

The 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SUN Movement Network of SUN countries took place from May 18<sup>th</sup> to May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015. The meeting involved 10 two-hour sessions by tele and videoconference: six in English, three in French and one in Spanish.

In all, there were 152 participants in the meeting from 37 countries [Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Cambodia; Brazzaville; Congo, DRC; Côte d'Ivoire; Costa Rica; El Salvador; Ethiopia; Ghana; Guatemala; Guinea-Bissau; Guinea-Conakry; Indonesia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mali; Mozambique; Namibia; Nigeria; Pakistan; Peru; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; Swaziland; Tajikistan; Tanzania; The Gambia; Togo; Uganda; Vietnam Zambia; and Zimbabwe] including 9 who joined by videoconference system. Participants from 18 countries (Bangladesh, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, The Philippines, Rwanda, Yemen and the Indian State of Maharashtra) were not able to join.

45% of the participants were employed by their national governments, 28% came from United Nations entities, 13% from civil society, 6% from donors, and 4% from business.

The Meeting agenda was as follows: 1) Thematic Discussion: *“Strengthening a culture of effective partnering in the SUN Movement”*. 2) Information about current priorities of the SUN Movement: Global context – Updates on the Post 2015 and Post ICN2 processes; Shaping the future of the SUN Movement - Update on the decisions of the Lead Group and follow up; Supporting the SUN Movement to deliver results: Updates on the financial tracking exercise and follow up; Updates on Social Mobilization Advocacy and Communication; Information on functional capacity workshop; Monitoring exercise 2015.

**Thematic discussion: *“Strengthening a culture of effective partnering in the SUN Movement”***

Participants were invited to consider the following questions when preparing for the call:

1. What actors do you currently engage with well and why? What actors are challenging to engage with and why?
2. Where are you engaging now that it was not possible before? What created this change? How did you find a common ground?
3. How successful is the coordination of all these sectors and actors at the national and the decentralized level? Why?
4. How the lessons learnt from the GSO/SUN Col (Conflict of Interest) process might support and strengthen effective engagement at country level?

Harnessing and supporting a culture of effective partnering is the essence of functional capacities within the movement. As part of the Movement's continuing efforts to strengthen engagement among all stakeholders, the Conflict of Interest process supported our understanding of the complex issues that arise when bringing many individuals together in a multi-stakeholder platform. Having guidelines and frameworks established to both prevent and manage Conflict of Interest (Col) is, in itself, an important tool when effectively engaging a wide group of stakeholders. This process also reinforced the Principles

of Engagement as an anchor for the Movement. The following observations from countries reflected how key the principles of engagement remain in multi-stakeholder working and the lessons learned from the Col process resonated throughout the discussions on effective partnering.

### **Observations from countries**

**Principles of Engagement & key lessons learned from Col process reflected many of the issues that emerged when discussing strengthening effective engagement within multi-stakeholder platforms.**

#### ***Principles Reflected included:***

- Be inclusive
- Be transparent and share information, agendas and experiences.
- Be willing to negotiate
- Be mutually accountable
- Be continuously communicative: put in place platforms for dialogue
- Be mutually respectful and seek to earn the trust of those with whom you are working. Recognition of all stakeholders' importance and work
- Knowing the commitment taken and the red lines not to cross
- Do no harm
- The SUN Principles of Engagement form an ethical framework

#### ***Learnings from the Col Process were reflected in the discussions:***

- Leadership at all levels matters. Lead from where you are is key
- Written policies and laws consistently applied and monitored are essential
- A community-level focus for strengthening nutrition practices
- Decentralization of responsibility for implementation. A way to incentivize stakeholders' engagement at the decentralized level is financing actions based on results to ensure effective implementation
- Determining how to engage the private sector to contribute public goods
- National and local academic institutions can contribute to capacity building
- The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes is recognized as a key international standard
- Realization that Conflict of Interest exists and is normal
- In a conflict it is needed to first identify the points of divergence, when these relate to differences on concepts or ways to frame issues, it is important to build upon common points to facilitate the dialogue among the two sides of the Conflict

#### ***But some other principles have been highlighted:***

- Establishment of a Common Result Framework is crucial to have a common and shared vision and to determine the role of each of the actors
- Well-structured networks or bodies for each family of actors are important
- The high level of anchorage of the multistakeholder platform (MSP) can help to allow the government Focal Point to convene different sectors and actors. Effective alliances involve high level decision-makers to give continuity to processes and policies especially during the change of government administrations
- Defining ad-hoc alliances around concrete goals and common objectives is key.

## **CHALLENGES the countries are facing when bringing people together**

- Lack of capacities in terms of training (on coordination, leadership, communication ...), and accessible tools for advocacy, communication, ...
- Lack of time as a resource for the Focal Point
- Lack of human resources to cover all different tasks required for coordination (especially when local level coordination is required)
- Involvement of certain actors - the Private sector (the geographical spread, the different approach and objectives of the sector, and the difficulty to define their role makes it hard to involve the sector); Ministry of Agriculture; Civil Society; and donors (not very involved and lack sufficient coordination among them)
- Lack of experience or mandate for some network representatives
- Not knowing how to show impact

## **Skills needed for efficient coordination**

### Personal qualities:

- Having relevant experience
- Patience
- Enthusiasm
- Flexibility, ability to adapt
- Sensitivity to avoid offending some actors
- Listening skills
- Empathy (capacity to perceive and frame issues from other's point of view)

### Skills to be acquired to be able to coordinate among different actors:

- Negotiation skills
- Communication and advocacy skills
- Competence of leadership. Being able to build alliances between actors or sectors, being inclusive.
- Competence or tools to better understand the context and the environment (situation, actors, potential roles ...)

In summary the calls demonstrated the wide range of issues that impacts effective engagement: level of anchorage of the focal point, leadership at all levels, transparency, inclusiveness, the importance of a community level focus, good communication and a deep understanding of all partners. These issues require a wide range of skills, attitudes and behaviours in all actors involved to support effective engagement. As the Movement evolves, understanding the challenges to effectively partner is an important area to bring together the appropriate resources for a response.