

SCALING UP NUTRITION TODAY:

Looking at progress, building back better



Scaling Up
Nutrition



PROGRESS REPORT 2020
PART 1



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STANDING UNITED FOR NUTRITION:

Setting the scene for SUN to further rise



The year 2020 was a defining moment in our global efforts to end malnutrition in all its forms. It was a time of celebration, as we looked back over the past 10 years of progress since the SUN Movement's inception, and all we have accomplished to scale up nutrition. It was also a time of immense adversity, as we faced a global pandemic that threatens to erode hard-won progress and presents new barriers to achieving our vision of a world without malnutrition by 2030. If our experience these last ten years has taught us anything, it is that we are stronger when we face such challenges together.

The SUN Movement was born out of a crisis: created out of a concern that child malnutrition was not declining fast enough despite economic growth. The 2008-2009 financial crisis and the subsequent rise in food prices had put the most vulnerable children, women and populations at risk of malnutrition—and collective, significant action was needed to respond to this challenge at scale. The SUN Movement pushed for a country-owned, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to scale up nutrition and transform institutions to leverage and increase investments. Our vision has remained the same: to achieve sustainable and equitable reductions in malnutrition and nutrition justice for all.

Today, we have 62 member countries and four Indian States—home to almost 2.7 billion women, men and children. This shows that countries and governments recognise their nutrition challenges and are committed to lead actions towards ending all forms of malnutrition.

Today, 57 SUN member states have put in place national nutrition platforms to align actions around common results, with 49 national nutrition plans being in existence. 48 member countries work across sectors and stakeholders at the sub-national level, for maximum impact. Since 2016, when SUN embarked on its second phase, more SUN countries are considered on course or making progress in meeting global nutrition targets for under-five stunting, under-five overweight and exclusive breastfeeding.

This new progress portal and report presents a glimpse into 10 years of SUN and the achievements, successes and bottlenecks that we have faced together. It reminds us that a world without malnutrition is within reach – but only if we act together.



As the Movement enters its third phase (2021 to 2025), we need to renew our momentum to better respond to the evolving malnutrition landscape. We face a triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition, hidden malnutrition and overweight – which threatens the survival, growth and development of children, women, communities and nations. All these forms of malnutrition share many common causes, notably the poor quality of diets. Tackling them is more important than ever, as we work to counter the devastating socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, that have further strained national systems and made it increasingly difficult for children and women to access the nutritious diets and nutrition services they need to achieve good nutrition.

In 2019, 3 billion people – or almost half of the world's population – could not afford a healthy diet. Addressing this will require solid and sustainable system changes to fix broken food systems to make good nutrition available, affordable and sustainable. Inequalities are growing, which means more children and their families will be left behind if we do not also act on underlying malnutrition drivers and differential access and opportunities, often based on gender. We need stronger nutrition financing to drive all actions, as true change only happens through adequate and sustained investments – by SUN member States and member organisations, partners and donors, alike.

We are entering a phase of renewal – a chance to recommit to scaling up nutrition in ways that empower children, adolescents, women and men to create and nourish their own future and support their community and country. **If we align at country level, focus on nutrition impact, focus on prevention while ensuring treatment and getting the country nutrition system right, we will make a difference in the lives of so many. I look forward to scaling up nutrition for another 10 years with you.**

Henrietta H. Fore
UNICEF Executive Director and SUN Lead Group chair

” Since 2016, when SUN embarked on its second phase, more SUN countries are considered on course or making progress in meeting global nutrition targets for under-five stunting, under-five overweight and exclusive breastfeeding.

2020:

A year like no other

2020 was a unique year for many women, men and their families. This also rings true for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, and, indeed, for nutrition. At the start of Decade of Delivery for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SUN Movement has marked its 10th anniversary, #SUN10ary, and prepared for its third phase (2021-2025).

All the while, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a halt, and the disease – and its socioeconomic consequences – have had disastrous impacts on nutrition, risking a reversal of a decade of progress.

For the SUN Movement, now is the moment to take stock of how far we have come in bringing together multiple sectors and stakeholders, to put in place policies, systems and enabling environments for collective nutrition action, while we reconsider our approach to better respond to a changing global landscape.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed profound dysfunctionalities in the systems that are essential to good nutrition, including health systems, food systems and social protection systems. These are underpinned by current trends of urbanisation, climate change, growing inequalities, conflicts and the co-existence of multiple forms of malnutrition, to name a few. Now is the time to safeguard nutrition progress and ensure nutrition is prioritised in COVID-19 responses and in recovery across SUN countries.

The third phase of the SUN Movement starts in 2021 and gives us ample opportunity to learn from the many lessons of the past decade and make sure the right course corrections are made, with accelerated speed.

Looking ahead, all SUN Movement actors stand united – in solidarity, commitment and support – with all countries to help them recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and build forward better. Only by working in an aligned way can countries be supported to put in place the right mechanisms and improve nutrition, leaving no one behind.

This report will take an innovative approach. This will be the first of four launches, where bite-sized, illustrative stories to spur nutrition action around SUN and beyond will be in the spotlight. What's coming next?

Go to: www.scalingupnutrition.org/progress for updates.



*Welcome to the
SUN Movement,
Timor-Leste!*



SUN PROGRESS IN 2019-2020:

A snapshot



The 2019 SUN Movement Global Gathering brought some

1,200

participants to Kathmandu, Nepal



In 2019-2020, the SUN Coordinator visited

El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Mauritania

To ensure nutrition was integrated in COVID-19 response efforts,

19 SUN Movement Focal Points

have formed part of their countries' emergency response team

In 2020, the SUN Movement marked its

10th anniversary,

which we call the #SUN10ary

10

49 SUN countries

did the 2020 Joint-Assessment between August and October

The 2019-2020

Strategic Review report

of the SUN Movement was published in April 2020



In October 2020,

Timor-Leste

joined the SUN Movement as its

62nd member State



A new strategy for the Movement for

2021-2025

was drafted by the Executive Committee

WFP, a SUN Movement member, won the

2020 Nobel Peace Prize

in December 2020

The 2020



Lead Group meeting

was held on 7 December

10 SUN countries



are on track to reach the global stunting target

23 SUN countries

are on track to reach the global breastfeeding target



51 SUN countries

track public financial allocations for nutrition

35 SUN countries



are on track to reach the global child overweight target

In 2020

65 organisations in 44 countries

have – or are receiving – SUN Pooled Fund grants

SUN Networks are bigger and bolder than ever:
In December 2020 a

SUN Civil Society Network of over 3,000 organisations;
a SUN Business Network

– including some **900 small, medium, and large enterprises; 16 UN agencies** representing the UN Network for SUN; and a group of international donors and foundations that form the

SUN Donor Network

17 SUN countries



are on track to reach the global wasting target

49 SUN member States

have a national nutrition plan which brings together sectors and stakeholders

2021 has been proclaimed the

Nutrition Year for Action,

also leading up to the UN Food Systems Summit and Nutrition for Growth

Nutrition for Growth 2021 commitments

have been announced by

Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Guatemala and Senegal





OUR STORY:

A decade of SUN at a glance

In 2010, the UN Secretary-General launched the SUN Movement – an initiative like no other, with a unique inclusive multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral approach to ending malnutrition.

The SUN Movement was born from the collective recognition that the international system was failing to address undernutrition – the cause of nearly half of all deaths in children under five. Evidence that stunting is irreversible and devastates children’s physical and cognitive development and therefore, the economic growth and stability of countries, was a political call to arms.

[The 2008 Lancet series on maternal and child undernutrition](#) ignited stakeholders with the scale of the problem, the Copenhagen Consensus armed them with the economic imperative, and, as a response – as a catalyst for action – the Scaling up Nutrition Movement was born, calling for an end to fragmentation, increased investment and unprecedented collaboration, for greater impact at scale.



In April 2010, a broad group of more than 100 leaders¹ endorsed [Scaling Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action](#), on the margins of the World Bank-IMF [Spring Meetings](#). The first edition of [the Road Map for Scaling-Up Nutrition \(SUN\)](#) was launched in September 2010, by the UN Secretary-General and global leaders during the UN General Assembly.

At this time, the Movement brought a new way of working for the global community and in countries – which was ‘ahead of the curve’ with regards to the approach required to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched in 2015.² The unique country-led and country-driven SUN Movement approach helps nations bring together multiple stakeholders and multiple sectors to, in unison, address high levels of hunger and malnutrition, with focus on the first 1,000 days of a child’s life.

To meet this challenge, the SUN Movement has advocated for agreement, at the country but also global level, on multi-sectoral nutrition policies, operational plans, financing mechanisms, systems for monitoring progress and procedures for accountability. This is because nutrition is a multi-faceted challenge which requires action by multiple stakeholders, driven by passionate leadership at the highest levels – for results and lasting impact.

The 2013 Nutrition for Growth Summit and 2017 Milan Nutrition Summit have fuelled political and financial commitment for nutrition on a global scale, contributing to a much-needed increase in nutrition financing, which has spurred further progress.

The greatest success of the Movement has been its ability to rally and unite countries (and Indian States) around a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral way of addressing malnutrition. At the end of 2010, four countries had expressed interest in joining SUN, today the Movement is proud to count 62 countries and four Indian States as members,³ with Timor-Leste joining SUN in October 2020.

Many of our countries have seen great success in addressing one or more forms of malnutrition, with the support of a vast and wide SUN support system, comprising thousands of organisations and individuals around the world.

” What Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) is trying to do—a global movement supporting multi-stakeholder action at country level—is a relatively new approach within international development, and probably one of the most complex and ambitious examples of such partnerships.

SUN Movement Mid-Term Review report 2019

Evolution of SUN countries and the 4 Indian States



1 Including leaders from national governments, civil society organisations, the European Commission, foundations, bilateral donor partners, UN agencies and the World Bank.

2 An overview of SUN’s chronology can be found at: <http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ICE-Report-ANNEX-D-Chronology.pdf>

3 The four Indian States that have joined SUN are: Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.

SUN stories

OF CHANGE



Guatemala was one of the first countries to join SUN in December 2010

Since then, nutrition has been firmly positioned high on the political agenda across the Government, but also for civil society, the United Nations, donors, the private sector and researchers. Nutrition is also seen as a key issue for the development of the country.



Indonesia joined SUN in December 2011

Since then, the prevalence of stunting decreased from 37.2 per cent in 2013 to 27.7 per cent in 2019. Although stunting is still relatively high, this reduction shows us that efforts are working and the strong motivation of SUN and its Networks in Indonesia to continue reducing this number even further. Indonesia has aimed to further reduce stunting among children under 5 years down to 14 per cent by 2024, with a strong commitment by the President.



Rwanda joined SUN in December 2011

Since then, the country has introduced a community for health workers, to reduce the four top killers – malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and malnutrition – diseases key to fight maternal and child mortality. 98 per cent of Rwandans are now covered by the community-based health insurance programme focused on local ownership of the country's future and the 'one cow per family' programme has increased household income and the consumption of milk – leading to reductions in extreme poverty and malnutrition in rural areas.



Kenya joined SUN in August 2012

Through SUN and the SUN Networks, the country has been supported through smart planning, to develop costed multi-sectoral nutrition action plans at national and county levels. The Civil Society Alliance has been essential to mobilise domestic resources for nutrition, at the sub-national level.



Pakistan joined SUN in January 2013

Since then, high-level nutrition coordination forums have been held under the auspices of the Prime Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. Nutrition has been included in the manifesto of main political parties and public sector financing for nutrition has been introduced.



Côte d'Ivoire joined SUN in June 2013

Since then, nutrition has transitioned from the sectoral level to the Presidency of the Republic and a multi-stakeholder platform, the National Nutrition, Food and Early Childhood Development Council, has been set up.

Côte d'Ivoire committed to financing their national nutrition plan up to 15% and hosted the first ever SUN Movement Global Gathering in a SUN member State, held in Abidjan in November 2017.



Gabon joined SUN in December 2016

Since then, having a SUN nutrition champion has helped stress the importance of putting in place a multi-stakeholder platform, while the dynamic nature of SUN has led to a better knowledge about the importance of nutrition. Great support has been given by the UN system and Resident Coordinator and the food and agriculture sector is now viewed as nutrition-sensitive.



Cameroon joined SUN in February 2013

Since then, nutrition has been anchored at the strategic level, also through the creation of an inter-ministerial committee under the auspices of the Prime Minister. Actions to combat malnutrition have been scaled up at the decentralised levels – where a Local Governance for Nutrition initiative has been launched, involving more than 40 municipalities. To date, around 20 communes have ensured financing of more than CFAF 82 million for one year.



Philippines joined SUN in March 2014

Since then, a Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) with outcome and output targets, in a results framework, has been launched. Local Government Unit mobilisation strategies to scale up investments in nutrition, with a focus on dietary supplementation for pregnant women, and 6-23 -month-old children, have been created. Landmark legislation, such as Republic Acts No. 11037 on child nutrition and No. 11148 on scaling up national and local health and nutrition programmes have been passed.



Honduras joined SUN in May 2019

Since then, high-level advocacy, including the 2019 visit by the SUN Coordinator has led to progress towards SUN's strategic objectives, all which are in line with, and strengthen, the implementation of Honduras' food security and nutrition policy and strategy (PyENSAN 2018-2030).



OUR GOALS:

A world free from malnutrition is within reach

Our vision is clear: A world free from all forms of malnutrition by 2030, leaving no one behind.

SUN is built on government ownership and the understanding that factors underlying nutrition are interconnected. It is critical to bring actors together for impact at scale. With the knowledge that without adequate nutrition, few – if any – Sustainable Development Goals will be met. That is how important good nutrition is.

There are almost 2.7 billion women, men and children that call our 62 SUN countries and four Indian States home today,⁴ with some 320 million girls and boys under the age of five.⁵

These children represent:⁶



76% of all stunted children;



64% of all wasted children;



28% of all overweight children, and;



23% of all girls and boys with low birthweight.⁷

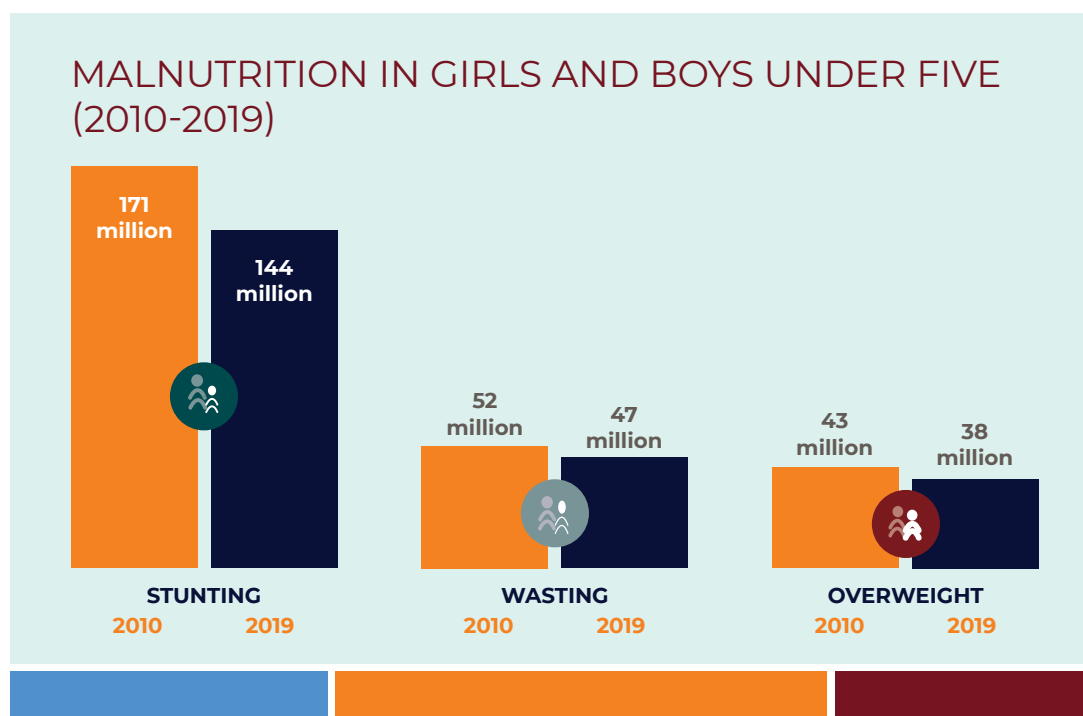
⁴ Based on population estimates from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, population dynamics, available [here](#). Figures from the four Indian States are based on estimates from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), available [here](#).

⁵ Based on JME 2020 population of U5 children estimates, available [here](#).

⁶ These percentages estimate the proportion of the global burden of malnutrition that is represented by SUN countries, using the population of children under 5 years and estimates of malnutrition burden (data sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, 2020; UNICEF/WHO low birthweight estimates, 2019).

⁷ Please note that this estimate is only based on the 44 SUN member countries who have low birthweight data.

Looking back to when the SUN Movement started in 2010, **child malnutrition has been reduced, but results have not been seen fast enough**, globally.⁸



In 2012, the World Health Assembly adopted the Global Targets 2025 to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition. Since then, 44 SUN countries have included at least one of these nutrition targets in their national nutrition policies or strategies – for lasting impact.

Many SUN countries are moving in the right direction to improve girls' and boys' nutrition and meet both national and global targets – with concrete results to show for:⁹

5 SUN countries are considered shining examples of stunting reduction over the past 20 years: **Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Peru** and **Senegal**.¹⁰

- **Ethiopia:** In 1992, two out of every three Ethiopian children were stunted. At 67 per cent, the country's stunting prevalence was among the highest in the world. Over the next 25 years, stunting declined steadily. By 2016, prevalence had been cut by almost half, to 38 per cent.
- **Kyrgyzstan:** In 1997, a survey revealed that 36 per cent of children (over 200,000 girls and boys) were stunted. In 2006, the national survey of stunting revealed that the rate had dropped by half to 18 per cent in just nine years. By 2014, the rate had fallen to 13 per cent, and approximately 95,000 Kyrgyz children were stunted compared to a high of more than 200,000 20 years prior.
- **Nepal:** In 1995, Nepal recorded a stunting rate of 68 per cent, the highest in the world. This amounted to more than 2 million stunted children. By 2016, the rate had been cut almost in half, to 36 per cent.
- **Peru:** In the mid-2000s, the Government started to target stunting explicitly. As a result, between 2008 and 2016, the stunting rate dropped by more than half, from 28 to 13 per cent.
- **Senegal:** Senegal has been an exemplar country in the West Africa region, reducing child stunting prevalence by 17.9 per cent from 1992 to 2017.

8 JME 2020 estimates for the year 2019, available [here](#).

9 *Ibid.*

10 Exemplars in Global Health 2020, available [here](#).

Whereas many countries are making strides towards meeting these targets, progress is uneven and perhaps – also because of the impacts of COVID-19 – more at risk than ever. Many SUN countries are facing the challenge of fighting a persistent burden of stunting and wasting, various types of micronutrient deficiencies, and rising rates of overweight people.

HOW SUN COUNTRIES ARE TRACKING AGAINST WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY TARGETS

World Health Assembly: Global Targets 2025 to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition	SUN country progress in 2019-2020	
 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted	10 SUN countries are on track Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Peru, Tajikistan	33 SUN countries are making some progress 10 SUN countries are making no progress or worsening
 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age	No SUN countries are on track	27 SUN countries are making some progress 35 SUN countries are making no progress or worsening
 30% reduction in low birth weight	No SUN countries are on track	33 SUN countries are making some progress 11 SUN countries are making no progress or worsening
 No increase in childhood overweight	35 SUN countries are on track Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Eswatini, The Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	17 SUN countries are off track
 Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%	23 SUN countries are on track Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, El Salvador, Eswatini, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Viet Nam	13 SUN countries are making some progress 13 SUN countries are making no progress or worsening
 Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%	17 SUN countries are on track Cameroon, El Salvador, Eswatini, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Peru, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	18 SUN countries are making some progress 18 SUN countries are making no progress or worsening

Nutrition is a lifelong issue. Although key country achievements towards child malnutrition should be celebrated, good nutrition is essential at many – if not all – stages of life. This requires a people-centred and holistic approach to combating malnutrition in a given country, as no two countries are the same and all countries have a malnutrition people – to leave no one behind.

Although the effects of poor nutrition rear their ugly head in the womb, they stretch from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood, with the potential of continuing for generations. Multiple forms of malnutrition can exist in the same child, in the same household or in the same community.

To this end, it becomes the more important to take a lifecycle approach to combating malnutrition.

Starting from the start, this means looking to:

Taking a lifecycle approach to scale up nutrition



Make sure that every woman gets to choose when (and if) to have children and that she receives the care and support deserved;



Fight for each boy and girl to get the best start in life and ensure they grow healthily;

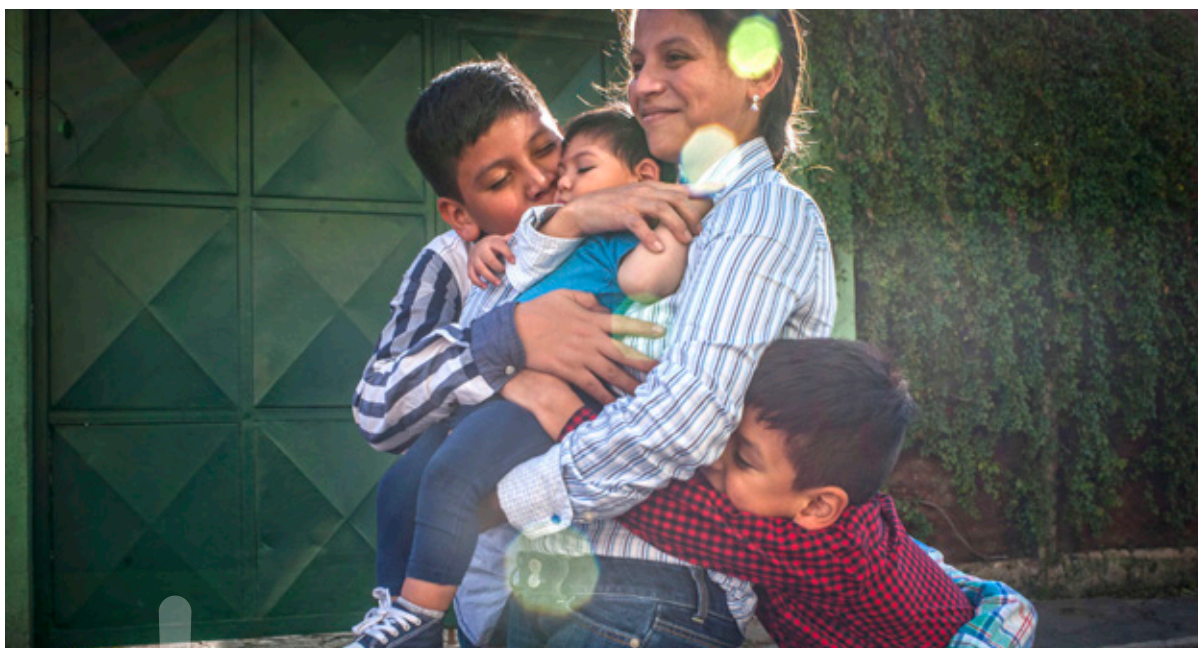


Act on the fact that adolescents need key nutrients in this second critical window of opportunity, and;



Strive for each adult to thrive and be able to fight off disease.

With interconnected and contributing factors, such as insufficient food systems, climate change, struggling education, health and social protection systems, limited water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), gender inequality – to name a few, solving the malnutrition puzzle requires consolidated and systematic actions, across stakeholders, across sectors.



OUR APPROACH:

Stronger together as multiple sectors and stakeholders

” Defeating malnutrition, united with multiple sectors and stakeholders in a truly coherent approach, is no longer an abstract aspiration – it is the new normal.

SUN Movement 2015 progress report

Nutrition indicators are important, albeit not the whole story. Driven by evidence, SUN aims to support and further strengthen in-country systems needed to tackle malnutrition, how diverse groups are coming together on shared platforms, what laws are being passed, what programmes implemented, and how much money is being invested and what impact is seen.

SUN countries are breaking down boundaries between sectors and stakeholders, developing a systems approach to nutrition. Each of the 62 SUN countries lead their own unique national SUN Movement, where actors are joining forces for joint advocacy, alignment, and investment in adapting successful strategies for eliminating all forms of malnutrition.

Across the board, countries that joined the SUN Movement early (2010-2011) consistently show higher performance in all domains than latter joining countries.¹¹ However, whereas most people have reported their work as completed (or nearly) in bringing people together and ensuring a coherent policy and legal framework, slower progress have been seen in aligning actions around common results and scaling up resources.

¹¹ See the SUN Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system [2016 Baseline Report Executive Summary](#), where, also, the largest gaps between the oldest and newest SUN countries are in the enabling environment, finance for nutrition, legislation for nutrition, and IYCF and dietary intake domains.

- **57 SUN countries** (or **92%**) have national multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) in place, helping establish an environment where good nutrition can prosper. This figure was at 10 SUN countries (or **53%**) in 2010. In 2020, a whopping 48 SUN countries also have these platforms at the sub-national level.
- **49 countries** (**79%**) have a national nutrition plan which brings together sectors and stakeholders in a whole-of-government approach to address malnutrition. In 2012, 17 (or **60%**) countries had costed plans.
- **51 SUN countries** (or **82%**) track public financial allocations for nutrition, with to identify gaps between what funding is needed to fight malnutrition, and what is actually spent.

SUN countries are bringing thousands of stakeholders, and the right stakeholders, to the table for lasting impact.

- This includes a SUN Civil Society Network of over 3,000 organisations; a SUN Business Network, which includes some 900 small, medium, and large enterprises; 16 UN agencies representing the UN Network for SUN (now known as UN Nutrition); and a group of international donors and foundations that form the SUN Donor Network.
- At the country level, there are **53** Civil Society Networks, the SUN Business Network supports **45** countries, with 25 national SUN Business Networks (up from 13 in 2019), and **42** SUN countries have an appointed donor convener. **61** SUN countries have established UN Networks. In 2011, 13 SUN countries had a donor convener, 4 countries had formalised their civil society engagement and 6 countries worked with business.

At the end of the second phase, the majority of SUN countries have the right policies, plans and systems in place for scaling up nutrition, but the scaling up, alignment and disbursement of funding remains a major challenge for many SUN countries. Since 2014 SUN countries have been asked to self-assess their advancement towards our strategic objectives, known as the SUN Movement Joint-Assessment, which – despite COVID-19 – an impressive 49 SUN countries undertook between August and October 2020.





SCALING UP NUTRITION IN A TIME OF COVID-19:

Time to accelerate action

While the world had been making slow but steady progress on reducing malnutrition over the past decade, recent trends and events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have put this progress at risk.

As a result of climate change, conflict, environmental degradation and stressors – such as the current locust infestations – hunger is on the rise and we are not making enough progress on malnutrition targets. Hunger affects 60 million more people than five years ago.¹²

The devastating COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis on top of a crisis in many countries with negative impacts on nutrition. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate an already alarming situation. Acute hunger is likely to have doubled by the end of 2020 – from 130 million to over 270 million – due to the impact of COVID-19 and drought.¹³

The pandemic has created multiple shocks, which impacts people's nutrition, especially the most vulnerable, by disrupting livelihoods and food systems, interrupting access to essential health and nutrition services and overburdening already stretched health and social protection systems.

These disruptions have been caused by parents avoiding health centres out of fear of infection, transport restrictions, financial difficulties, closure of facilities, and fewer health workers available due to diversions, shortages of personal protective equipment, among other things.

COVID-19 has adversely impacted diets, eating habits and lifestyles of adults but also children. Without the school platform, and without the access to school health and nutrition programmes, hunger and malnutrition, poverty and early pregnancy are exacerbated.

¹² FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2020. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020, available [here](#).

¹³ Trocaire, 2020. [Hunger pandemic threatens 270 million people this Christmas](#)

FAST FACTS:

- As of 21 January 2021, **SUN country COVID-19 infections – covering the Movement’s 62 member States – stand at 5,640,590** – which is 5.81 per cent of the total infections seen globally.¹⁴
- A UNICEF survey conducted in 77 countries during the summer of 2020 found that **63 per cent of countries reported disruptions in antenatal check-ups and 50 per cent in post-natal care.**¹⁵
- A WHO survey showed that more than **half of 105 countries reported disruptions in health services for sick children and in management of malnutrition.**¹⁶
- Since April 2020, about **370 million children have missed out on meals and essential health and nutrition services**, with a potential impact of up to 24 million dropouts and USD 10 trillion in lost future earnings.¹⁷
- UNICEF reports a **30 per cent reduction in the coverage of essential nutrition services** in low- and middle-income countries and declines of 75 to 100 per cent under lockdown, in the early months of the pandemic.¹⁸
- COVID-19 impacts over the next 3 years will inhibit meeting SDG2 and WHA global nutrition targets. This could lead to: **9.3 million more wasted children, 2.6 million more stunted children, an additional 168,000 under-five child deaths, an additional 2.1 million cases of maternal anaemia** and a decrease of USD 29.7 billion in economic productivity.¹⁹
- Already in 2019, **an estimated 3 billion people could not afford healthy diets.**²⁰

” Because of so many wars, climate change, the widespread use of hunger as a political and military weapon, and a global health pandemic that makes all of that exponentially worse —270 million people are marching toward starvation.

*David Beasley, WFP
Executive Director and SUN
Lead Group member at the
2020 Nobel Peace Prize
ceremony*

This data is only the tip of the iceberg. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to increase other forms of child malnutrition, including stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight.²¹ This is unacceptable, as even short-term disruptions in access to nutritious food and key nutrition services can have irreversible effects on the health and development of children and their families.

14 Data from [Johns Hopkins University](#), updated on 21 January 2021. India is not considered. Tanzania has not reported cases since June, which means that the 509 cases they last reported are included in this figure. Note that underreporting or standardised, accurate reporting of confirmed cases remains a challenge, also in middle and lower-income contexts.

15 UNICEF Tracking the situation of children during COVID-19, Dashboard, September 2020, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/rapid-situation-tracking-covid-19-socioeconomic-impacts-data-viz/>

16 WHO Pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic: Interim report, 27 August 2020 https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS_continuity-survey-2020.1

17 UNICEF and WFP, 2020. [Futures of 370 million children in jeopardy as school closures deprive them of school meals](#)

18 UNICEF, 2020. [An additional 6.7 million children under 5 could suffer from wasting this year due to COVID-19](#)

19 S. Osendarp, J. Akuoku, R. Black, et al., 2020. [The potential impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on maternal and child undernutrition in low and middle income countries](#)

20 Supra note 12.

21 Supra note 19.



COVID-19:

The SUN Movement rallies

” In 19 SUN countries, the SUN Focal Point is a part of the COVID-19 emergency response efforts: Bangladesh, Cambodia, El Salvador, The Gambia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Liberia, Nepal, Mauritania, Mozambique, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Viet Nam and Zambia

With people’s ability to access safe, nutritious and diverse diets at risk, and health and resilience under threat, urgent multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral action is needed. Since the start of the pandemic, SUN Movement stakeholders have worked together, and as one, to mitigate the impact on nutrition during the crisis and put in place the foundations for building back better after the pandemic.

Key priorities have been to ensure this multi-sectoral approach nutrition is prioritised and fully integrated across COVID-19 response and recovery plans, at all levels, and to build on and leverage existing nutrition capacity, data and coordination forums while responding to the crisis.

The pandemic has disrupted established ways of collaborating, in SUN countries, but also globally. Countries have been supported to keep their multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) active, and maintain close working relations across different stakeholders, and to ensure SUN Movement Government Focal Points and MSPs contribute to the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

The SUN Movement Secretariat, alongside the SUN Networks, have scaled up collaboration in support of member States, through joint advocacy and communication, facilitating technical assistance and providing guidance to countries how to access nutrition funding during the crisis. This has included conducting rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on nutrition and on SUN Movement ways of working, facilitating webinars for knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning.

A SUN Movement COVID-19 [advocacy and communication strategy](#) was developed to guide messaging and coordinated action, and a range of resources were developed to support SUN countries in responding to the crisis. These include, among others, [key advocacy messages](#), an [information note](#) for SUN country stakeholders, [factsheets](#) and a [SUN COVID-19 knowledge hub](#), which is regularly updated with the latest guidance, good practices and country stories.

5 SUN COUNTRY TRENDS IN A TIME OF COVID-19

COVID-19 has brought new challenges but also new opportunities, to look at the way we work together to fight malnutrition. Webinars with SUN country stakeholders held in August 2020 identified the following trends:

1. The pandemic has laid bare the fact that confusion between nutrition and food security exists, thinking that enough calories is enough to be well-nourished;
2. It has been harder than ever to access real-time reliable data to prioritise adequate actions and allocate resources for nutrition interventions;
3. There is new political momentum and unprecedented opportunity for investing in and strengthening local food systems, due to the disruption of global food systems which has had negative effects in SUN countries with a reliance on imported food;
4. Citizens across SUN countries expect improved health, nutrition and education services;
5. This crisis has led to the development or scaling up of good practice, including innovations and adaptations that will help countries respond during the pandemic, and build back better. For example:
 - In **Central America**, the Central American Integration System (SICA) has launched a Regional Contingency Plan where food security and nutrition is well positioned, as SICA will coordinate actions within this framework to avoid food crises, and will monitor indicators, especially related to adequate access, availability of food and stability.
 - In **Cameroon**, FAO is training producers to use innovative solar dryers to process and conserve fruit and vegetables while preserving their nutritional status. In Cameroon, Congo and Gabon, 'Green Classes' have been introduced in schools to ensure nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems, with FAO support.
 - **Burkina Faso** is harnessing digital and transformative opportunities for both integrated management of childhood illnesses and malnutrition – leading to a significant rise in correct undernutrition classifications.
 - In **Comoros**, an information system on severe acute malnutrition (SAM) management has been built during the COVID-19 crisis.
 - In **Bangladesh**, the National Nutrition Services (NNS) is conducting online surveys to assess the functionality of 366 severe acute malnutrition centres.

Continued efforts are needed to respond to the imminent hunger and malnutrition crisis, evolving in the pandemic's shadow, and to ensure nutrition is prioritised in COVID-19 recovery plans at all levels. It is crucial to scale up food assistance and treatment of acute malnutrition of children, and to invest in comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to prevent and treat malnutrition.

Accelerated action is needed across food systems, health systems and social protection systems to protect people's nutrition – making healthy diets are available and affordable to all, especially the poorest, and ensure everyone can access the health and nutrition services they need.

Without this, our vision of a world free from all forms of malnutrition by 2030 will be hard to reach.

THE FUTURE OF SUN:

Let's make sure a world with no malnutrition is still within reach together



It is my great pleasure to share some thoughts with you at this important but difficult time.

I am proud to be part of a Movement that has done so much over the last years to improve people's lives. Millions less children are stunted and wasted because of our efforts. If we can meet global nutrition targets 65 million fewer children will be stunted in 2025 compared to 2015.

For me the Movement approach continues to be fundamental to our success. It's a real game changer. We must never forget how innovative and empowering our country-driven approach is. We must build on it, as only through collaboration, inspiring each other and sharing and learning, will we be able to make the progress needed

Sound nutrition is the investment needed to provide the best chance for us all in life, not just physically but cognitively. Nutrition is not a standalone issue. It is part of, and interlinked with, so many parts of our lives – human and planetary health, economics, and conflict and much more.

Nutrition is a game changer. Its central to the Sustainable Development Goals and without increased investment in nutrition we will not achieve them. The harsh reality is we need USD 7 billion per year above current levels to achieve the global targets for stunting, anaemia, and breastfeeding, and scaling up treatment of severe wasting among children.

We need an enormous step change in behaviour and financing. Nutrition still falls between the gaps in the minds of many decision makers. We need to change that.

We have a new SUN strategy for 2021 to 2025 which can inspire us to further catalyse nutrition impact in countries. The next months will see us all putting it into practice. We have always prioritised the leadership of countries and this will be further accelerated, with us all getting behind their priorities in a more effective and joined up way.

The pandemic has made it clearer than ever that a SUN Movement approach is needed to keep nutrition on the global and local agenda, to link health systems, food systems and social protection to work for nutrition, to prioritise evidence-informed actions and make the case for investing in nutrition. Children,

women, girls and gender equality, must be at the core of all actions. Youth must be enabled to step up on nutrition. I would like to see young people stepping up for investing in people's nutrition as they do for investing in our planet.

Understanding and fighting all forms of malnutrition is vital. Many of the root causes are similar. We need to share, and learn from, our experiences including in dealing with crises like COVID-19, and, to be clear, such crises could easily reverse all the gains we have made. Nutrition must be an essential pillar of crisis preparedness and emergency packages and to build forward better for people and communities

Perhaps the biggest lesson to be learnt from COVID19 is that we need better systems in place to help build forward better from a country and community perspective. The pandemic will affect us for many years to come and history shows we can expect more crises. We must be prepared. People want global leaders to put forward, and consult widely and act properly on, concrete action to protect us and our planet.

It is crucial to advocate for putting nutrition at the centre of investments for recovery and prosperity. All of us – policy advisors, decision makers and leaders need to get the distinction between food security and nutrition right. Calories are not enough. Only investment in sound nutrition can produce healthy, smart, productive, and happy people.

It is always the most disadvantaged that suffer most in a time of crisis. As we struggle to deal with the impacts on our loved ones, communities, and nations, let us face facts. This is a crisis on top of a crisis in many parts of the world – a crisis that puts those living in already fragile conditions, including the 1.6 billion who work in the informal economy, in a particularly precarious position. Millions of women, men and their families survive from day to day, and the pandemic has hit them very hard.

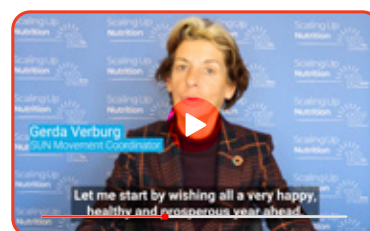
In this third phase of the SUN Movement, we all need to 'build back' but also forward better, not just from COVID but in general. Eliminating hunger and fighting malnutrition requires a multifaceted and collaborative response from numerous stakeholders across sectors to get policies and systems right

This is the very purpose of the SUN Movement. We have much to build on, not least the Nobel Prize received by the World Food Programme, a global recognition of the food and nutrition as essential to global peace and stability.

The next phase of SUN will be judged a success if members across our Movement can demonstrate that their individual and collective effort contributes clearly to an acceleration in nutrition results at the national and subnational levels. If global players are serious about supporting a country owned and driven approach, we have to be honest about what that means. It means alignment behind country priorities and a willingness to streamline and not using different sets of tools and data which can confuse and make it more difficult to measure and articulate progress.

We need to change how we work at every level with a special focus on strengthening health systems, food systems and social protection systems and making them nutrition sensitive.

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” As SUN Movement Coordinator I see tremendous challenges going forward but as is my nature, I remain optimistic. This Movement is exceptional. It brings us all together in a way that otherwise would not be possible.

The strategy should be the springboard by which nutrition is stronger elevated as a multisectoral political priority, a main driver of food system transformations, a prevention in health, economic development, and a prerequisite to achieve all SDGs.

To do so we must use events over the next year such as Nutrition for Growth and the Food Systems Summit to contribute to elevate nutrition as a political priority at global, regional and national level and contribute to renewed alignment and commitment of national nutrition stakeholders.

We also need to engage effectively at events like the G7, G20, COP 26 and the World Health Assembly. For example, food systems, nature-based systems and rural transition are all high up the agenda for COP 26. Let us make the linkages.

As we have started implementing of the strategy, we must ensure that every step supports countries to improve nutrition impact. We have much to build on and I know that all members, including the Global Support System are ready for the next challenge.

As SUN Movement Coordinator, I see tremendous challenges going forward, which we can transform into opportunities. Our SUN Movement is exceptional. It brings us all together in a way that otherwise would not be possible. We are bigger and better than our constituent parts. We have tremendous Focal Points and in-country platforms and networks, colleagues, champions and leaders with the ability and influence to drive systemic change in their networks and institutions to support progress at the country level.

Gerda Verburg
Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition Movement





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