

IDS Special Collection on Undernutrition in Zambia Launch Report

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Date: 23rd September, 2014

The CSO-SUN Alliance in collaboration with the University of Sussex's Institute of Development Studies and the United Kingdom's Department of international development launched an IDS special collection book with the title, '**Turning Rapid Growth into Meaningful Growth: Sustaining the Commitment to Nutrition in Zambia.**' The publication was officially launched by the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Hon Dr. Guy Scott. He provided the foreword for the special collection.

CSO-SUN's country coordinator, Mr. William Chilufya gave the opening remarks recognising Government efforts, with regards to addressing under nutrition, such as a new National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) Board, and the NFNC ACT being under review. However, Mr. Chilufya also noted that is a presence of certain gaps such as Stake holder **coordination, capacity, financial and evidence gaps that undermine the reduction of under nutrition in the country.** He also highlighted the latest Food and Agriculture Organisation's State of World Food Insecurity Report estimates which show that Zambia is the highest undernourished country in Africa and second in the world after Haiti. He mentioned that such revelations are of serious concern that calls for strong commitment and action.

In his speech at the publication launch Vice President Dr. Guy Scott noted that Zambia is one of the first signatories to the **Scaling Up Nutrition** movement and the Government recognizes that chronic under-nutrition is a major obstacle to national development as a result of its long-term and detrimental impact on physical and mental development. He also acknowledged that the Papers in the publication came from Zambians and from those working in Zambia and as such put national voices, knowledge and know-how at the forefront of the collection. He cited the social cash transfer, a government initiative, as going a long way to reduce malnutrition

Noteworthy statistics were given by Bruce Lawson-Mcdowell **DFID head of Zambia** office, who gave an overview of the publication, citing that under nutrition reduces a nation's economic growth by at least 8%, because of direct productivity losses, losses due to poorer cognition, and reduced schooling. He added that the situation currently cannot afford for nothing to change, Investing in nutrition will benefit child growth and everybody's nutrition status and also help sustain economic growth.

Presentations, moderated by Jody Harris a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), were given among them was; **“The links between aflatoxins and stunting”** presented by John Shindano and **“The Impacts of an Unconditional Cash Transfer on Food Security and Nutrition: The Zambia Child Grant Program”** presented by Leah Prencipe. Further limelight was cast on issues in Nutrition by way of a panel discussion moderated by Lawrence Haddad, also a senior research fellow at IFPRI and former IDS director.

Following the publication launch, a lecture on nutrition was held at the University of Zambia under the title **‘What is an Enabling Environment for nutrition improvement and how can it be built?’** given by Lawrence Haddad. With a great turnout at the lecture including students from NRDC, UNZA, and representatives from various CSO’s, the professor went on to highlight the fact that enabling environments make it easier for everyone to contribute to nutrition improvement. The CSO-SUN particularly took interest in building awareness of the problem and its consequences, the problem being malnutrition. Also, another point of fascination from the lecture for CSO-SUN was holding stakeholders to account concerning commitment transparency; for instance mentions of nutrition in public speeches, press releases and policy documents. These talking points were outstanding as they fall in the CSO-SUN’s line of advocacy work.