

Scaling Up Nutrition

Information Note: January 2012

As evidence accumulates about the long-term impact of poor nutrition in pregnancy and early childhood, more and more countries are committing to scaling up their efforts for better nutritional outcomes. They are leading the **Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement** which was initiated in September 2010. Hundreds of partners provide concerted support to SUN countries as they invest in policies and actions that will reduce hunger and the burden of under-nutrition.

Tremendous progress has been made since the SUN Movement was launched and the momentum is increasing. Heads of States from countries with high burdens of under-nutrition are committing to scale up nutrition in increasing numbers. Partners are aligning behind country-led plans and activities and committing to increase investment in nutrition.

"The Government of the United Public of Tanzania is committed to the successful implementation of the SUN initiative. Let me reiterate that the Government will work day and night with all partners involved to attain the noble objectives and goals and triumph in the SUN... I'm optimistic that with the Scale-Up Nutrition initiative, Tanzania will reduce drastically the number of undernourished Tanzanians and hence avoid unnecessary death."

H.E Prime Minister Minzengo Peter Pinda, Tanzania, June 2011

"The Government of Nepal is highly committed to improving the nutritional status of children and women as a foundation for future social economic growth and development. This is also a prerequisite to achieving all the MDGs... There is an opportunity to make substantive and sustained progress in this area with a strengthened global partnership."

H.E Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, Nepal, September 2011

"My Government is convinced that investing in high-impact nutrition interventions produces exceptional pay-offs in terms of reduced morbidity, mortality and improved physical and mental growth and that through these interventions Zambia can meet the MDGs and the national vision of becoming a prosperous middle-income country by the year 2030."

H.E President Rupiah Bwezani Banda, Zambia, February 2011

"I strongly support this initiative, which aims at contributing to the achievement of the MDGs and in particular the MDG 1: "Reduction of extreme poverty and hunger."

H.E Prime Minister Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, Senegal, June 2011

"Food and nutrition security is a human right ... and drives economic, social and human development... Countries in the SUN Movement will be accountable to those they seek to help. Different parts of the UN system ... are also accountable for supporting this effort. We plan to put SUN on a stronger footing. We are here to make the SUN of better nutrition rise over our entire world."

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, September 2011

"The United States is firmly committed to our investments in global nutrition and we believe fervently that improving nutrition for pregnant women and children under two is one of the smartest investments we or anyone can make"

United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, September 2011

The SUN Movement brings together the authorities of countries burdened by under-nutrition, a broad range of stakeholders from multiple sectors in-country and a global coalition of partners to contribute to significant and sustained reductions in under-nutrition and improvements in the health and prosperity of future generations. Today, Government leaders in over 20 countries with high levels of under-nutrition have indicated that they are scaling up nutrition and many others have expressed interest.

SUN is not a new initiative, institution or fund: instead it is a movement that increases the effectiveness of existing initiatives and programmes by supporting national leadership for nutrition; encouraging focus and alignment of this support; and enabling the participation of a wide range of stakeholders to foster broad ownership and shared responsibility for results.

The SUN Movement focuses on the 1000 day window of opportunity between pregnancy and the child's second birthday and recognizes that investing in well-tested, low-cost and effective nutrition interventions is one of the smartest ways to save lives and enhance the intellectual, physical and social growth of children. Partners in the movement have committed to working together to create conditions in which household members – especially women – can improve their own and their children's nutrition. They are expanding the pool of resources for implementing a set of specific interventions that improve nutrition, and are incorporating nutrition-sensitive strategies into health, agriculture, education, employment, social welfare and development programmes.

Countries that join the SUN Movement are committed (a) to ensuring that programmes in all sectors of government are sensitive to nutrition, and (b) to increasing coverage of proven interventions that improve nutrition during the 1000 day period such as support for exclusive breastfeeding, optimal complementary feeding practices and delivery of essential vitamins and minerals. Partners support the implementation of national nutrition plans through a responsive harmonized effort that builds on results-driven leadership, political energy, high-level advocacy and catalyzing financial and technical resources around countries' priorities. Participants in the SUN Movement are guided by the **SUN Framework** (2009), which has been endorsed by more than 100 agencies and other entities, and by the **SUN Roadmap** (2010), which helps to coordinate investments and activities by outlining principles for scaling up nutrition.

- ***SUN is a collective effort*** that supports countries as they invest in policies and actions that will reduce hunger and under-nutrition. SUN is not a new initiative, institution or fund.
- ***SUN supports country-led efforts*** for nutrition and advocates for harmonized and aligned financing at country level. Committed countries are at the core of the SUN Movement.
- ***SUN is inclusive*** and brings together a broad range of in-country stakeholders and multiple partners worldwide.
- ***SUN promotes specific nutrition interventions and nutrition-sensitive strategies*** in sectors such as agriculture, water and sanitation, education, social welfare, employment and development programmes.

Country Participation in the SUN Movement

Any country that is developing, updating or implementing policies, strategies and plans of action to scale up nutrition can participate in the SUN Movement. Countries that have joined the SUN Movement include: ***Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia*** and ***Zimbabwe***. It is anticipated that other countries will follow.

SUN countries are applying the key principles of the SUN Movement. These include:

- Developing or revising **national policies, strategies and plans of actions to scale up nutrition** that include both nutrition-specific interventions as well as nutrition-sensitive development strategies;
- Nominating a high-level **national focal point** who is responsible for ensuring that the country's efforts engage the whole of Government and for coordinating external support. In some countries, the national focal point is supported by a **facilitator** from a development partner with technical expertise in nutrition. In several countries this role is being fulfilled by the UN system through the REACH initiative.
- Nominating a **donor convener** who undertakes to bring the donor community together and encourage the alignment of their financial and technical assistance to national plans.
- Forming or strengthening a **multi-stakeholder platform** that includes relevant line ministries like agriculture, health, education, social welfare, women's affairs, local government and key partners including civil society, businesses, universities and research institutes, donors and the UN system. Often countries will have a steering committee and a working group.
- Undertaking regular **stocktaking** of in-country and partner capabilities in nutrition to clearly identify capacity gaps and set priorities for resource mobilization.
- Increasing numbers of SUN Governments are carefully looking at the **costing** of specific nutrition interventions and nutrition sensitive strategies as the starting point resource mobilization.

Countries signal their intention of scaling up nutrition and joining the SUN Movement by sending a **letter of commitment** from a High-Level Government official to Dr. David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition, who is Coordinator of the SUN Movement. In some countries this letter has come from the Head of State or Government, in others it has been sent by a Minister with responsibility for nutrition.

Stewardship of the SUN Movement

New stewardship arrangements for the SUN Movement are being put in place during the first half of 2012. These arrangements are based on an independent, external study of the SUN Movement which took into account the views of a large number of key SUN stakeholders. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General is giving strong support to the SUN Movement which is evolving into an effective partnership between SUN countries and those aligning their support behind country scale-up plans. The Secretary General has asked that a **Lead Group** be formed to improve coherence, provide strategic oversight, improve resource mobilization and ensure collective accountability.

Members of the Lead Group will be high level leaders committed to equitable human development, serving for three years in the first instance. They will be drawn from communities of development partners including donors, civil society, business, and the UN system. At the core of the Lead Group will be members from SUN countries. Members of the Lead Group will be responsible for providing both strategic oversight and leadership for the SUN Movement - as countries transform their political commitments into improved nutrition outcomes at scale.

Networks of partners are being established to facilitate timely and coherent support to national efforts to scale up nutrition. Networks will encourage dialogue between partners and contribute to sustained advocacy. They will catalyze coordinated support to SUN country scale up plans in a way that enhances partner responsiveness to country demands and respect assistance processes already in place. Networks are not designed to be “operational”.

The Country Network consists of SUN country focal points. They are responsible for ensuring that national efforts engage the whole of Government and that external support is coordinated. This Network will identify common needs and emerging issues, enable lessons to be shared and encourage best practice. It will be at the heart of the SUN Movement.

Partner Networks that are working to align their support for SUN countries represent different stakeholder groups. These Networks are in the process of developing work-plans that are reflective of, and responsive to, SUN country needs and requests. They have their own ways of working and are developing results frameworks with specific and measurable milestones. These Partner Networks include: a Donor Network; a Civil Society Network; a UN System Network and a Business Network. The creation of a Knowledge and Learning Network is being explored.

Assisting the Lead Group to deliver its objectives, and working with the Networks to align their support is a small **SUN Movement Secretariat**. The Secretariat plays a facilitation and catalytic role: it is not an operational or funding entity. It facilitates linkages between SUN country requests and SUN Partner Networks; helps to track country processes; supports high level advocacy and resource mobilization; ensures effective communication between Networks and SUN countries and helps connect SUN countries with donors to increase their likelihood of mobilizing funds.

Launched 16 months ago the SUN Movement is still young. Yet it is growing rapidly in size and strength. It starts 2012 with ever increasing commitment, conviction and energy, and a renewed stewardship structure. The countries in the movement know that by working together, and by engaging with hundreds of committed supporters from around the world, they will contribute to major improvements in women’s and children’s nutrition and to ensuring the right of all to food and nutrition security.