

Divisional Seminar on SUN Movement by the Civil Society Alliance for SUN, Bangladesh to Celebrate Breastfeeding Week Sylhet Division on August 1, 2013

The Civil Society Alliance for SUN, Bangladesh (CSA for SUN, BD) along with a local NGO, Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD), a member of the general committee of the CSA for SUN, BD has organized an event on Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement to celebrate breastfeeding week on August 1 in Sylhet Division, one of the worst divisions, in terms of nutrition and health indicators. The meeting was attended by high level divisional government officials along with government officials from health and family planning, education, agriculture and WASH sectors, women and social affairs, general members of CSA for SUN, BD, NGOs, UN REACH staff, academics, media and other concerned stakeholders. The Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet, Mr. NM Ziaul Alam attended the meeting as the chief guest whereas Goutam Kumar Ghosh, Additional Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet, Md. Shahidul Islam, Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, Md. Azahrul Islam, Deputy Civil Surgeon of Sylhet attended the event as special guests. Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Secretary of CSA for SUN, BD and Director BRAC Health Nutrition and Population Programme chaired and moderated the session.

Dr. Kaosar Afsana started her welcome speech with celebrating breastfeeding week from August 1 and specifically emphasized how important it is for all stakeholders to promote exclusive breastfeeding. Considering the improvement in exclusive breastfeeding in Bangladesh, the push should be stronger to enhance coverage and quality. The country led and country owned SUN Movement and the role of civil society was highlighted in order to end hunger and malnutrition in Bangladesh.

In a brief presentation, Dr. Ferdousi Begum highlighted, member of the Executive Committee, CSA for SUN, BD, highlighted the Global SUN Movement and the activities of the alliance in scaling up nutrition in Bangladesh. She detailed the background of SUN Movement along with the role of CSA for SUN, BD and its key activities further stating that the current government has incorporated nutrition as a priority agenda and as such has taken several initiatives to improve the nutritional status of Bangladesh. She also extended in her presentation about the significance of exclusive breastfeeding to improve nutritional status of young children.

Mr. Ziaul Alam, divisional commissioner of Sylhet, in his speech endorsed that malnutrition in Bangladesh is a critical issue highlighting its negative impact on multidimensional poverty and less productive workforce.



He highlighted on the government interventions to address maternal health and neonatal health and mentioned that further emphasis needs to be given to promote exclusive breastfeeding across the pregnant and expected mothers. He also shared that development of women is a priority concern of the government further stating that women of Bangladesh have removed the social taboos and are now working in every sectors and contributing towards the economic development of the country.

The discussion was then opened up for all where participants shared that multidimensional and multi-sectoral approach is required to improve nutrition and growth in Bangladesh. The participants all promised to prepare achievable and actionable actions from various sectors to end malnutrition in Bangladesh with concerted efforts.

And it is high time that the civil society, government, private sector and media collectively work together to combat malnutrition. The Executive Director of VARD thanks all the participants. The meeting was ended by a call to promote 1000 days and multi-sectoral approaches to enhance nutritional status of mothers and children.

