

# Introduction: From inspiration to impact

*By Anthony Lake, Chair of the SUN Movement Lead Group and UNICEF Executive Director*



The SUN Movement was born in 2010 in response to mounting evidence of both the injustice and the impact of malnutrition – costs measured in children’s lives and futures, and thus in the strength of their societies.

Since then, it has become a true movement: an inclusive structure of networks built around our shared vision of a world in which no child is malnourished. It is a collective effort led by governments uniting with thousands of organisations, businesses, and committed individuals to scale-up nutrition for every child.

In 2016, we can all take pride in how far we have come. From six countries leading the way in 2010 to 57 governments today, including most recently Papua New Guinea, Sudan, and the Indian States of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. And from a comparatively small group of committed organisations, the Movement now includes over 2,000 civil society groups, over 300 businesses, donors, scientists, UN agencies, and citizens alike.

Together, we are driving national action, energising cross-sector collaboration and putting nutrition on political agendas.

And together, all of us can share in some extraordinary achievements: In 2012, when SUN began, there were roughly 165 million stunted children. Now, new figures released in September 2016 show that that number is now 156 million – a great result, realised in part due to our movement’s efforts. Dramatic reductions in stunting are being recorded in Bangladesh, Nepal, Lesotho, El Salvador, and many other countries.

Our new four-year strategy, launched in September 2016, “From Inspiration to Impact,” builds on our strong start. It presents a practical plan on how we can turn the momentum we have built together into greater results for people suffering from malnutrition in every country... to monitor these results... and to use this knowledge to drive further action to improve access to nutrition for millions of people around the world.

This will be all the more important as governments turn their attention to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, so many of which contain indicators linked in some way to nutrition.



For example, SDG 1: We know that investing in nutrition is one of the best investments we can make towards eradicating extreme poverty, because well-nourished children are 33 per cent more likely to escape poverty as adults. Similarly, social protection programmes to eradicate poverty, such as cash transfers, can help poor families to provide better nutrition to their children. And the role nutrition plays in the development of children's brains - and thus, their future ability to learn, to earn, and to live productive lives - is fundamental.

Throughout 2015-16, nutrition champions across the Movement have made an increasingly effective case for investing in nutrition - and for incorporating nutrition targets into development and social sectors, where many governments spend more than 30 per cent of their budgets.

This is especially important now. Estimates show that to meet World Health Assembly nutrition targets, which include reducing stunting in children and anemia in women, we will need to mobilise an additional \$7 billion over the next 10 years.

These pressing needs will require ever greater coordination, new funding mechanisms, greater national ownership, and a renewed sense of solidarity across the SUN Movement. Our work will be aided significantly by three steps the SUN Movement has taken in 2016.

First, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently appointed Ms. Gerda Verburg, formerly Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations Organizations for Food and Agriculture in Rome, as SUN Movement Coordinator. Gerda replaces Tom Arnold, whose steadfast leadership has steered the SUN Movement forward and was instrumental in the development of the new SUN Movement Strategy and Roadmap.

Second, we have formed a new SUN Movement Executive Committee to help drive and guide our common quest for results.

Finally, the Secretary-General has appointed a new SUN Movement Lead Group, whose members will build on the remarkable achievements of their predecessors in making nutrition a global priority.

As 2016 draws to a close, we have every reason for optimism. Together, united behind the new Strategy and Roadmap, we will move forward - energised by the results we are achieving, the momentum we are helping to build around nutrition, and the urgent need to reach millions of children at risk of malnutrition and stunting.

Our job will never be finished until all of those children get the nutrition they deserve... the chance at the healthy, productive life they deserve... and the future they deserve.

This is the vision of the SUN Movement. We all look forward to the work ahead.