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Making sure a world with no malnutrition is within reach

4.1 THE WAY FORWARD

By Gerda Verburg, Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and SUN Movement Coordinator

This report is intended for sharing, learning and ensuring accountability – all principles found at the heart of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement. Agenda 2030 is a game changer for all. No longer can we kick “a can down the road” – business as usual just isn’t an option for any of us. Fighting malnutrition is no small task, as it requires a consolidated and coherent approach, with many stakeholders onboard. SUN Countries are figuring it out and learning from one another. Over the past year, I have been very impressed by how many SUN Governments, and beyond, are stepping up to implement Agenda 2030, its Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Climate Agreement. The motivation appears to be very much there. So are challenges.

For many, the year 2016-2017 can be looked back on as unforgettable – for better or worse. I believe this also rings true for the SUN Movement. Let me start by giving a snapshot of some ‘better’ moments from the past year. SUN Countries including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Myanmar, and Nigeria, have seen reductions in the number of their stunted girls and boys, proving that its eradication is within reach and that, with sustained efforts, malnutrition – in all forms – can be fought. Globally, although fewer girls and boys are stunted than before, more than 155 million children are still at risk of lifelong damage to their brains and bodies, which won’t be an easy task to redress. There is little time.





And there is no time like the present. Many SUN Countries believe that the environment in which they work today is better than it has ever been for ending malnutrition, which is a great start. What SUN Countries share is their commitment to deliver to those most in need, by establishing a set of common results and the frameworks needed to put these goals into action.

Advocacy to sustain political commitment towards nutrition has been scaled up this year. The 28 members of our Lead Group, representing political and social changemakers, have been flying the flag for better nutrition since they last came together at their inauguration in September 2016. The recently launched engagement plan will further ensure these moments, at the right time, and the right place, for maximum impact. This work will complement that of a record-breaking number of parliamentarians and champions who work in SUN Countries to fight malnutrition, once and for all. A handy toolkit on how to best engage these champions – as we hope more endeavour to be – will be launched at the same time as this report, during the 2017 Global Gathering of the SUN Movement in Abidjan, alongside the first-ever Scaling Up Nutrition Champion Awards. It is high time that these often un-sung sheroes and heroes are acknowledged and lauded.

At the core of the SUN Movement lies the belief that multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration – at all levels – must be promoted and strengthened. This is in line with SDG 17's vision for strong partnerships and solidarity for sustainable development. In addition to a wider membership of multi-sectoral platforms in 2016-2017, gathering governmental branches, setting the same goals and ensuring adequate and tracked resources is within reach. The Movement's theory of change – with a vision to meet all SDGs – is built around the hypothesis that, together, with aligned nutrition implementation, we see better results than could have been achieved alone. If multiple stakeholders come together, in an enabling environment, actors subsequently change their behaviours and make sure no one is left behind – leading to more and SMARTer contributions and spending. Our Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning (MEAL) system will help us gain knowledge, over time, how the countries that form the Movement are faring towards ensuring the environment and resources needed to scale up for nutrition. This report shows the power of knowing where we are, if we are on the right track, and where to focus our efforts.

The promise of equity, equality and non-discrimination – with women and girls at the centre, able to lead from where they stand – is a noble promise too good to break. Where women are empowered, there is less hunger. Whereas SUN Countries stand united in the belief of equity and equality, moving from lip service to action requires double effort, as it is dependent in social norms surrounding her. And this is where men come in – in all their roles, from fathers, husbands and partners to religious leaders, from teachers to CEOs – as champions of equality. This way, we know that no one will be left behind. Clearly, this is not the time to rest on our laurels.

4.2 THE ROAD AHEAD

“ FOR THE THINGS WE HAVE TO LEARN BEFORE WE CAN DO THEM, WE LEARN BY DOING THEM.

– Aristotle

By 2020, as stated in the SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap, national plans to end malnutrition will be fit for the challenge. This is the Movement's ambition. To get there, in-country capabilities will be strengthened and reinforced – through building on what exists in countries and learning-by-doing.

To solve the malnutrition puzzle, for everyone, everywhere, countries, sectors and stakeholders

should focus efforts on: 1. continuously improving country planning and implementation, 2. mobilising, advocating and communicating for impact, 3. strengthening capacities at all levels, while 4. ensuring equity, equality and non-discrimination for all – with women and girls at the centre of actions. This will require coherent and consistent efforts, where divides are bridged.

To power progress for all, the SUN Movement will, in the period ahead, support country action towards the four agreed areas, as mentioned above, whilst addressing urgent and potentially irreversible risks to nutrition successes, including increases in hunger and food insecurity due to conflict and climate-related shocks, the drastically growing multiple burden of over and undernutrition, and the peril of leaving behind those needed to solve malnutrition, once and for all.

4.3 LOOKING TO 2018

The SUN Movement has demonstrated that immense energy is driving this collective push for nutrition results, reinforced by a growing recognition that we are all in this together, as we must be to achieve goals set. SUN Countries are leading by example, showing results, sharing what works to accelerate progress and learning from one another.

As the year 2018 will mark the mid-term period of the Strategy and Roadmap, this will be a critical time for assessing whether progress towards commonly set goals are on par, or if efforts need scaling up.

Moving forward, the SUN Lead Group has recommended several priorities for SUN Countries – to spur concrete nutrition results – for the year ahead.

1. Take a long-term approach to better nutrition in crises settings and in building resilience

1. **Strengthen leadership, political commitment and coherent action for improved nutrition**, across crises response and development plans – in line with the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit outcomes.
2. **Intensify the prioritisation of nutrition at all levels**, across all sectors, especially in humanitarian responses with a focus on stunting prevention.
3. **Collaborate with multiple stakeholders**. The private sector and civil society have important roles to play in the field of recovery, resilience-building, and early action focused on long term stability.
4. **Leave no one behind, especially adolescent girls**. SUN Countries should focus on ensuring progress for adolescent girls, in particular, and make sure that women have access to decision-making in crises settings to build resilience.

2. Domestic and external investment must increase rapidly, as nutrition is the maker and marker of the Sustainable Development Goals

1. **Scale up cost-effective actions which can be scaled up immediately**, as well as leveraging the contributions of multiple sectors.
2. **Make the investment case** with Ministers of Finance to increase domestic nutrition investments.
3. **Keep political attention high** in the offices of Presidents and Prime Ministers, which is also where the SUN Government Focal Point should be nested.
4. **Look towards innovative sources of finance**, such as private revenue and multilateral instruments such as the Global Financing Facility (GFF).

3. Build trust amongst stakeholders and leverage the immense potential of the private sector

1. **All stakeholders (businesses, civil society, donors, the UN) in the SUN Movement must live up to their commitments to implement national nutrition plans, and collaborate to address the multiple forms of malnutrition.** SUN stakeholders and networks should recommit to nutrition and be challenged on what they will do differently in light of the multiple burdens of malnutrition.
2. **Host critical, transparent and inclusive dialogue among stakeholders to build effective partnerships at all levels, to prevent and fight all forms of malnutrition – focused on measurable results.** The SUN Lead Group acknowledges the important contributions of the private sector and the need to build effective dialogue between business, government and civil society, to ensure a solid base of trust and collaboration.

4. Address inequalities amongst women, men, girls and boys

1. **With the knowledge that where women and girls are empowered, hunger and malnutrition will decline, SUN Countries need to scale up efforts that uphold equity, equality and non-discrimination**, in every aspect of life;
2. **SUN Countries also need to put more emphasis on ensuring progress for adolescent girls**, an essential group in the nutrition puzzle.

All stakeholders in the SUN Movement are building upon current successes with greater ambition for results and impact. This ambition is the unique quality that has made the SUN Movement a success to date. The ambition will ensure it remains country-led, inclusive, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral. As 2018 commences, it will be essential to **strengthen the narrative on nutrition; keep political attention focused on the issue; always focus on inequalities and those most at risk of being left behind**; and focus on tackling **the multiple burdens of malnutrition which threaten many SUN Movement countries, and beyond**. Through principled collaboration, the SUN Movement will continue its drive to ensure a world free from malnutrition, in all its forms.



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