

## MAIN OBSERVATIONS FROM THE COUNTRY VISIT TO BANGLADESH

Date of visit (day/ month/year)

Sunday 2 April to Wednesday 5 April

### BACKGROUND

The Government of Bangladesh joined the SUN Movement in September 2012 with high level commitment from the Prime Minister, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, who served in the first phase of the SUN Movement as a Lead Group member. A National Plan of Action (NPAN2) has been developed and a high level structure, the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), has been mandated to convene the sectors in support of the plans implementation. Madam Roxana Quader, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the SUN Government Focal Point and she is supported by a small Secretariat which is working toward revitalizing the BNNC and assisting with coordination of nutrition stakeholders in the country including civil society, UN agencies, donors, academia and private sector representatives.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM MEETINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

The delegation held meetings with the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Minister for Planning Mustafa Kamal, Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mohamad Nasim, Minister of Food Kamrul Islam, Minister of Agriculture Matia Chowdhury.

During discussions, the Prime Minister was praised for her leadership on nutrition and development, with her role as a former SUN Movement Lead Group member acknowledged. She was also encouraged to endorse the NPAN2 and Chair the first meeting of the revitalized Bangladesh National Nutrition Council. All Ministers were encouraged to provide continued leadership on the BNNC to ensure a multi-sectoral approach through convening the relevant Ministries. The delegation encouraged multi-sectoral leadership in ensuring the implementation of NPAN 2, with requisite domestic funding ensured for the scale up of nutrition specific and sensitive interventions.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM MEETINGS WITH UNITED NATIONS

Through interactions at a UN Country team meeting and subsequent discussions with UNICEF, FAO, WFP and WHO country representatives and nutrition advisors, there was support for helping to accelerate the process of approval of NPAN2 and institutionalization of a strengthened BNNC, with strong leadership. UN Agencies are working to ensure that BNNC governance and institutional arrangements cut across sectors bridging interfaces with existing food security and nutrition arrangements in country and ensuring that programmes to address undernutrition are well funded from domestic sources. Partners are also working to mainstream community based management of acute malnutrition. UN partners also raised the need for more coordinated efforts to enhance the enabling environment through effective laws, policies and regulatory framework, for public private partnerships to enhance their contributions to people's nutrition.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM MEETINGS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The Civil Society Alliance for SUN, hosted by CONCERN Worldwide presently, is having funding challenges following the end of the MPTF in December 2015. Members of the alliance raised concern regarding the level of political commitment for nutrition and fragmented coordination among government sectors, but also networks of stakeholders. They flagged that turnover of officials disrupts collaboration and creates gaps in communication, particularly with UN and donor officials. Overall, there has been impressive advocacy for nutrition carried out but challenges with civil society collaboration have prevented a more unified civil society voice on nutrition. Further work can be done to move from advocacy related activities to focus intently on capacity building and implementation.

## OBSERVATIONS FROM MEETINGS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR AND BUSINESSES

A formal SUN Business Network has yet to be established in Bangladesh, however GAIN and WFP are actively working toward the development of the Network by first mapping business competencies in Bangladesh. Because of its involvement in fortification (salt, rice, oil), the INGO, GAIN, participates as a private sector stakeholder in the SUN Multistakeholder Platform. Stakeholders mentioned plans to catalyze this Network and working with the government to ensure there is a strong vision for how business can adequately contribute to people's nutrition in the country, with the government in the lead and effective regulation of activities.

## OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The SUN Movement Coordinator spoke in a side event at the Inter-Parliamentary Union side event **“Breaking Down Barriers for Improved Health of Young Generations: A Multisectoral Approach”** and addressed all parliamentary delegations during the general debate focusing on **“Redressing inequalities: Delivering on dignity and well-being for all”**. Following the Coordinator urged the Bangladesh Parliament Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury to convene a parliamentary discussion on nutrition in 2017.

Media interviews were also held with [BDNews 24](#) and [the Independent](#) and [Newshour](#).

A meeting with SUN Movement Lead Group member and Vice-Chairperson of BRAC Dr. Mushtaque Chowdhury encouraged his role in making the WASH-Nutrition linkages a priority, both national and globally; as well as collaboration with the Government to ensure nutrition remains a national priority.

A meeting with the Ambassador of the Netherlands encouraged them to take more of a leading role in terms of donor alignment and collaboration given recent turnover of officials.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Overall, there has been impressive progress in tackling malnutrition in Bangladesh and the development of NPAN2 and the revitalisation of the BNNC demonstrates the political will to build on past success. Ensuring the plan is sufficiently funded going forward is key. It will be important for stakeholders from government, UN, donors, civil society and private sectors to bolster their collaboration and unity in support of the national plans. More can be done to involve actors from the media, particularly those that have been trained to report on nutrition as well as the sensitisation of Members of Parliament. We encourage stakeholders to use the Annual SUN Joint-Assessment process as a way to reflect on the state of collaboration and set priorities in line with national objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage final approval of NPAN2 and support the first meeting of the BNNC, with chairing by the Prime Minister.
- Encourage the Speaker of Parliament Dr. Chaudhury's leadership on nutrition in parliament and work with the All Party Parliamentarian Group to support a national nutrition discussion.
- Revitalise engagement with the media using the many journalists who have been trained on reporting on nutrition.
- Bolster coordination through more regular interaction between SUN Network stakeholders.

## ANNEXES

### List of people met

Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina  
Minister for Planning Mustafa Kamal  
Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mohamad Nasim  
Minister of Food Kamrul Islam  
Minister of Agriculture Matia Chowdhury  
Speaker of Parliament, Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury  
Dr. Mushtaque Chowdhury, Vice-Chairperson BRAC and SUN Movement Lead Group member  
Madam Roxana Quader, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
Dr. Rukhsana Haider, Chairperson, CSA SUN BD  
Dr. Sultana Kanum, Global SUN CSN  
Ms. Asfia Azim, CSA SUN Coordinator  
Dr. Iftekhar Rashid, Nutrition Specialist USAID  
Dr. Afsana Kaosar, Director of Health, Population, Nutrition BRAC  
Dr. Tahmeed Ahmed, Director of Nutrition, ICDDR,B  
Dr. Rudaba Kondker, Country Manager GAIN  
Ms. Jane Edmondson, Country Representative DFID and SUN Movement Executive Committee Member  
Ms. Leoni Margarethe Cuelenaere, Netherlands Ambassador to Bangladesh  
Mr. Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Country Representative  
Ms. Anuradha Naryan, UNICEF Chief of Nutrition  
Ms. Sue Lautze, FAO Country Representative  
Dr. Lalita Battacharjee, FAO Senior Nutrition Adviser  
Ms. Christa Rader, WFP Country Representative  
Ms. Monique Beun, WFP Head of Nutrition  
Dr. Robert Watkins, UN Resident Coordinator

### Delegation composition

Gerda Verburg – UN Assistant Secretary General and SUN Movement Coordinator  
Edwyn Shiell – Policy and Strategy Advisor, Advocacy and Communication, SUN Movement Secretariat  
Alam Khattak – Policy Advisor, SUN Movement Secretariat