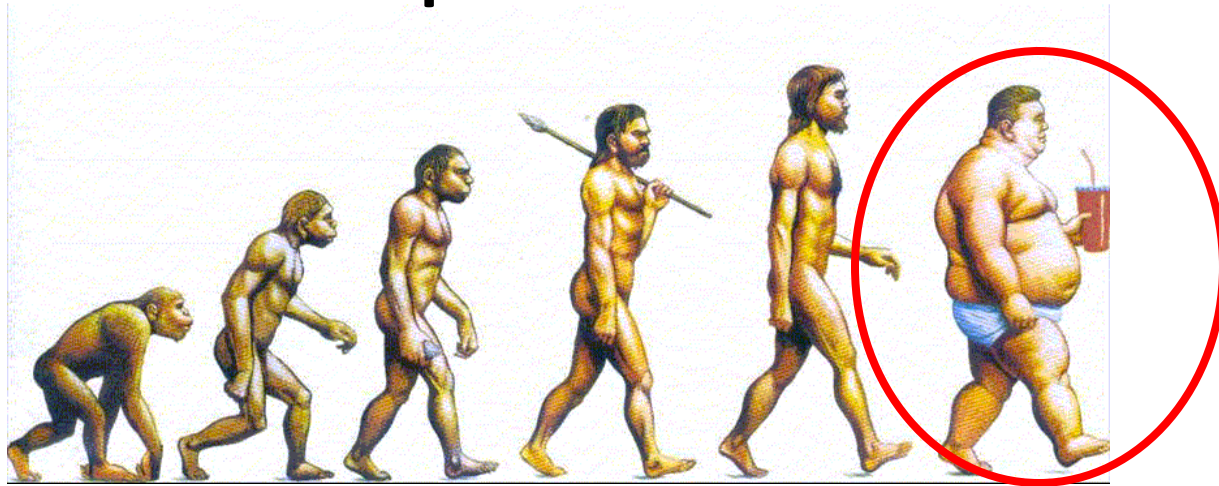


Source: WHO (2013)

Causes of the nutrition transition

- Income growth
 - large calorie increases
 - higher red meat and fat consumption
- Urbanization
 - less physical activity
 - increased processed foods

Role of processed foods



- Survival instincts: humans hard-wired to crave sugar, fat and salt
- In excess,
 - salt → hypertension
 - sugar → obesity, diabetes
 - fat → cardiovascular diseases
- Food processing technology
 - Salt → food preservation, taste enhancer
 - Sugar → preservative qualities, taste enhancer
 - Fat sells

Consequences

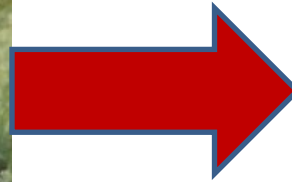
- Obesity
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Dental disease
- Reduced life expectancy
- Lower worker productivity
- Rising public health system costs

Rapid rise of dental disease

Rural Ecuador, 1978



2011



Source: Sokal-Gutierrez (2013).

Africa's choices



Source: Sokal-Gutierrez (2013).

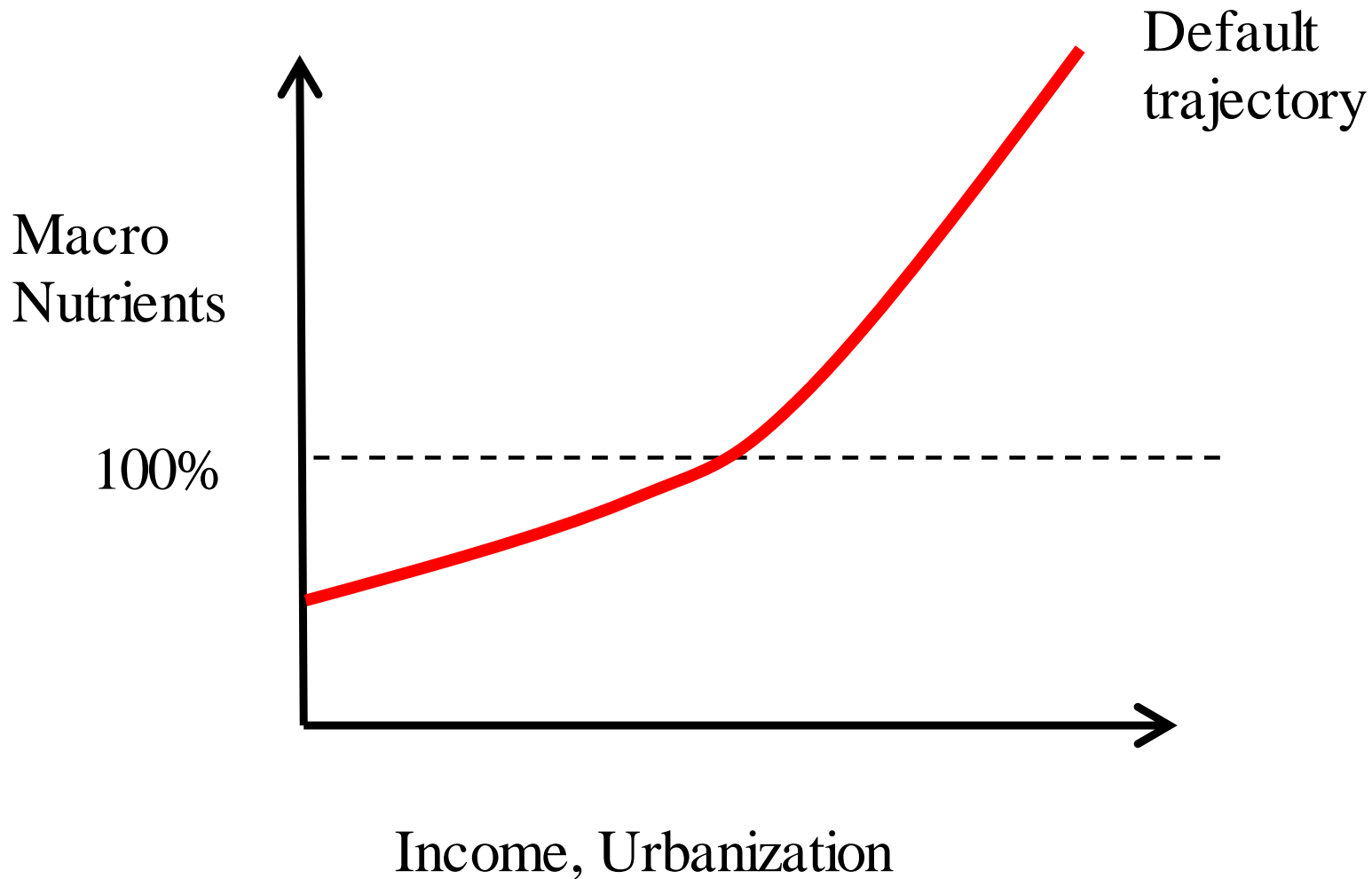
Africa's challenges

- Double burden: under and over-nutrition
- Linked burdens? → thrifty phenotype
- Oral health
- Accelerating time frame

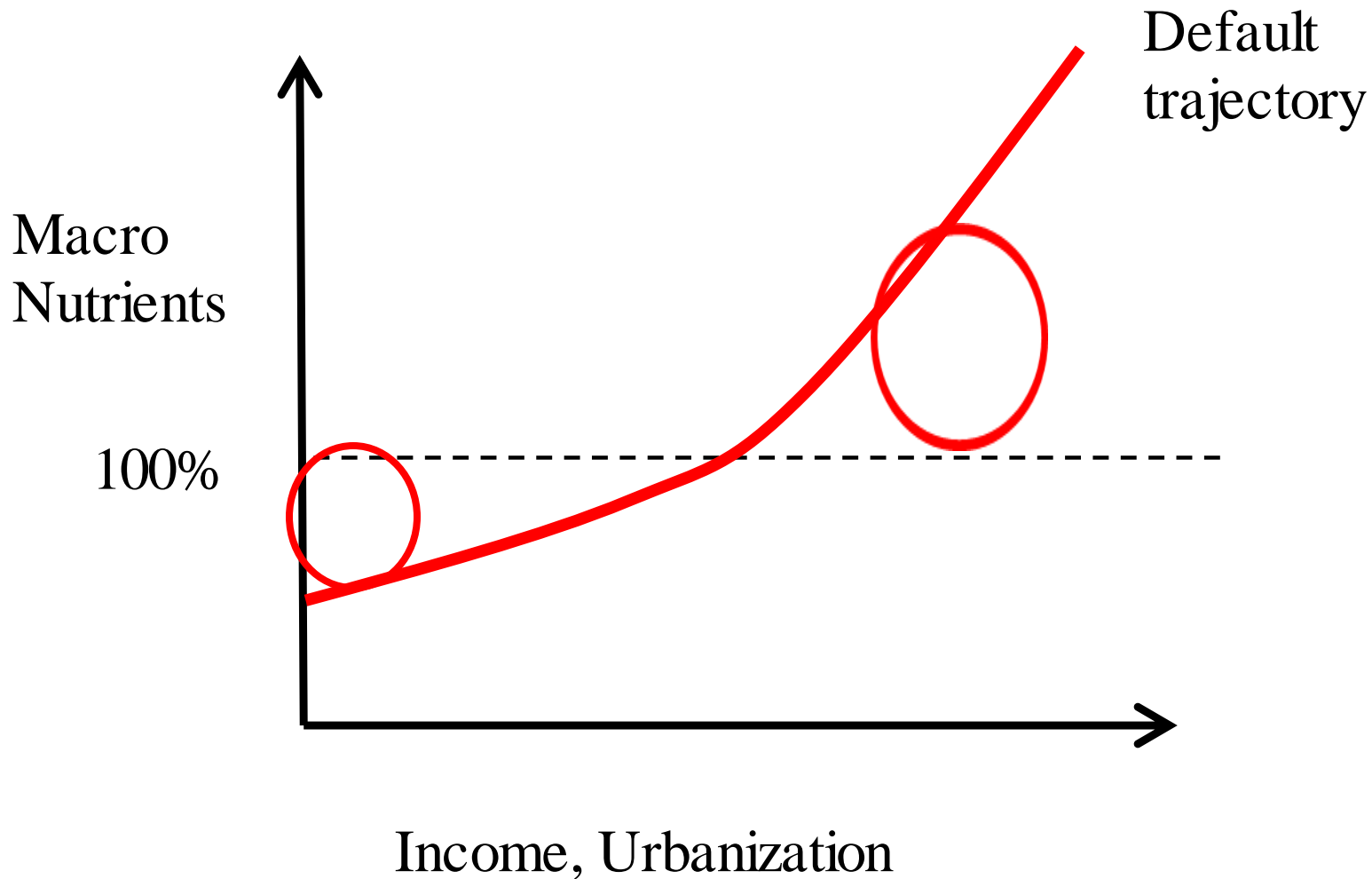
Africa's latecomer advantages

- Last continent to urbanize
- Last continent to undergo the nutrition transition
- African can learn from the experiences and mistakes of wealthier countries

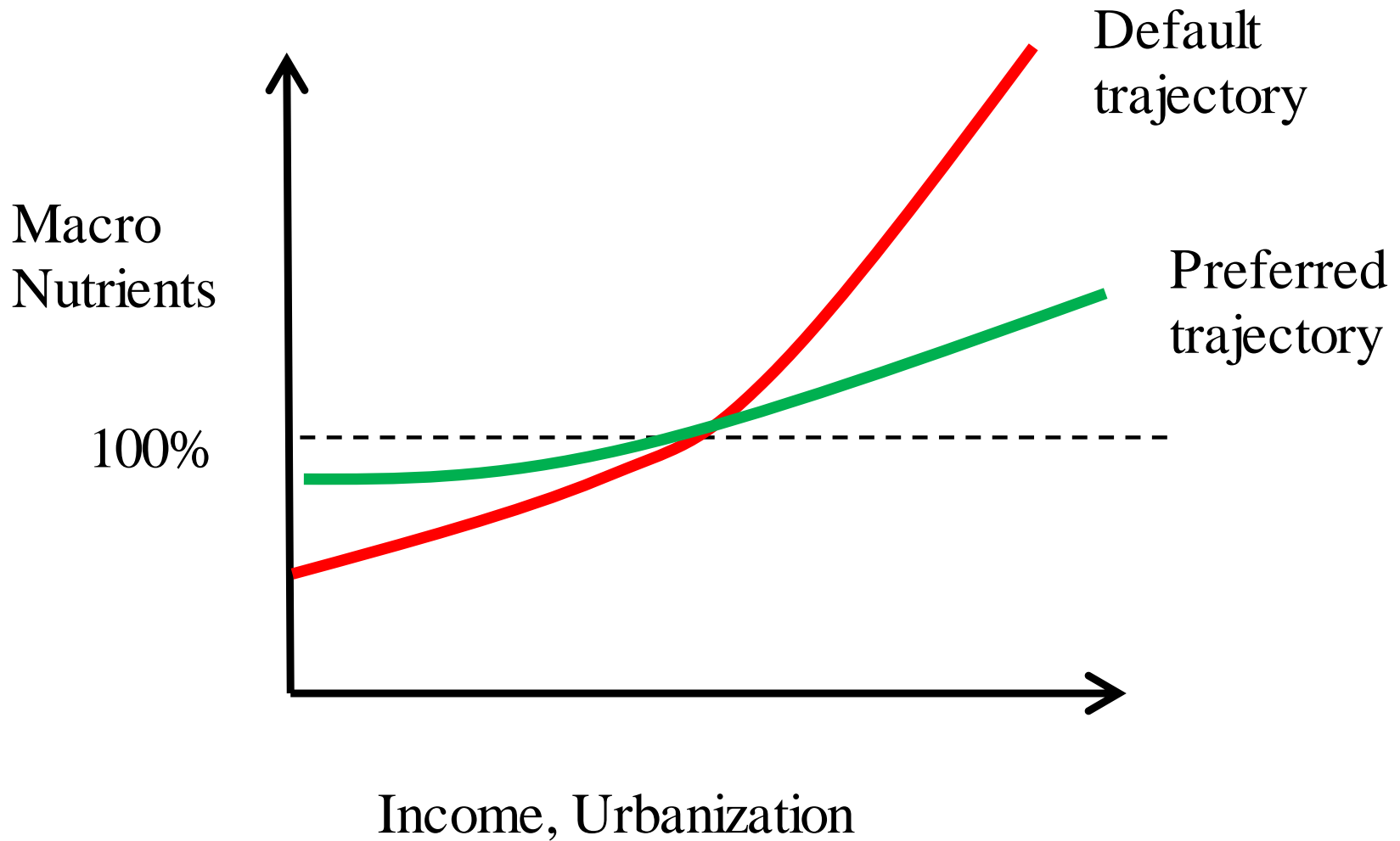
Bending the curve



Bending the curve



Bending the curve



Discussion questions:

What steps, taken now, might enable Africans to improve public health outcomes of the coming nutrition transition?

- Private sector actions?
- Public sector actions?
- Key lessons from elsewhere?

References

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