

Stewardship of the SUN Movement: Taking SUN to the Next Level

30 SEPTEMBER 2011

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the well over 150 people who gave us their time, suggestions, insights and feedback in interviews, in responding to our questionnaire, in consultations and in round-table discussions. We very much appreciate the openness, co-operation and ready support we have received from the SUN Transition Team, which commissioned this study. The guidance from leaders and those working on policy and operational programmes among all SUN constituencies – developing countries, civil society organisations, UN agencies, donor agencies, foundations, other relevant international partnerships, the private sector, and those from the nutrition policy and research communities – has been instrumental in shaping the recommendations presented here. Together, they are far too numerous for us to name individually here, but our appreciation is profound.

We would also like to give special thanks to those who assisted us directly in the preparation of the report. These include Anna Herforth, who had the lead role in preparing the statistical annex; Savitha Subramanian, who carried out background research for the annex on lessons from global partnerships; Yves Martin-Prevel, who disseminated the questionnaire at a WHO regional consultation and interviewed key country informants; and Cristina Lopriore, who supported the qualitative analysis.

The usual disclaimer applies to both the report and its attachments: any errors of omission or commission are entirely ours.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CA	Cities Alliance
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DfID	UK Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
ExCom	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation, of the UN
FTI	Fast Track Initiative (Education for All)
G-8	The Group of Eight governments of major economies
G-20	The Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GFATM	Global Fund (for the fight against) AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GHP	Global Health Partnership
GPE	Global Partnership for Education (previously FTI)
GPR	Global Program Review
GWP	Global Water Partnership
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IEG	Independent evaluation Group (of the World Bank)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFFm	International Financing Facility (medicines)
HLTF	High Level Task Force on the World Food Security Crisis
IHP+	The International Health Partnership
IWRM	International Water Resources Management
LDG	Local Donor Group
LEG	Local Education Group
LICs	Low Income Countries
MAP	Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program (of World Bank)
MD	Managing Director
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	New Economic Program for African Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAF	Policy Advisory Forum
PCB	Program Coordination Board
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (USA)
REACH	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Partnership (FAO, WHO, UNICEF, WFP)
RBM	Roll Back Malaria
SCN	UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)
SG	Secretary General of the UN
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition movement
SuRG	Scaling-up Reference Group
TF	Task Force of the SUN movement
UBW	Unified Budget and Workplan
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations development Program
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (of the OECD)

Summary of Recommendations

Please see the main report and its attachments for the evidence that underlies this summary of recommendations.

1. Take Account of Lessons from Other Global Partnerships

These include:

- Focus mainly on the detailed building blocks of what makes stewardship of partnerships effective: solid, achievable and measurable strategies, with means carefully aligned to achieving the desired ends; plans and incentives for their implementation; clear and understood roles and responsibilities among stakeholders; accountability of all stakeholders, including the board; and constant focus on implications for partnership objectives.
- Establish the baseline and measure the value-added of the partnership. If it is insufficient, then the partnership should be discontinued or modified. Address asymmetries of influence and interests, including the excessive influence of donors and the need for the private sector to make profits.
- Address issues in effectiveness of multi-stakeholder stewardship. Balance inclusiveness and efficiency. Keep board size small, with balance among stakeholders but with members serving in a personal capacity. Avoid micro-management. Assume responsibility for solving problems.
- Provide adequate and predictable funding for secretariats to reduce risk of partnership failure.
- Apply good practices in governance at the start. This includes the points above and, for example, annual performance targets for the board as well as transparency.

2. Option A: Multi-Stakeholder Stewardship of the SUN Movement

This option received resounding support. It is based on the principle of building on what has been working well and in changing what needs changing as SUN moves from a primary emphasis on mobilisation to one on implementation. It includes multiple components:

Leadership Group (or whatever name is chosen): to provide overall leadership to the SUN movement; set its strategy and an accountability structure to support its implementation; as well as proactive advocacy and resource mobilisation.

- Size and composition: multi-stakeholder, not controlled by any stakeholder group; 15 members, with some weighting toward developing countries.
- Auspices and chairing: remain under the auspices of the Secretary-General, who should nominate a chair to serve the interests of the SUN movement.
- Membership of the Leadership Group: appointed by the Secretary General, primarily on a personal basis while taking account of stakeholder balance.
- Chief Executive (title to be chosen by Leadership Group): pivotal role in driving the SUN movement forward; member of the Leadership Group; supported by the Secretariat. Crucial to get best, most capable and committed person.
- Meetings of the Leadership Group: principals only. Chief Executive convenes group of designated deputies on interim operational matters.
- Decision-making: consensus basis, but with fall-back rule of two-thirds majority to avoid deadlock.
- Structure: partnership rather than as a new legal entity.

Champions as Key Element of Advocacy: near-universal support for the importance of SUN champions at country, regional and global levels; requires clear and targeted strategies and specific mandate for each champion; should be done in partnership with stakeholders with existing programmes of champions.

Secretariat: Broad role is limited support and enabling of activities of SUN movement, catalysing and not substituting for what others should do.

- Main functions include: mobilising and harmonising external resources; support for advocacy; monitoring; support for SUN stewardship structure (including champions and working groups); limited enabling (but not controlling) role at country level; and supporting accountability.
- Size: 10-15 professionals to carry out tasks above, learning lessons from other partnerships that have started out too small to take off.. Priority need for predictable dedicated funding from donors.

Evolution of Task Forces: to be reviewed individually by Leadership Group. Constituency groups should be encouraged. Others should be strictly on a task-specific, time-limited basis.

Outsourcing and Links: outsource, tapping the energy and mandates of others where feasible, for example for global fora, research and knowledge management. SUN needs close links with other relevant processes and partnerships to encourage “nutrition-sensitive” development and to tap available financial resources.

Technical support to SUN Countries: countries to choose their source of external technical support, of which REACH is one option.

Transparency and Accountability: must be key elements of SUN, following accepted Paris-Accra principles. Specific recommendations cover: transparency of aid; country-owned monitorable results frameworks; mutual-accountability processes at country level; tracking by the secretariat; consideration of sensitive issues of standards and validation of country programmes; and extension of accountability to all SUN stakeholders.

Dedicated Fund: not on the cards at the present time.

Timeframe: 3 years, to allow sufficient time to show progress on the ground in scaling up in a sub-set of “early riser” countries, whilst not being overly long so that SUN becomes *de facto* permanent.

3. Option B: Merger of SUN and SCN

- i. Immediate merger of SUN into SCN: almost universal rejection as inconsistent with rapid initial progress of SUN and need for SCN to carry out its internal reform, focusing on intra-UN co-ordination. There is an alternate option of having SCN be the convenor of the SUN’s UN caucus; this would require SCN’s gaining the confidence of an enlarged group of UN agencies.
- ii. Bringing the SCN under the SUN Leadership Group: would increase complexity and costs - and risk holding back progress of both SUN and SCN.
- iii. Merger after three years: could be considered as an option. But SUN, as a multi-stakeholder movement, cannot play the role of intra-UN co-ordination; and the SCN, whose primary function is intra-UN co-ordination, cannot plausibly lead a multi-stakeholder movement. There should be examination, though, of whether there are technical functions that should be rationalised between SCN and SUN.

Introduction to Stewardship Study

Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) is a global movement involving a diverse set of stakeholders, with one highly focused objective: scaling up effective, evidence-based actions at country level to sharply reduce undernutrition, especially among young children and their mothers in the 1,000 days between conception and two years of age. It is structured as a broad-based partnership of stakeholders committed to joint action at global, regional and country levels to achieve that objective, drawing on a shared vision (the SUN Framework). These call for multi-stakeholder platforms at country level, for country strategies with direct multi-sectoral and 'nutrition-sensitive' interventions and for application of the internationally agreed principles of aid effectiveness (the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action).

Current stewardship arrangements are presented in Attachment 1, which summarises them as follows:

"The Transition Team is stewarding the Movement. It is comprised of experts representing different SUN stakeholder groups and is chaired by the UN's Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition. It is informed by: i) a United Nations Reference Group and ii) an interim Country Partner Reference Group. The Transition Team is guiding the work of six Task Forces that are helping provide assistance to in-country stakeholders aligning behind Government plans to scale up nutrition."

In March 2011 the consultant team (the authors) was commissioned to carry out the study on behalf of the Transition Team by a sub-group of the Donor Task Force (the Gates Foundation, the European Commission and the World Bank), with financing from them and the Government of Japan. The Terms of Reference (Attachment 2), include the following: "As part of the examination itself, there would be attention to trying to establish a shared understanding of the stewardship arrangements that would be most appropriate to advancing the SUN movement over time."

This report starts with a brief summary of its methodology and with general lessons for stewardship derived from evidence from other global partnerships. It then draws a set of more specific key findings from its analysis. These then set the basis for the consideration of two main options, with several sub-options on operational details. It goes into some detail in an effort to speed progress in implementation of stewardship arrangements.

Methodology

The study aims to combine rigorous analysis and good practice in social science. As the work progressed, the authors were asked by the Transition Team to focus increasingly on the most plausible options and on building space for consensus. This led rapidly away from the initially intended 'light-touch' consideration of a series of options to a more comprehensive and intensive effort - with broad, inclusive and iterative consultation across all major stakeholder groups. Key elements of the methodology were:

- **Initial scoping interviews** to clarify issues to be explored and to define a possible range of future stewardship options;
- **Preparation of the inception report** for comment on results from these scoping interviews and on broad options that emerged from them;
- **Development of a structured questionnaire** dealing with important issues, including controversial ones, that emerged;
- **Drawing lessons from relevant global partnerships**, through review of the (sparse) comparative literature, a scoping review of 25 potentially relevant global partnerships and then an intensive review, including interviews, of stewardship-related issues in 12 partnerships;
- **Semi-structured interviews**, including high-level consultations with developing countries, UN entities, civil society organisations (CSOs), donors, other global partnerships, the private sector and researchers;
- **Preliminary analysis and triangulation of evidence** on main findings and conclusions to refine analysis and options;
- **A final round of consultations** to assess and contribute to enlarging possibilities for consensus on options to be presented;
- **Completion of analysis** (qualitative and quantitative) and preparation of this report.

Scope of Information that Fed in to the Analysis

Overall, the study has drawn on interviews with over 100 stakeholders and other relevant experts (listed in Attachment 3); over 90 completed questionnaires (slightly over half from those also interviewed), constituting an exceptional response rate of 81%; and the review of global partnerships.

The evidence from the questionnaire is presented, with detailed charts and figures, in Attachment 4. Table 1 of that attachment presents results arranged according to the convergence of responses; Table 2 presents the detailed feedback for each question; and the figure displays the results regarding the priority functions for SUN.

An in-depth report on lessons of governance of global partnerships, drawing on comparative studies and on review of experience of twelve international partnerships, is presented in Attachment 5. The bibliography (Attachment 6) applies to both Attachment 5 and the report as a whole.

This report quotes extensively from the interviews and from the comments section of the questionnaire; quotes have been chosen to illustrate predominant views succinctly and clearly. To protect confidentiality, sources of quotes are identified only by group: developing country; donor; CSO; United Nations (UN); or "other" - global partnerships, research institutions, foundations and the private sector (combined to assure confidentiality given small numbers in each category). There is also extensive use of the survey questions, giving the relevant percentage agreeing (or disagreeing). These percentages exclude those who chose "don't know" on that question. A full breakdown of responses is included in Attachment 4, Table 2.

Lessons from Multi-Stakeholder Global Partnerships

Typically, multi-stakeholder global partnerships for development are established as ‘partnerships of equals’ - between developing countries, bilateral and multilateral donors, private foundations, civil society organizations and the private sector - for the pursuit of shared goals. The term ‘partnership of equals’ is misleading, though, since, as discussed below, some ‘equals’ have more power than others.

The number of institutions established as multi-stakeholder global partnerships has proliferated rapidly, particularly since 2000. The degree of complexity of internal collective action has been described conceptually in the literature as “hypercollective action”¹, of which multi-stakeholder partnerships are an increasingly important element. There is general agreement among analysts that these represent a major systemic change in the management of global challenges – one in which the rules change as the number and heterogeneity of players increase. There is also general agreement that these partnerships require more complex and delicate approaches to leadership and governance.

It is crucial to learn from the experience, good and bad, of stewardship – usually referred to in the literature as governance – of such global partnerships. Otherwise, there is the danger of repeating costly errors that have hampered their effectiveness and of not benefiting from their good practices, including their efforts to change governance to make it more effective. This section draws out key lessons from an in-depth analytic background paper (Attachment 5). Most of these lessons have direct implications for analysis and recommendations of this study. The later sections of this report, on key findings and on options, draw heavily on them and other issues considered in the background paper. These lessons, and the background paper, also have broader implications well worth keeping in mind as SUN stewardship evolves. In addition, SUN stakeholders may also find them useful for addressing governance of other partnerships in which they are or may be participating.

The background paper draws on the little credible comparative literature on governance of global partnerships that exists. There are numerous studies on the experiences, costs and benefits of specific partnerships, but because of their recent emergence, only a few credible comparative studies are available. Fewer yet have attempted rigorous measurement of the value-added in practice of global partnerships (over more traditional institutional arrangements) or the effectiveness of their stewardship arrangements. As described in three comparative studies on multi-stakeholder global partnerships carried out since 2004, the aggregate picture shows the need for caution.

The conclusions of the first of these, a review of 26 World Bank global partnerships², included the following: i. While the partnerships held significant potential for increased effectiveness through economies of scale, there was weak evidence that this was actually happening; ii. There was a general absence of evidence that the partnerships were adding value to what could be achieved without them; iii. Performance measurement was aimed at the behaviour of the developing country and not at that of either the other members of the partnership or of the overall partnership itself; and iv. While pure shareholder (financier) models of program governance were being replaced by stakeholder models, programs were struggling to balance legitimacy with efficiency: transaction costs in most cases were exceptionally high, resulting in largely negative benefit-cost ratios of the decision-making process.

The second, a report on seven global health partnerships in twenty countries³, found that, although the global partnerships were generally increasing stakeholder participation, the partners themselves were often unclear about their roles and responsibilities. It also found that the partnerships were increasing overlap and

¹ Severino, J-M. and Ray, O. (2010). The End of ODA (II): The Birth of Hypercollective Action. Working Paper 218, Center for Global Development, June 2010. <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1424253>

² World Bank. (2004). Addressing the Challenges of Globalization: An Independent Evaluation of the World Bank’s Approach to Partnerships. Washington, DC.

³ McKinsey and Company (2005). Global Health Partnerships: Assessing Country Consequences.

duplication through the addition of parallel processes that bypassed those already in place, as well as in some cases resulting in distortion (from the country's point of view) of resources within the health sector.

The third, by Buse and Tanaka⁴, synthesised results of the independent evaluations of eight global health partnerships. Of these, it found that: 7 had weak strategic planning and/or lacked an overarching partnership strategy; 6 had weak partnership performance evaluation frameworks and accountability mechanisms; 5 had poorly defined roles and responsibilities of partners; and 5 lacked strategic arrangements to promote and ensure value-added from the partnerships.

Building on these and other studies, the background paper looked intensively at 12 multi-stakeholder global partnerships for insights and lessons on governance effectiveness relevant to the SUN movement. These partnerships spanned health, nutrition, education, agriculture-food security, micro credit, water and cities.

Taken together, the findings confirm that the new partnerships are increasing stakeholder engagement, and often a shared sense of ownership, albeit with a general pattern of shared weaknesses identified in the three comparative studies. Global partnerships evidence great variability not only in their main purposes, but also in the ways in which they have been structured, in the defining characteristics of their governance and in the growth trajectories they have followed. Thus, while considerable caution is called for, some 'good practices' or lessons are emerging relevant to stewardship of SUN and other global partnerships. These include the following eight points, which build on the 'lessons learned' of Buse and Tanaka:

- i. ***Global, multi-stakeholder partnerships have tended to place too much emphasis on the partnerships as ends in themselves*** with too little recognition that they can create burdensome transactions costs. They have approached 'inclusiveness' and 'participation' more as goals in themselves rather than as means to ends (i.e. increasing programme impact). This has tended to divert attention away from the painstaking detail required for successful partnerships – including the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and the division of tasks amongst actors within the cooperation system. There should be clarity on the rationale for inclusion and the specific value-added expectations for all parties to a partnership. There should also be a continuous focus on key governance questions, such as “how will this contribute to the impact of the partnership in attaining its objectives”?
- ii. ***Establish the baseline and measure the partnership:*** The true measure of the success of any collective endeavour is the value it adds over what could be accomplished without it. Yet, the required baseline to measure this has characteristically not been established or agreed for the new multi-stakeholder partnerships. Evaluators have had to rely on proxy and anecdotal measures. The baseline should be established for any new partnership along with the means of measurement. If sufficient value-added does not materialize within a reasonable time period, then the partnership should be discontinued or modified.
- iii. ***Asymmetries of power, influence and interests generate problems in the governance of many multi-stakeholder partnerships.*** Partnerships need to be based on shared purposes but they also need to acknowledge and accommodate divergent interests. One major issue is the influence that donors have, relative to other stakeholders, through the power of the purse-string – albeit that the literature finds that donors (individually and collectively) have been inconsistent in their policies on global partnerships and have tended to blame global partnerships for problems emerging from governance structures that the same donors helped to create.⁵ Also global health partnerships have been generally unrealistic in their approaches with the private sector by failing to recognize its need for a “value proposition” – i.e. to make profits. The CGIAR similarly failed to recognize and address the divergent interests of both the private sector and NGOs.
- iv. ***There are trade-offs between inclusiveness and effectiveness for multi-stakeholder governance.*** The literature of development is replete with illustrations of failure as a direct consequence of inadequate inclusion. But the evaluations of multi-stakeholder partnerships are clear that that there are often

⁴ Buse, K. and Tanaka, S. (2011). Global Public-Private Health Partnerships: lessons learned from ten years of experience and evaluation. *International Dental Journal*, 2011: 61 (Suppl. 2) 2-10.

⁵ Isenman, P. and Shakow, A. (2010). Donor Schizophrenia and Aid Effectiveness: The Role of Global Programmes. Institute of Development Studies, April, 2010.

major trade-offs between inclusiveness and effectiveness. The independent evaluation of the Global Fund, for example, found that its highly inclusive, multi-stakeholder board had produced neither an effective international division of labour nor strong and durable global partnerships. As a general rule, transactions costs and barriers to timely and effective decision-making seem to increase with the size of the board.

- v. ***Clear and achievable strategies are an essential first requirement of governance:*** In most of the partnerships reviewed by Buse and Tanaka, there was “*a lack of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound objectives.*” The present study’s findings echo these and go even further: in several partnerships reviewed, ‘strategies’ were mainly political or aspirational documents, with inadequate attention on the requirements to link means to ends, to determine priorities and sequencing and to establish robust and credible M&E systems to measure performance. These are basic components of good governance.
- vi. ***Secretariats need to be adequately resourced:*** Without adequate and predictable funding, secretariats struggle to perform and spend much of their time in search of funding.
- vii. ***Multi-stakeholder constituency boards pose special challenges:*** These include problems of efficiency and difficulties in reaching timely decisions because board members are generally not empowered to take decisions without broad consultation and specific authorization from their home organization. Also, while there has usually been quite senior level representation in the early years of a global partnership, this generally moves over time to lower-level personnel who are not mandated to take decisions. Finally, constituency boards tend to focus on micro matters and to emphasize the interests of their own organisations and constituencies far more than the strategic and governance interests of the global partnership. Some of these factors have led some global partnerships – such as GAIN and GAVI - to make changes away from the constituency board model towards boards comprising individuals serving in their personal capacities.
- viii. ***A range of established good governance practices applies to, and should be applied to, global partnerships.*** The problem is that many global health partnerships are not doing this. Many of the most fundamental requirements for good governance have been lacking, including transparency in decision-making and performance reporting, and systems for accountability. The extensive literature on good governance has tended to inform major NGOs much more than international partnership boards. Established good practices include published annual performance targets for boards, collective and individual objectives and work-plans for board members, 360-degree appraisals and regular, independent, external reviews of governance.

All these known good governance practices need to be applied in new international, multi-stakeholder partnerships, to maximise their chance of success. SUN is no exception.

Key Findings

The learning from existing global partnerships, together with the evidence from the interviews and survey, show strikingly broad consistency on key findings and considerations that underlie the options for SUN's future stewardship. These are summarised as follows:

- I. SUN has made a strong start. A great deal has been accomplished since the SUN Framework for Action⁶ was agreed and the movement was launched in Rome in June 2010, and its Road Map was agreed in September 2010. This opportunity for impact comes from a confluence of several factors: newfound unity – *"Nutrition has made it to the top because we are all speaking with the same voice, portraying strength in unity"* (developing country); evidence of the profound negative impact of undernutrition in under-twos and of high returns from nutrition interventions; effective advocacy and high-level political commitment; and the changes – and expectations – generated by SUN over the past year, and seen dramatically in the UN events held on 20–21 September 2011. There are now key initial foundations, increasingly at country level, on which to build, and the momentum of the movement continues to increase. *"It has become the principal motor in international nutrition and should be further advanced on that basis"* (UN). *"SUN has the wind behind its sails"* (UN). 87% of questionnaire respondents agreed that *"The SUN is the best and probably the last chance for at least several years for nutrition to be taken seriously in international development and by the MDGs"*. *"SUN is the most encouraging development in nutrition in decades, the only real game in town"* (other). *"The SUN has gained more traction for nutrition than was ever the case before"* (other).
- II. Build on what is working. *"If it ain't broke, don't fix it"* (UN). The SUN movement has been supported and enabled to function through a coalition of committed agencies and individuals, operating flexibly under highly effective leadership (see Attachment 2 for a description of current stewardship arrangements). *"SUN is creating a new atmosphere of trust that had been lost ... Institutions fill space; movements create space"* (UN). *"SUN is playing the catalyst role we have needed for decades"* (UN). Substantial majorities disagreed that *"SUN has not made much effort to give voice to views of developing countries, civil society or UN agencies"* (72%, 79% and 95% respectively). Future stewardship should build on what has been achieved through the commitment to and ownership of SUN by all major stakeholders and should not *"stifle the vibrancy and the feeling that I want to be part of this"* (UN).
- III. Nonetheless, this must not be a cause of complacency. Substantial change is needed. There is a need for SUN, and its stewardship, to evolve in order to be able to achieve the SUN objective of sharply reducing undernutrition. There was concern among 62% of those who expressed an opinion (although only 49% of total respondents) that *"We can't continue with the current stewardship arrangements. They are inherently unstable and unreliable and they depend far too much on the energy and ability of one person."* The evidence from interviews was much stronger and less ambiguous. *"The movement needs to keep moving"* (UN). SUN needs *"something stronger than the current Transition Team set-up but still working as a facilitator and not in a directive capacity"* (developing country).

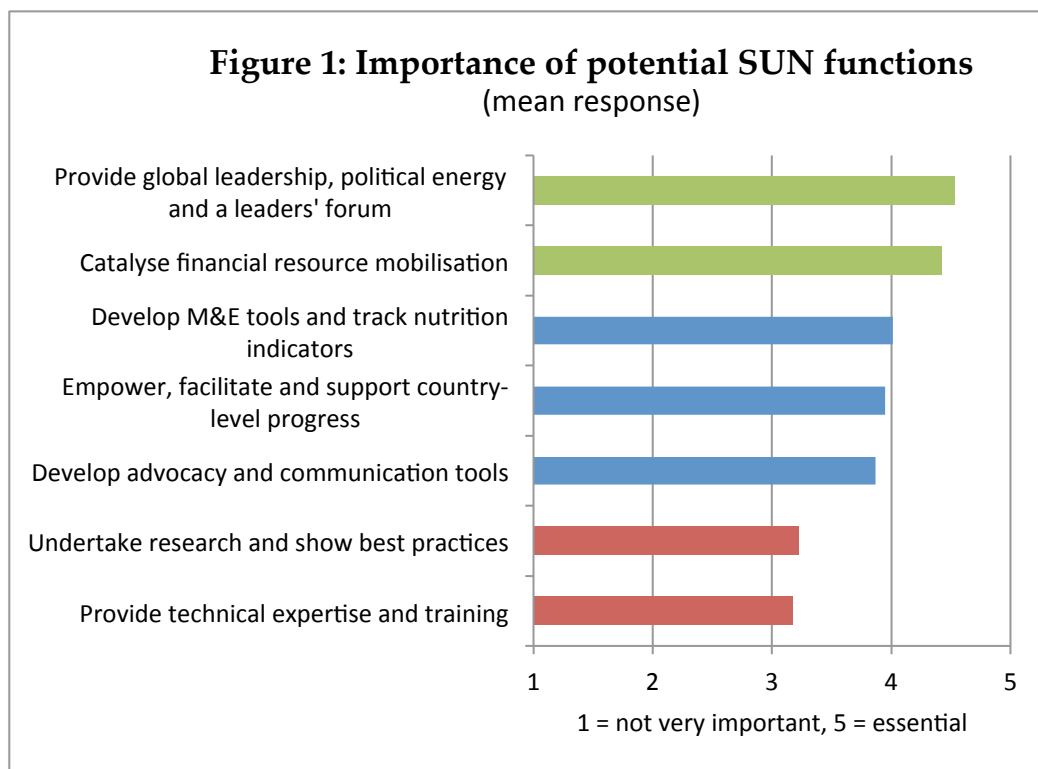
Interviewees were clear on where those changes were needed. They derive from the movement's overall objective: the scaling up of effective country programmes to reduce undernutrition, especially in the first 1,000 days between conception and two years of age. *"What needs to happen on the ground should drive governance"* (donor). *"SUN needs to move to concrete actions on the ground quickly, with clear targets, goals, key performance indicators and focused resources. SUN must not remain a high flying idea whose rhetoric is not matched with actions"* (CSO). *"Effective partnerships need to show real models of real collaboration with real results on the ground"* (other). This means that the emphasis of the SUN movement as a whole should shift *"from mobilisation to implementation"* (UN) – i.e. from planning and mobilising platforms at country level to action on the ground and then to sustainable results. The SUN Progress Report of September 2011 shows the advances made on mobilisation as well the different stages of progress among countries in nutrition programming. In the words of the Progress

⁶ <http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/key-documents/>

Report, "...the conversion of political commitment to effective actions requires a significant set of institutional mechanisms. These include ... developing prioritized plans based on national strategies and stock-takes of on-going programmes ... providing the necessary financial resources and capacity ... aligning support for effective implementation and sharing national experience."

For all its promising start, the SUN movement – like any new movement or initiative – should be considered "on probation" (UN). "If you don't plan for an exit strategy then it will become another white elephant" (UN). SUN must provide a solid demonstration of its value-added. "Only then can it expect to sustain political and financial support or move to more permanent arrangements" (UN). "... Sustaining this commitment is only possible if national leaders perceive that this will contribute to national development..." (SUN Progress Report, p.31). 72% respondents agreed with the survey question: "The SUN is now in great danger of raising expectations that will not and cannot be met. We can succeed only if we concentrate initially in a few countries (e.g. 6–8) and show real progress on the ground." This can be consistent with encouraging efforts in a larger group of countries – now over 20 and growing. But to do so, SUN needs to give attention to "what can be done first and of sequencing; not everything can be done and without priorities little will be accomplished" (other). "Nutrition has a narrow window of opportunity; if this is not taken up and moved to real action on the ground, any solid deliverables will simply fade away" (other). This period of "probation" is not a criticism, but a challenge.

IV. There are several key functions of SUN stewardship. Figure 1 shows the results of the survey on the relative importance of SUN functions.



Global leadership overall and resource mobilisation – which depends heavily on advocacy – are considered most important. Resource mobilisation must be a key function of SUN, and of SUN stewardship. It is true, of course, that resources are by no means enough. 82% of respondent agreed that "Money is not the main issue. What matters far more is strong leadership and effective advocacy". Nonetheless, "the SUN cannot rise without additional commitment of resources" (donor). "Do not shy away from resource mobilisation being a core function of SUN" (CSO). "There is a disconnect between the resources and the aspirations of the movement" (CSO). Increased donor financing will be difficult because of the economic environment in donor countries, but it is essential. (The remaining functions are discussed in subsequent sections.)

- V. SUN needs to be flexible, agile and innovative. *“We recommend a light structure that is agile and flexible, non-bureaucratic”* (donor). *“Don’t mire SUN’s structure in bureaucracy”* (UN). The future SUN structure *“must be savvy and intelligent – creative and ahead of the curve”* (donor). *“SUN doesn’t need to be bureaucratized, but it does need to be driven”* (donor). SUN, which has taken an experimental, searching and evolutionary approach, compares favourably with other international partnerships reviewed, which have generally adopted a fairly permanent institutional structure and/or a rigid and doctrinaire business model early on, in effect letting form get ahead of function. This reinforces the need not to rush prematurely to permanent arrangements.
- VI. As a key part of advocacy for SUN, there is a widely agreed need for ‘champions’ at both global and national levels. Champions are needed all the more to mobilise political support, because scaling up will take place under exceptionally difficult economic circumstances, with heavy competition for increasingly scarce resources among donors and developing countries. However, the general, though not unanimous, evidence from global partnerships is that the cost of maintaining and effectively using such champions is often formidably high.
- VII. SUN, at a global level, should be a catalyst or a facilitator – not an implementer or a programmer. As a movement, it needs to empower, not attempt to micro-manage, whether at global or country levels – but it needs sufficient and secure resources to play that role.
- VIII. There is a need to set realistic expectations. Reducing undernutrition is a long-term effort. *“Results need to be real, i.e. sustainable, not donor-driven quick wins”* (donor). *“SUN should articulate and promote realistic goals, targets, intermediate results and timelines for itself and for participating countries, and explicitly discourage the counter-productive ... project timelines and unrealistic political expectations regarding quick impacts”* (other).
- IX. There should be UN-wide leadership, but not control, in SUN’s multi-stakeholder stewardship. 77% of respondents agreed that *“Leadership in international nutrition requires strong, credible leadership coming from the UN system ... on a UN-wide basis...”*. However, this did not mean UN control of SUN governance. Rather, evidence from the questionnaire, as from interviews, was that the senior stewardship structure (board equivalent) should be multi-stakeholder. 64% of respondents *disagreed that “UN agencies should have at least de facto control of the SUN stewardship structure, rather than having a rough balance among key stakeholders”*; and 89% *disagreed that “only UN agencies should be on the Executive Committee of the SUN”*. *“[SUN] can in no way become a UN-dominated body but [would require] universal legitimacy, which would mean sponsorship by the Secretary-General”* (developing country). A multi-stakeholder approach is more consistent with continued mobilisation of a broad partnership of stakeholders (in comparison, for example, with the practice of having other stakeholders only on an advisory board). It is also more consistent with a 21st century approach to the UN’s role in leadership of global, broad and enabled partnerships.

Options Considered

Options needed, at a minimum, to meet three broad sets of criteria: potential impact, in terms of likely contribution to achievement of SUN objectives if successfully implemented; practicality, in terms of likelihood of being successfully implemented if adopted; and political feasibility, in terms of likely capacity both to generate sufficient support for adoption and to avoid protracted delays that would set back SUN objectives.

One broad set of options related to having SUN hosted by an existing nutrition-related organisation, within or outside the UN. This was seen as threatening one of SUN's key strengths – inclusivity. 86% agreed that “If it is hosted ... by a specific institution, whether outside or within the UN, the result is likely to be reduced convening power and concern about whether the host would favour its own institutional agenda.” “No matter which organisation was decided, there would be both capture and all the well-known rivalries, distrust and competition” (UN). In considering an organisation not involved in nutrition – whether or not in the UN – interviewees emphasised concerns regarding the reduced priority to nutrition and reduced convening power to mobilise stakeholders and financing.

There were also suggestions of having SUN hosted by other cross-agency UN structures, including the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) (as well as the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), discussed below). These structures play valuable roles. But the HLTF is a temporary UN coordination committee focusing more on the crisis in food security and agriculture than on nutrition. And the CFS has a primary emphasis in food and agriculture and a highly complex governance structure⁷ not well suited to a movement. The overwhelming consensus among interviewees was that if SUN were to be hosted by one of these structures then, in the words of one, “the momentum established by SUN will be placed at serious risk” (UN). Similarly, there were suggestions of bringing SUN under G-20 or G-8 auspices, in order to leverage the necessary political commitment and action required to combat undernutrition. However, this would be a hard political sell, and harder yet to get deep political commitment even without the current global economic difficulties; and it would be inconsistent with the existing momentum and urgency.

Consideration was also given to setting up a separate organisation, such as a Swiss foundation, following the examples of GAVI, the Global Fund and GAIN. However, this has major disadvantages. It makes it more likely that there would not be an exit option and that SUN would go on whether or not it had proved itself; fully functioning separate organisations are expensive and time-consuming to set up, as the experience of these other partnerships, which were hosted by UN institutions for their initial years, shows; and it would make it harder to have the leadership from the UN and its Secretary-General that was found in the survey to be very important. A separate organisation, still with a link to the UN, might be feasible in the future, however.

The option that received by far the greatest support in the interviews and the survey, backed by lessons from other partnerships, was that of a new mechanism for multi-stakeholder stewardship under the aegis of the Secretary-General (SG) of the UN. Another, more controversial, option – merger of SUN and the SCN – was also considered because it arose in interviews and received some, although conflicting, support in the survey.

Option A: Multi-Stakeholder Stewardship of the SUN Movement

This option is based on the principle of keeping and strengthening what has been working well and of changing what needs changing – including getting a step ahead of emerging challenges, as described in the considerations above. What follows examines in more detail how this option would work and the sub-options it raises. It deals in turn with the executive body; a selective network of nutrition ‘champions’; a modest secretariat; support to SUN constituency- and task- groups; outsourcing to and links with other initiatives; the

⁷ Executive power is vested in FAO member states, the Secretariat is in FAO, and other constituencies participate in advisory structures.

REACH programme; transparency and accountability; the possibility of a dedicated fund; the timeframe; and the need for rapid decision and implementation.

A1. SUN Leadership Group

The executive body: The new body should choose its own name. The spirit of a non-bureaucratic movement might best be captured by 'Leadership Group', the term used here.

Role: The role of the SUN Leadership Group is overall leadership and setting strategy, policies and priorities in carrying out SUN objectives. Its role, like that of the movement as a whole, also includes proactive advocacy and resource mobilisation. Its first responsibility would be agreeing a realistic, prioritised, sequenced strategy, specifying milestones and measurable targets (and the means/ends linkages to achieve them), as well as actions and dates and a baseline and a monitoring structure. Evidence from other partnerships shows that this is too rarely done and that there is, instead, insufficient delegation and excessive micro-management.

Size and composition of the Leadership Group: Stewardship would be multi-stakeholder rather than controlled by the UN or any other stakeholder. Experience from other partnerships emphasises the need for the group to be small if it is to be strategic and effective. The recommendation that follows is based on recent evidence from other global partnerships as well as the experience of the SUN Transition Team: a Leadership Group comprised of 15 members:- four from developing countries (of which one from civil society, including the policy research community), to embody the country-driven focus of SUN; two each from donors, the UN and global civil society; and one each from multilateral development banks, foundations, public-private partnerships and the private sector; plus the chief executive (see below). The Chair would be included in this distribution among stakeholders. Minor adjustments on the margin could still be consistent with SUN stewardship needs. But it is important to keep broad multi-stakeholder participation with a strong role for developing countries; to keep the size of the Leadership Group small, avoiding number creep through first adding to one stakeholder group, then 'compensating' another; and to reach a prompt decision on the precise composition of the group and then to get on with it.

Chair: 86% of respondents agreed that "*The SUN movement should remain under the broad aegis of the UN Secretary-General.*" The SG's "*desire to champion nutrition is the most important and promising development in the SUN*" (other). Given this endorsement, the best option for top-level, system-wide support for SUN would be to ask the SG to take an active role as the sponsor of SUN and of its Leadership Group. He would appoint the Chair, whether from inside or outside the UN, and (as discussed below) its members. The Chair should be a person of exceptional capacity, deeply committed to SUN objectives, widely respected by SUN stakeholders and enjoying the confidence of the SG. The SG would meet with the Leadership Group on at least an annual basis to discuss SUN progress and problems and steps needed to accelerate progress. Whoever the SG appoints as Chair should serve in an entirely impartial and personal capacity, irrespective of institutional affiliation.

Choice of members: One option is for the SG to appoint members of the Leadership Group, while still giving attention to stakeholder balance, based on informal consultation with stakeholder groups. Another is a 'constituency board', where each stakeholder constituency elects its representative(s) on the Leadership Group. The balance of the evidence from other partnerships for what actually works well argues for relative emphasis on appointed boards. "*Pure constituency governance looks very democratic but almost inevitably produces endless back and forth talk, high costs and few concrete results*" (other). "*Representational boards don't work*" (UN). As in the case of the Chair, the primary responsibility in the SUN Leadership Group is advancing the work and objectives of SUN, rather than arguing for institutional or stakeholder interests. This model would encourage strong identification with overall SUN objectives. "*People need to feel as much a part of the board as a part of their own constituencies*" (other). "*Although it requires careful consultation, an appointed board would be the best way to get a clean, clear outcome and avoid a lowest common denominator mess*" (UN). It would encourage both rapid decision-making and the inclusive style suited to a movement that mobilises a diverse set of stakeholders for joint action.

Choice of the chief executive: It is up to the Leadership Group to determine the precise role (and find an appropriate title) for the chief executive of SUN⁸. The role of the chief executive is crucial, since good stewardship requires substantial delegation by the Leadership Group, and since the Leadership Group – of which the chief executive would be a member – would have little time to spend on SUN between its meetings. As SUN’s experience to date shows, it is an understatement to say that this role goes well beyond that of managing the secretariat. Rather it covers all aspects of SUN, although the chief executive’s responsibilities include those covered by the secretariat. One option in choosing the chief executive is to start with a fresh search in order to demonstrate a lack of dependence on a single person; the other is to make a strong effort to keep an individual who has, by all accounts, been outstanding. The spirit of a multi-stakeholder movement, and evidence from other global partnerships where leadership has been excellent, point to the advantages of keeping strong leaders if possible. The comments by interviewees on the work of the current chair of the Transition Team were extraordinarily positive. Although concern was expressed about what would follow when he departs, there was strong agreement about the need to keep him through the next phase of SUN’s evolution – including making any special arrangements necessary to do so. The recommendations here take account, however, of the need to ensure that the institutional structure is robust and not designed around one particular person.

Meetings of the Leadership Group: Consistent with the focus on members serving on a personal basis, meetings of the Leadership Group would involve principals only, and would not be transferable. Evidence suggests that after initial meetings, attendance slips significantly, resulting in boards where those around the table do not have the level of responsibility needed to resolve issues or the level of authority to set strategic directions. The SG would be asked to make this expectation clear when nominating members of the Leadership Group and in annual meetings with it. Meetings of the Leadership Group should not be frequent (e.g. not more than quarterly) and could in some cases be by video link or telephone, or in the margins of other meetings that most members would be attending. For interim operational business, the chief executive could convene, generally by conference call, a group of designated deputies. This group would build on the functioning of the current SUN Transition Team, which, apart from overall strategy, helps to assure two-way communication, build commitment and work out operational matters.

Decision-making: Decisions would normally be made on a consensus basis. The issues with which the Leadership Group would deal would in general not be highly contentious, and consensus is the usual basis for decision-making in global partnerships – even those that have a back-up decision rule. However, their experience indicates that it is prudent to build in provision in advance for such a back-up rule. This addresses the risk of long delay, if not deadlock or lowest common denominator decisions imposed by one or a very small group of board members. Two-thirds, the level used by the FTI and the Global Fund, would be a reasonable decision rule.

Structure: It is proposed that SUN be structured as a partnership rather than a new legal entity. “*The legitimacy of SUN comes from its energy, not from a legal structure*” (UN). Also, a flexible partnership “*makes exit more feasible in the case of non-performance*” (UN). Most interviews that touched on this, showed support for putting SUN on a more stable footing - but without creating a new legal entity. There are numerous examples of intra-UN or broader multi-stakeholder structures being established without such formality (such as Every Woman Every Child and the High Level Task Force on Food Security.) However, a few interviewees disagreed – arguing either that the proposed structure of SUN was too weak and informal (without a specific legal basis, for example from an ECOSOC resolution), or, conversely, that its high level made it so strong that it would become *de facto* a permanent institution.

A2. Advocacy and Champions

There was strong agreement in the survey and interviews on the importance of advocacy and nutrition champions. The background note on advocacy and champions (Attachment 7) identifies several key drivers for successful sustained mobilisation of attention, commitment and support for important causes. These include: the mobilization of dedicated political champions, especially from national leaderships; effective and informed

⁸ For example, ‘Chief Executive Officer’ has strong connotations of a hierarchical and permanent organisation; ‘Chief Operating Officer’ has some of the same connotations and understates the importance of this role.

NGO pressure; policy cohesion within the professional and policy community; community participation; the existence and application of credible indicators; focusing events; and strong leadership. 92% of respondents agreed that *“Nutrition ‘champions’ working at national, regional and international levels are badly needed to get political leaders and decision-makers to act on nutrition.”* And 95% agreed that *“There should be a global leadership group at the highest level (such as heads of agencies, ministers and former heads of state) to advocate for higher priority to nutrition.”* One option is a combined group of global champions and the Leadership Group; the other is to separate the championing and executive functions. Interviews were consistent with evidence from the positive experience of UNICEF and the Global Fund, that *“There is a need to separate out the roles of governance and of champions”* (donor). This point, never contradicted in interviews, was that those best suited to active stewardship of the movement and those who make the most effective champions tend to be quite different people.

The SUN side events at the UNGA in 2010 and 2011 show amply that there is already a group of high-level champions of SUN – including heads of state, the SG and ministers of both donor and developing countries. Attention is needed on how best to maintain, motivate and leverage the support of these champions. Also, there is increasing evidence on the effective use of champions (Attachment 7). The greatest benefits require clear, precise and targeted strategies. These tend to accrue when each champion has a strong personal commitment to nutrition, a specific mandate and a focus on a particular country or region. For example, a minister from a donor country could champion SUN by reaching out to ministers in other donor countries and to global NGOs, as well as championing innovative financing for nutrition. Evidence from other initiatives shows that costs associated with supporting champions, however, can be quite high (but varying considerably), with those of celebrities particularly so.

Financing and staff support for champions can be partly outsourced as well. For example, the Global Fund has had good experience with *“Friends of the Global Fund”*, supported and organised by funding from a foundation. This also has political advantages (as compared with direct support from the secretariat) when, for example, arguing for more support for nutrition from donor countries. In addition, the Global Fund provides extensive direct support for champions. SUN should also explore the possibilities of partnership with key stakeholders, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, which have on-going champions programmes. The Leadership Group should decide on how best to allocate scarce resources among these different approaches to the use of champions, taking account of opportunities for outsourcing.

A3. Secretariat

The main functions of a SUN movement secretariat would include help to mobilise and harmonise external resources, undertake advocacy, exercise a supportive but not directive role to members of the movement working at country level, tracking and monitoring country-level progress on scaling up nutrition, and facilitating mutual accountability. *“The secretariat needs to keep the trains running”* (other) in this wide-ranging partnership with its numerous tasks.

Secretariat role at country level: There are two basic options: direct, involvement and intervention at country level; and a more hands-off approach, with global monitoring, providing generalised guidance, responding to questions (or referring them to those who can) and intervening only in the most serious cases. Interview comments were clear that the second option was preferable. The secretariat *“absolutely must avoid becoming some kind of central control mechanism and must continue to operate as an enabler and catalyst”* (developing country). *“It should not directly implement or manage country activities, and should have checks/balances to ensure that there is no mission creep”* (donor). A more interventionist approach, even with the best of intentions, risks disempowering action at country level – where to achieve sustainable progress governments are to take the lead with broad-based stakeholder platforms and with development partners coordinated by a donor convenor. It also would risk disempowering the currently highly effective donor coordination Task Force, which has the advantage of having ‘voice’ within donor agencies to address issues as they arise. So, SUN should avoid substituting for what donors or CSOs might otherwise be willing to do.

Support at regional level: Interviews also showed a complementary need for action by SUN (by the secretariat as well as by champions) at regional level, including, particularly in the case of Africa, regional economic (as well as e.g. health) organisations. In nutrition, as in other areas, effective regional organisations

have credibility among their member countries that can contribute to bringing about needed change – for example, on allocating more resources to nutrition or on working with multi-stakeholder platforms.

Supporting and enabling working groups (Task Forces, Reference Groups): This role is important but subject to the constraints of cost and, importantly, the risk of the secretariat inadvertently reducing the ownership and commitment of group members.

Support for the Leadership Group: This function is important, but experience of other initiatives points to the need to have clear understandings on relative roles to avoid high transaction costs and micro-management.

Support to champions: Evidence of the experience of others points to the need for support on strategy, tactics, messaging and logistics for champions. This requires selectivity, given resource constraints, as well as outsourcing (as discussed above).

Advocacy: “*Telling the nutrition story*” (UN) – directly at global and regional levels, and through encouraging support for advocacy at country level.

Monitoring, transparency and accountability: The Secretariat should monitor globally (including through partial outsourcing) country progress and aid for nutrition. It should also have responsibility for monitoring transparency and accountability structures (as discussed below), as well as for a results framework for the SUN movement itself – to assure that SUN has added value to what would have happened in its absence.

Administration and financial management of the secretariat: There is an urgent need to set up appropriate financial and administrative arrangements for SUN. Four options emerged from interviews: administration by the Office of the Secretary-General; an administrative hosting arrangement with a UN nutrition-related agency; independent administrative hosting by an organisation selected via a rapid limited tender; and use of UNOPS, which has played this role for the HLTF secretariat. The second of these options raised the same concerns about ‘capture’, whether real or perceived, as with full hosting. The Office of the Secretary-General should be asked to consider hosting the secretariat itself or, if this is not feasible, to decide between sponsoring a tender to choose another host or using UNOPS. A tender would be preferable to sole-source procurement in principle, if the Office of the Secretary-General were unwilling to be the administrative host for SUN. However, the process, following UN tendering rules, is likely to be a long one; and the devil is in the details - mixing UN and non-UN administrative and financial rules would result in major difficulties.

Number of staff: The options are (i) a very small secretariat (e.g. fewer than five staff members, as currently); (ii) moderate (10–15 people); or (iii) large (20+). An appealing approach is to start very small and see how needs evolve. However, evidence from other partnerships suggests that inadequate staffing and funding of the secretariat at the initial stages are major obstacles to a fast start and so to building support and achieving objectives. And there has already been a year’s experience with a small secretariat, which is by all accounts unsustainably overworked and overstretched, with gaps in what it can cover. “*The secretariat should be big enough to perform but not so big as to do things that members of the movement should do*” (UN). The moderate approach (10–15 people) strikes a reasonable balance, although the precise size should be based on a solid three-year strategy as formulated and approved by the Leadership Group, including a detailed plan by function of what should be done by the secretariat and why. An illustrative example, to provide an order of magnitude, would be as follows. Two staff each on: country monitoring and support; support to constituency groups or temporary task forces; and support for advocacy and champions at global and national levels (assuming substantial outsourcing to other partners here). One each on: support of the Leadership Group; global monitoring and reporting; communications; accountability; a website; and organising SUN participation in international fora. There would also be need for a manager who would work closely with the chief executive. This would total 13. If SUN decides to introduce the standards for country programmes and light review process mentioned under the section on transparency and accountability below, that would require an extra 1–2 staff (plus funding for development of standards and for external review). In sum, even rounding down, the range of 10–15 (apart from the chief executive) seems well justified. Whatever the decision on size, it is important that the secretariat have predictable multi-year financing and some built-in flexibility so that it can concentrate on getting the job done rather than chasing after funding. As noted above and in Attachment 5, evidence from other global partnerships points to the imperative of assuring adequate and predictable financing for secretariats.

A4. Evolution of Task Forces

The main options are: (i) keep all existing Task Forces; (ii) start afresh; or (iii) build on what is working. Keeping all, in spite of their variability in commitment and effectiveness to date, risks perpetuating bureaucracy, dissipating enthusiasm and providing a disincentive for action by others. Starting afresh would jettison valuable ownership, support, capacity and accomplishment. It is preferable to continue and attempt to improve what works best. Based on experience to date, this means continuing constituency groups, which have been the most effective (particularly the donor and civil society groups) and which help directly to mobilise support for the SUN movement. Constituency groups also include the UN reference group and, importantly, the new interim country partner reference group of representatives from some of the SUN countries.

Also, more attention is needed to harnessing the contribution of the private sector. In the questionnaire, 68% of respondents *agreed that “There are no clear parameters to encourage the constructive involvement of the private sector in the SUN. This gap needs to be addressed with some urgency.”*⁹ If SUN does not do so more effectively, *“It will slowly become more and more marginal to the directions and needs of African countries”* (developing country). Successfully engaging with the private sector requires addressing frankly the private sector’s need to make profits (other than in philanthropic activities).

Apart from the above constituency groups, there should be strictly time-limited task-specific groups, with attention to what can be done by others (see below). It is therefore recommended that the Leadership Group should review the status of existing non-constituency Task Forces from this perspective.

A5. Outsourcing and Links

The Leadership Group needs to decide which functions it wishes to have performed in-house and which it can fully or partly outsource to others, thereby reducing costs and providing incentives for others to contribute their capacities and financing. 94% of respondents agreed that *“The SUN stewardship structure can and should ‘outsource’ some functions to other relevant partnerships or agencies.”* The case of mobilising and supporting champions has been discussed above. Other examples could include convening a global forum, monitoring, research or direct support at country level.

Global fora can play an important role in the SUN movement. *“It is useful to have a broad umbrella where things can be negotiated or announced”* (donor). Interview results, showing a different but consistent view, suggest that scarce resources should be leveraged through proactive participation in existing global and regional fora (e.g. the recent UN nutrition events, conferences organised by academic groups, such as IFPRI, or inter-agency thematic events) rather than used to mount separate SUN events. This seems the preferable approach during the proposed three-year period.

Research and the spread of good practice across countries are crucial for the achievement of SUN objectives. But neither critical evaluation of good and bad practice nor, even more so, research, are comparative advantages of a multi-stakeholder movement or the SUN secretariat. They are expensive, and others can do them well. This view is consistent with – and probably at least partly explains – the relatively low priority given to research and dissemination of good practice (sixth out of seven functions) in the survey. Other organisations, such as universities or research institutes, could help as catalysts, implementers or disseminators of research. The SCN has a proven track record on dissemination. This would still call for the SUN secretariat to be proactive, working with such organisations and encouraging appropriate donor financing.

Links with the wider nutrition-related community: These examples also illustrate the broader point, of *“the need to establish, selectively, links with relevant processes and partnerships already out there”* (donor). Just a few examples are the HLTF, the CFS, the SCN, the World Health Assembly and the dedicated funds available for health, food and agriculture, and social protection. 87% of respondents agreed that *“SUN’s work*

⁹ Interestingly, in spite of concerns by a number of CSOs about conflicts of interest, agreement among CSO respondents was about average (marginally, but not statistically significantly, higher than average).

will need to be tightly linked to the emerging international agenda for food security. This would include close linkages between SUN and the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Food Security". Also, "Nutrition should jump onto the climate change agenda – there are a lot of resources there and an important impact of climate on food and nutrition" (developing country).

A6. REACH

The options are between REACH as SUN's main preferred source of technical assistance at country level, in planning, facilitation and coordination, or as just one relevant source among others. REACH, sponsored by the four main UN nutrition agencies, has an interesting multi-sectoral approach and has recently experienced rapid growth. Views in the survey were sharply divided on REACH as "the SUN mechanism of choice" (40% disagree, 38% agree and 21% don't know). But there was overwhelming agreement (98%) that the Paris-Accra principles meant leaving countries to decide between other sources of assistance. The message from the interviews was also strong and consistent (if not so extraordinarily close to unanimity). "It was established to achieve in-country facilitation on nutrition and to bring the UN agencies into a shared country plan and these are excellent purposes. But REACH should be arms-length from SUN as it is only one potential source of delivery" (other). Going beyond that, SUN could also treat it as one plausible source of technical assistance among others, subject to a "market test" (UN). In sum REACH should be "on tap rather than on top" (other).

A7. Transparency and Accountability

These issues were stressed consistently, particularly by donors. They must be taken seriously by any global initiative if it is to be effective and credible and to raise resources. "Partnerships can be effective when mutual accountabilities have been worked out in advance and where they are measured" (other). At a general level, this requires following good practice under the Paris-Accra principles and in their implementation by other relevant partnerships. The International Health Partnership (IHP+) puts it thus: "We begin by affirming the importance of accountability in improving aid effectiveness, both in general and specifically within the health sector."¹⁰ Accountability needs to be closely linked to sustainable results – initially in terms of steps required to achieve improved nutrition indicators and then of the indicators themselves. And accountabilities should be specific and monitorable, and to apply to all members of a partnership. It also needs to be linked, as the OECD's Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) has shown, with internal incentives. "How can a new governance reinforce incentives and accountability for moving from rhetoric to action?" (other). Final decisions on accountability should be taken by the Leadership Group. However, the following steps (adapted from on-going work by the Cluster on Ownership and Accountability of the OECD-hosted Working Party on Aid Effectiveness)¹¹ would contribute to SUN accountability:

Transparency on past and planned aid for nutrition at global and country levels, applying the highest degree of transparency possible for each donor. For many donors, this would be the standard of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and of the DAC initiative on "Donors' Forward Spending Plans". The same principle of maximum possible transparency should apply to partner countries, including regarding transparency of government and external financing at the local level. But this should not be a precondition to what donors do.

Country-level indicators of aid effectiveness. Each SUN country should have a monitorable results framework with country-owned indicators, but with strong urging to incorporate a minimum common set of indicators based on global good practice that would, in part, permit aggregation of results across countries. Experience of other initiatives – for example, IHP+, which is similar in not providing earmarked funding – indicates that getting reliably gathered data, whether from developing countries or donors, and making it available, is difficult and requires real effort.

An agreed process is needed in each country whereby multi-stakeholder platforms could make effective use of data on financing and effectiveness to increase accountability and address issues. Consistent with the

¹⁰ http://ihpresults.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Foreword_ENG.pdf

¹¹ http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_43384788_1_1_1_1,00.html

Accra Agenda for Action, this process would also make use of credible independent evidence.¹² It applies both to mutual accountability between donors and developing countries and to domestic accountability. Mutual accountability, as called for in the Paris-Accra commitments, attempts to address the imbalance in power between donors and developing countries because of donor discretion in when and how much financing to provide and under what conditions. Donors should agree to country-level monitoring, by donor, of agreed donor indicators, including on meeting financing commitments; this would be consistent with good practice (overall, not nutrition-specific) in countries such as Tanzania and Mozambique.

On-going light-touch tracking by the secretariat of progress and issues, by country and by donor, that would be included at least annually in reviews by the Leadership Group, with overall findings discussed in the annual meeting with the Secretary-General.

Standards on country strategies: This is a sensitive issue. The Global Fund, IHP+ and FTI have adopted such standards in an effort to accomplish two objectives: to avoid each donor insisting on its own vetting procedures, with different standards – contrary to the Paris-Accra principles; and to help increase the evenness of programme quality. For the latter reason they have also adopted external review processes for country programmes. Experience is accumulating on how to do so with a light touch consistent with country ownership and predictability. This is an issue to be considered by the Leadership Group as part of moving to increased emphasis on implementation.

Accountability of SUN overall. Within SUN, the Secretariat is accountable to the Leadership Group. The Leadership Group, along with the Secretariat and relevant SUN stakeholders, is accountable to SUN stakeholders for progress on an agreed results framework – recognising that there are factors beyond their control. The Leadership Group should explore how to extend accountability to all stakeholders, including CSOs and the private sector, as recommended in interviews. There should be an evaluation of SUN in time to consider next steps after the three-year time period proposed below. In that case, the SUN Transition Team should commission a quick study to determine the extent to which data (quantitative and qualitative) are or could be available to serve as a baseline for the evaluation. It would also be useful to have on-going independent monitoring of SUN as a supplement to that carried out by the secretariat. This could be done, as in the case of IHP+, by a designated external monitor (in that case by a consortium). That experience also suggests the benefits of an arms-length relationship, but with terms of reference that call for approaches and mechanisms aimed at achieving better performance rather than mainly at ‘naming and shaming’ as has too often been the case with independent monitoring.

A8. Dedicated Fund

64% of respondents agreed that *“It is important to put in place a global earmarked fund for nutrition.”* But 90% of donors – who would be asked to put up the financing – disagreed. Interview results among donors were more nuanced: some argued that (as the FTI evaluation found) a dedicated fund risks diverting attention from the volume and quality of overall donor support; others thought that a fund could be useful. The main view of donors was that financing such a fund is out of the question at this time; but they did not completely rule out re-examining this option in the future. This is different, though, from a modest dedicated fund for adequate and predictable support of the secretariat and related responsibilities, which should be a high priority for donors and foundations.

A9. Timeframe

The main options are: (i) moving immediately to a permanent institutional arrangement; (ii) a transition period of 18–24 months before deciding whether or what permanent structure there should be; or (iii) three years of intense effort to achieve SUN objectives before reaching such a decision. The two relevant questions in the survey gave conflicting results, weakly supporting both of the first two options, but the third had not been developed in time to be included. The Paris-Accra principles (and the majority of the interviews) argue against haste in setting up new permanent organisations, and concerns about ‘capture’ rule out haste in attaching SUN to an existing one. But interviews showed that 18–24 months was not seen as sufficient, all the

¹² Paragraph 24 of the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), which discusses transparency and accountability, also includes other relevant issues such as the need to combat corruption.

more so counting the time needed to implement changes from current arrangements and to evaluate and set the stage for what is to follow. Three years would provide a more reasonable time to get from the current stage to proven scaling up of implementation in even a few countries. Then a more informed decision, based on evaluation, could be taken as to whether and in what form SUN should continue. However, it should be made crystal clear that the three-year timeframe above should not be mistaken for the creation of a permanent organisation. That would be premature.

Option B: Merger of SUN and the SCN

The option of a merger of SUN into the SCN governance structure has been under discussion since the SUN Road Map was launched in September 2010. This option has been associated with strongly held views, both positive and negative. Three sub-options are considered: (i) integrate SUN within the SCN in the relatively short term; (ii) bring SCN under the SUN Leadership Group; or (iii) consider possible merger of SUN and the SCN after a three-year period, as recommended in Option A.

Bi. Immediate integration of SUN into the SCN

The SCN was mandated by ECOSOC in 1974; it is multi-sectoral; its secretariat has provided some support for the secretariat of the Transition Team (with financing from Irish Aid); overlapping functions would be integrated; and the absorption of SUN would be relatively simple to accomplish on paper. It would be quite the opposite in practice, however, with major challenges. Among these would be building broad-based confidence in an integrated entity that combined the cultures of a mainly UN stewardship framework and mandate (SCN) with a rapidly growing multi-stakeholder movement aimed at scaling-up programmes at country level (SUN).

93% of respondents agreed that *"SUN's progress in helping to scale up nutrition at country level should not be held hostage to SCN reform."* 88% agreed that *"The SCN has suffered from lack of true and sustained support from the UN agencies themselves."* This has been the case over many years in spite of previous reform efforts. Interview results, including some from within SCN agencies, were much sharper on how integration would cause SUN to lose its most important assets – the depth and breadth of its multi-stakeholder enthusiasm and effectiveness. *"Putting SUN into SCN would kill SUN and the prospects for nutrition"* (developing country). Given that the SCN has launched an internal reform and renewal process focused on addressing issues of intra-UN coordination and of inter-agency consistency in norm-setting, it would be premature and probably counter-productive to derail that process. Another role that could be explored would be to become the UN caucus within SUN, much as a self-organised group of senior officials from donors have constituted a donor caucus. This would require sufficient progress in SCN's reform for it to gain the trust of relevant UN agencies – including, for example, UN Women, UNHCR and OHCHR, as well as the four main SCN agencies.

Bii. Bringing the SCN under the SUN Leadership Group

This sub-option, which arose too late to be included in the survey, received negative reactions in interviews. *"The SCN and SUN are entirely different and should be kept separate"* (developing country). *"Ultimately, SCN is a technical group whereas SUN is a political movement"* (other). Furthermore, *"SUN should not take on problems of SCN"* (donor). It would increase complexity and costs – including the likelihood of referring back to ECOSOC for a change in SCN's stewardship – with a high risk in practice of holding back progress both on scaling up SUN at country level and on the SCN reform process.

Biii. Merger as an option after three years

This would enable SUN and the SCN to pursue their complementary priority objectives for three years while keeping merger as an option for future consideration. The survey had a weak finding on this point, with highly dispersed views favouring the statement, *"The credibility of SUN stewardship will require integration of SUN"*

into a reformed SCN" (47% agree, 40% disagree and 12% "don't know"). But this is subject to the two much stronger findings above.

There was a frequently expressed view that the UN should not play a leadership role in two partly overlapping efforts in global nutrition. This appears at first glance to argue for looking again at merger as an option at the end of the three-year period. But the merger option highlights the question of whether SUN is in fact a UN coordinating structure or a multi-stakeholder structure under the aegis of the UN. There is wide and deep agreement that it is the latter. SUN clearly cannot play the role of intra-UN coordination. Can and should the SCN, as a UN inter-agency group, lead a multi-stakeholder structure? It could, of course, transform itself into such a structure. But this would mean either duplicating SUN's stewardship structure or, preferably, coming back to the option above of bringing the SCN under this stewardship structure.

As discussed under Option B (i) above, there could be one form of closer link between SUN and the SCN in well under three years. This would be if the SCN could take on the role of convening the UN caucus of SUN. And there are, though, some technical functions that overlap, where functions could move to SUN or where the SCN could carry out functions for SUN (see "Outsourcing" above). These would include setting of standards (a clear UN responsibility) and technical work related to knowledge management or dissemination.

Decisions on options should in any event be informed by coordinated independent evaluations of both SUN and the SCN. Merger or joint stewardship in less than three years would have even greater disadvantages: greater uncertainty on process, with the substantial risk of the 'merger issue' being raised repeatedly; diversion of energy from scaling up to negotiating and implementing a merger of the two different mandates and cultures; and insufficient time for external evaluation and considered reflection of the best medium-term path(s) forward, whether for SUN or SCN. In addition, the combined SUN-SCN would become, *de facto*, a permanent structure, foreclosing the exit option. The SCN, like SUN, should be considered "*on probation*" until it demonstrates its success. "*Once you create something it stays there*" (UN).

Conclusion and Next Steps

This report has outlined the pros and cons of options and sub-options for the evolution of SUN's stewardship. In an effort to contribute to broadening the space for consensus, the study has involved a process of continuing consultation and has made recommendations among the options and sub-options. It is important that the option and sub-options chosen be those that will most contribute to achieving the central objective of SUN of accelerated progress in reducing undernutrition at the country level.

There is a need to reach a prompt decision. The Transition Team, which has commissioned this report, will determine the process for its distribution and consideration and then for arriving at a decision, promptly but taking account of the need for buy-in by stakeholders. In the interim, it is important to avoid the 'lame duck' syndrome: this means building on the political boost given by the UN events in September 2011 and providing support and encouragement, as well as setting clear expectations, for the Transition Team, the secretariat and the Task Forces to keep SUN's important work going strong.