

SUN CSN Strategic Review Survey Feedback:

The survey received 12 responses, including input from global members, and at least one response from each of the CSN's four regions. Additional input has been added from verbal conversations and feedback received from CSAs attending the West & Central Africa regional meeting (19 in total), and SUN CSN Steering Group members. The Steering Group particularly informed and refined the overarching messages section, whilst the survey responses were primarily informed by CSA responses.

Overarching Messages:

- 1. Expanded scope is important but needs careful management** - the Strategic Review's recommendations on expansion of the Movement's areas of focus was welcomed by most of our CSA respondents, who place great importance on addressing issues such as the double burden of malnutrition at a country level. Yet there was also some concern, particularly from CSN Steering Group respondents, that such an expansion risks a watering down of focus and limited meaningful progress against key global goals such as the WHA nutrition targets. This is a tricky dilemma to manage, and so more thought should be given to how to balance these elements. It is the view of the CSN that expansion of scope globally can be the right direction of travel, but critically it must not compromise the ability of country level actors to focus on the areas of greatest priority, as laid out in national nutrition plans. This balance will allow the SUN Movement to drive measurable progress by scaling evidence-based interventions, and we can and should make nutrition outcomes a key measure of our success as a movement.
- 2. Genuine country focus requires a more radical change in approach** - there is broad recognition that this next phase of the SUN movement as whole should focus on the implementation of national and sub-national nutrition action plans. The next SUN strategy must be fit for purpose in supporting country governments and other actors across civil society, UN, the donor community and business to realise that goal. In order to implement at a sub-national scale, funding modalities, functionality and structures of the SUN movement should be designed specifically with this purpose in mind. In order to do this, the CSN would like to see a greater acknowledgment of the power imbalances that civil society alliances face when engaging governments, focal points, and even the SMS. Further, the network like steps to be taken to address these, including better representation of grassroots organisations in central decision-making structures, such as the Lead Group.
- 3. Mix of operational and strategic blurs the lines** - The recommendations often flit between being strategic and operational. In order to make this more coherent, a good approach might be to join 3.2 with 3.3.3 as the headline shift, and then work back from there to devise the changes required to genuinely support the country management of implementation of key nutrition interventions. In this regard, it is somewhat disappointing that the Strategic Review did not really "tee up" SUN 3.0 to genuinely alternative ways of working rather than a "more of the same but tweaked" approach. In summary, most of the recommendations are useful but seem to be based

on an underlying acceptance of the current model rather than the radical thinking that the SR presented an opportunity for.

4. **Inclusivity & Tone** - There were a range of opinions on the accessibility and inclusivity of the strategic review process thus far. The lack of time given to comment (especially for francophone and hispanophone respondents, who largely did not contribute) was a major bugbear. Some respondents mentioned that whilst good CSA engagement occurred at the Global Gathering, this had not continued in the period since then. Whilst our survey was appreciated, it was felt this was not enough to fully communicate their perspectives - only one respondent felt their views had been fully included in the draft report, and the rest believed it had only partially addressed their concerns. This issue, namely the participation and representation of grassroots organisations in the decision making processes of SUN, the lack of financial resources to properly engage those organisations is the main barrier - this has been repeatedly raised in the SUN CSN annual survey for the last four years. Secondly, the report was felt to be overly gloomy, and not fully reflective of some of the great work that has happened within SUN, and specifically SUN CSN.

Q1: Which recommendations do you think are the highest priority and should receive top attention in the next phase of the movement? List 3-5 key priorities.

The five recommendations which received the highest approval ratings from our survey responses (all scored an average of less than 1.3 out of 5, where 1 represents agreement and 5 represents disagreement) were as follows, in descending order of approval:

- R2: Maintain SUN's commitment to addressing malnutrition in all its forms
- R1: The SUN Movement should focus on strengthening the SUN strategy rather than investing time and resources in developing new vision and mission statements
- R41: Tailor country structures to the country political and institutional context rather than promoting a 'one size fits all' approach
- R3: Expand the scope of SUN to include all people affected by all forms of malnutrition
- R9: Develop a clear strategy for SUN Movement engagement with global partners

Q2: Are there recommendations with which you disagree strongly, and if so, list up to 5 key recommendations that you disagree with, and why.

There were no recommendations which received strong disapproval from our survey responses, but those that picked up the least enthusiasm (all scored an average of more than 2 out of 5, where 1 represents agreement and 5 represents disagreement) are listed below, in descending order of disapproval:

- R25: Maintain the current hosting arrangement with UNOPS
- R17: Strengthen the role of the SMS in collaborating with countries to generate data for action
- R22: Revise the Lead Group's role and title

- R7: Maintain SUN's membership focus on low-income / lower-middle-income countries and explore the potential to expand membership to include some middle-income countries
- R27: Review the value and Value for Money of the Global Gathering and consider more effective and cost-effective alternatives

Q3: Are there important aspects that you feel have been missed by the Strategic Review, and if so, list up to 5 key areas?

- **Regionalisation** - there was a feeling that the importance of regionalisation and strengthening regional coordination had not been given enough attention in the report. Regional coordination is highly valued by CSAs as an opportunity to share learning, challenges and successes with other SUN CSN members operating in a similar cultural environment, and other networks are also pursuing regional approaches. The CSN has examples of regional success stories that could have been showcased.
- **Funding** - recommendation 38/39 deals with the future funding streams for the CSN and other networks. CSAs generally recognise that they need to be responsible for their own funding as the secretariat would struggle to secure funding for all 53 country alliances as well as obtaining financing for its own work. However, this recognition does not always result in success - CSAs have concerns on pooled fund disbursement which can result in delays in implementation and unpaid staff (this was particularly acute during the funding hiatus after the last phase of SUN ended). There is a need for a more sustainable way of funding CSA work, ideally through the form of a basic income grant, but this has not been addressed in the SR.
- **Gender** - there was a feeling that gender equality had not been given the emphasis that it should have been in the report.

Q4: Are there areas where you feel there needs to be more analysis in order to make an informed decision or recommendation? If so, list up to 5 key areas for further analysis.

- **Leave No-one Behind** – the introduction asserts that the SUN Movement approach needs to fully reflect the LNOB principles and that all countries should plan through a risk informed approach. SUN CSN endorses this totally, but the network does not feel that those principles have guided the development of the review (which they should), and nor was it felt that the recommendations did anything to take these specific issues forward. Is LNOB respected and supported in the governance structure, the funding streams and the content of all SUN's operations?
- **Related thematic issues** - there was general agreement that the Movement should engage more substantively with other nutrition-related themes such as climate change and food systems, but it was not felt that the report offered enough guidance on how to do this, and where to start and stop that engagement – tension between “we must be in all the conversations”, and “know where to stop – we are not the experts on all these issues”. Position papers were seen as useful, but potentially duplicative.

- **Technical Assistance** - the examination of TA provision was welcomed, but it was felt that not enough focus was put on the potential of peer-to-peer, civil society delivered TA, as opposed to SMS provision.
- **All its forms** - there was support for the recommendation of tackling malnutrition in all its forms (and some support for greater food systems engagement), but decisions over what the allocation of resource and time would be to the different elements of this could be given greater consideration.
- **CSN Secretariat** - the particular focus on SUN CSN Secretariat and its future was welcomed but more concrete proposals on how to achieve financial sustainability in particular would be useful. There were various capacity issues in the Secretariat in 2019, but the team is now almost back to full strength. The Steering Group will continue to work closely with Save the Children UK and the Secretariat to ensure that the needs of the SUN CSN are met. An MoU is being drafted to define shared hosting principles between the two parties – it remains the view of all involved that transparency is key. The hosting arrangement will be reviewed again in line with the process outlined when the CSN was created, in light of the SR outcome. Save the Children remains committed to hosting the Secretariat, for as long as that remains the wish of the Steering Group. Further, this issue is applicable across all the networks and there is a need for prioritisation of resources and a certain level of alignment in terms of implementation and processes to ensure each of them can plan adequately beyond the medium term.

Q5: Are the parts of the report, particularly recommendations, that need clarification? If so, list up to 5 key areas for further clarification.

- **GNR** – the proposed merger of SUN with the GNR was regarded as an interesting prospect and divided opinion. Some felt this would be a logical move that would make the global nutrition landscape more coherent and contained (versus the multitude of players that currently exist - ref. point on potential new nutrition alliance below), while others were more reticent. The key question that arose was: what steps would be taken to ensure the independence of the GNR, particularly given its critical role in holding countries to account for N4G commitments?
- **New Member Countries** - There were mixed feelings on the integration of developed countries into SUN. Some respondents indicated that those countries were perpetuating problems for existing SUN members, whilst others felt that the richer nations had problems with malnutrition too and that all would benefit from wider membership. There was a strong feeling that either way, the focus must remain on the social and economic issues that underpin the marginalisation of the most vulnerable groups in society. Relatedly, there was concern about the N4G Commitment Guide's push for a new food systems alliance. Could the review explore SUN taking up this mantle rather than forming a potentially duplicative structure?
- **Focal Points** - A greater investigation of the role and selection of focal points, and the nexus between technical and political positions would be helpful. Given the difficulty in accessing focal point time, the proposed shift to a country coalition approach is of interest, but this proposal needs to be fleshed out in greater detail.

- **Advocacy Strategy** - there was support for an advocacy strategy but also concerns that a Movement wide strategy could come into conflict with country and network priorities, given the desire for more tailored country approaches too.
- **Corporate Structures** - There was broad agreement on the proposed revisions to SMS / ExCom / LG role and structure, but it was felt that too much focus is being placed on these instead of on country, regional and network secretariat issues which face more pressing sustainability and delivery issues. This played into broader concerns (also illuminated by advocacy strategy point above) around the strengthening of the SMS vs. making the Movement more country led – how does that look in practice?