

SDN Retreat Report

Geneva, 30th January – 1st February 2019

Introduction

The SUN Donor Network (SDN) Retreat was held in the offices of the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS), Geneva in the afternoon of 30th January, all day on 31st January and in the morning of 1st February 2019. The main objective of the meeting was to develop the 2019/20 SDN work plan. The list of participants is attached in the Annex.

SDN members can access documents that are hyperlinked in this report on the SDN Knowledge Platform. If non-SDN members would like any of the documents, please send an email to sun.donor.network@gmail.com.

Context

The development of the 2019/20 SDN work plan during the Retreat was informed by:

- Conclusions and recommendations of the [SUN Mid Term Review](#)
- Outcomes of the [SUN Executive Committee](#) Retreat (28th & 29th January)
- Outcomes of the [SDN Senior Officials meeting](#) (30th January)
- SUN Movement Coordinator inputs to the Retreat and [the SMS reflections on the SUN MTR](#)
- [SUN Global Support System Collaboration Framework](#)
- Plans for the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#) in Japan in 2020
- Lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2018 work plan identified during the Retreat
- [Country case studies](#) collated by the SDN

Consideration of these inputs and the contexts in which the SDN is operating, led participants to identify the following observations to guide the strategic priorities and activities of the SDN over the next 2 years.

Donors and other stakeholders in the SUN Movement need to prioritise actions which contribute to impact at national and sub-national levels.

Donors have important roles to play beyond providing funding, including contributing to analysis of the political landscape, the development of policy messages, promoting high level political leadership, and helping respond to country support needs, including technical assistance.

There is a need for more strategic dialogue between stakeholders at national and

global levels, including between SDN members and the SUN Movement Coordinator.

High-level donor engagement at global and national levels at key moments is critical to ensure nutrition is a priority within sustainable development agendas and to ensure high-level political leadership.

Donors need to identify how we can enhance our own actions and ways of working to better contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the SUN Movement. In particular, we need to enhance efforts to improve our own coordination at national level and alignment with country priorities and plans, whilst recognising institutional constraints within which we operate.

N4G 2020 presents an important opportunity to review policies and actions for nutrition and to mobilise stronger policy and financial commitments. The SDN should consider the role it can play in informing work in relation to the five N4G 2020 thematic issues: nutrition within Universal Health Coverage; food systems for healthy diets; fragile and conflict affected states; data driven accountability; and new and innovative financing.

The country case studies presented by national donor convenors to date identify some common support needs of SUN countries, including high-level advocacy to promote a multi-sectoral approach and the sharing of experiences and lessons learnt between countries on issues such as costing of plans, budget tracking, stakeholder mapping and building implementation capacity.

The SUN Global Support System (GSS) Collaboration Framework is an important step in improving coordinated and coherent work by components of the GSS in support of SUN countries. The SDN recognizes that the Framework does not replace, but complements, the workplans that Network Secretariats already have, with the ambition that over time they will find greater and greater synergy, and overlap, and where appropriate the SDN work plan will aim to align with and contribute to the outcomes of the Framework.

SDN members will need to consider the best operating model for the SUN GSS going forward so as to ensure the most efficient and effective approach. The provision of coordinated and adequate technical assistance to SUN countries is critical.

Whilst there is a need to enhance mutual accountability and learning at country level we also need to continue to collate and communicate evidence of the added value of the SUN support system in order to make the case for future funding.

2019/20 SDN work plan

The [2019/20 SDN workplan](#) was developed during the Retreat and circulated to the wider SDN for comments following the meeting. The three Strategic Objectives (SOs) from 2018 continue into 2019/20 with one slight change, i.e. activities to do with "helping SUN to be fit for purpose/maximise its added value" now mostly come under SO3 rather than SO2. Activities relating to the 'global' overarching performance of SUN are under SO2 and activities on coordination between networks, including at country level are under SO3.

SDN SOs 1 and 2 will contribute to developing high level political and financial commitments in the build up to the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit to be held in Japan in 2020 (GSS Collaboration Framework Outcome 1) and SDN SO 3 will contribute to improved learning and support opportunities for SUN countries (GSS Collaboration Framework Outcomes 2,3 and 4).

SDN Strategic Objective 1: Galvanize more and higher quality financing for nutrition (Lead – BMGF, GAC)

Under SO1, SDN members will pursue activities that seek to improve the availability of information on funding sources, and continue strengthening donor reporting on nutrition spending, as well as use of spending data to improve strategic allocation and advocacy. They will also work with donor conveners to identify ways to support countries' access to financing. These areas of work will help to inform a more targeted engagement of Senior Officials (see also SO 2), with key messages, using key figures around nutrition needs and spending, and success stories around how financing is working to support improved nutrition outcomes in countries. The SDN will also – together with other stakeholder groups – explore further opportunities for increasing nutrition financing from new sources and align closely with the financing work stream for Nutrition for Growth 2020. The activities in this area will also contribute to outcomes from other Strategic Objectives in the SDN strategy. Some areas of work that were previously under SO1 in the 2018 work plan will now be undertaken by the SMS Financing Adviser with the support of the SDN, including developing an updated repository of information for SUN countries on nutrition financing sources and supporting country preparedness for nutrition financing opportunities

SDN Strategic Objective 2: Policy, leadership and governance: sustained political engagement, commitment and communication on nutrition at global and national levels and within the SUN movement (Leads: DFID, US State Dept, BMGF).

Under SO2, SDN members will seek to promote and support high level political leadership and commitment on nutrition by engaging in key global and regional events, N4G thematic working groups, further developing advocacy materials to make the case for investment in nutrition, collaborate strategically with the SUN Movement Coordinator in her country visits and other advocacy activities. N4G 2020 provides a major focus for the efforts of SDN members. The strong engagement by donor Senior Officials will be crucial for achievements under this SO. A work plan for Senior Officials will be developed. Consistent with N4G thematic issues SDN members will share views and develop common messages where possible on obesity/NCDs, food systems, gender and bridging the humanitarian-development divide. The SDN will also seek to seek to inform the design of the forthcoming SUN strategic review and influence how SUN monitors and communicates the added value of the SUN support system.

Strategic Objective 3: Improved coordination and learning both within the global SDN and across the SUN Global Support System (Leads: USAID, Irish Aid)

Under SO3, SDN members will share learning with each other, within and between global and national levels, through monthly calls, face-to-face meetings, an SDN

Knowledge Platform, country case studies, a guidance pack, self-assessments of functionality and progress. Key areas of activity include: identifying ways of coordinating and aligning better at country level and pooling learning on effective nutrition sensitive policies and approaches. Furthermore, SDN members will seek to strengthen collaboration with other networks at national and global levels and contribute to the achievement of collective outcomes defined in the SUN GSS Collaboration Framework 2019/20, including through joint advocacy and learning events.

SDN ways of working and accountability

Responsibility for implementation of activities in the SDN work plan should not fall only on the shoulders of the SO leads. SDN members, including national level donors, are encouraged to engage in activities in the work plan most relevant to them. SO leads will establish working groups as necessary to coordinate the implementation of activities.

Progress in the implementation of the work plan will be reviewed during SDN monthly calls, e.g. one strategic objective each month. Updates on implementation, achievements and constraints will be provided to Senior Officials. Progress will also be reviewed at SDN meetings during the SUN Global Gathering and at the annual SDN Retreat in 2020. The work plan will be shared with others in the SUN Movement Global Support System and progress will be reported on in the context of the GSS Collaboration Framework.

Donor perspectives on key SUN Movement processes and events

During the Retreat, participants exchanged views on some key SUN Movement processes: the SUN Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL) system; the SUN Strategic Review planned for the second half of 2019 to inform decisions about the Movement post 2020; and the SUN Global Gathering planned for the end of 2019. The main perspectives highlighted are presented below and will be shared with the SUN Movement Coordinator and others in the SUN GSS.

MEAL

- The SUN MEAL will focus more on promoting mutual accountability at country level and in country and cross country learning
- JAAs will be a key tool
- Donor alignment needs to be part of the JAA – opportunities to discuss fundamental constraints to budget support etc
- We also need to be able to quantify the added value of the machinery that donors pay for to make the case for continued support. JAAs can help to provide narratives on added value
- JAAs therefore need to be about both mutual accountability and added value
- Need a half page dummies guide on JAA
- The SDN facilitator should hold calls with groups of donor convenors to raise awareness of JAAs and to promote donor self-assessments prior to the JAAs guided by the SDN functionality checklist
- JAAs can be the basis for the development of brief country profiles and guide support from GSS

- Does JAA need a new template / deliverable?
- Need to support countries to develop their own M&E systems.

Strategic Review & Future of SUN post 2020

The Strategic Review needs to look at:

- How SUN needs to evolve to be fit for the future. Assuming business as usual or tweaks will do is not going to be sufficient – particularly as donors look at future funding scenarios.
- The extent to which challenges are fixable or whether there is a need for alternative ways of working
- Strategic options for SUN and weigh up pros and cons e.g. let go of countries that are not being successful, more performance related support. There may be a need for a brokered conversation on contentious strategic options.
- Link between SUN and global landscape
- Where SUN has had highest impact relative to resources and where there were missed opportunities
- Provide further evidence for the added value of the SUN Movement, especially through in-depth country case studies
- Lessons that can be learnt from other global initiatives
- Ways of better integrating nutrition into broader development agenda

SUN Global Gathering 2019

- Provides an opportunity to capture the opinions of SUN countries on the added value of the SUN Movement, including the Global Support System
- The GG should have a strong focus on sharing lessons learnt including examples of how challenges have been solved, and evidence on effective policies and actions (including thematic priorities for N4G 2020)
- Stakeholders who are not members of the SUN Movement could be invited to expose their experiences on country progress, overcoming challenges and the benefits provided by the Movement
- There should be a focus on country plans and support needs and sharing of information on how they can be met
- Country case studies, involving the range of national stakeholders, should provide a key basis for discussion and learning
- Information on the event needs to be shared earlier than in 2017 to ensure the desired level of participation

SDN resources

During the Retreat the following action points were identified relating to SDN resources/documents:

- Revise and finalise SDN Guidance Pack by end February based on comments received during the Retreat
- Follow up on the establishment of a SDN Knowledge Platform to be accessed through the SUN website
- Amend the SDN Terms of Reference to reflect the expected role of Senior Officials and develop a work plan for Senior Officials to ensure key events and dates are in their diaries.

Annex: SDN Retreat participants

In person participants

Francois	Picard	Embassy of Canada in Mali - Global Affairs Canada	Counsellor and Deputy Director (Cooperation) Child Survival and Development (CSD) programme manager
Safina	Abdulloeva	UNICEF Sri Lanka	Nutrition Adviser
Nicoliene	Oudwater	DFID Mozambique	
Emi	Inaoka-Hasegawa	Global Health Policy Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan	Special Assistant for Global Health Issues
Joyce	Seto	Global Affairs Canada	Deputy Director Nutrition
Andy	Rigsby	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Senior Program Officer Global Policy & Advocacy
Jeniece	Alvey	USAID	Nutrition Advisor
Kedar	Mankad	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Program Officer
Karin	Gross	SDC	Program officer
Marlene	Heeb	SDC	Program Manager
Mairead	Petersen	Irish Aid	Regional Nutrition Advisor
Ben	Siddle	Irish Aid	Nutrition Lead
Frits	van der Wal	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Senior Policy Advisor Food and Nutrition Security
Paul	van de Logt	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Head, Food & Nutrition Security
Heloise	Troc	European Commission	Policy Adviser
Abigail	Perry	DFID	Senior Nutrition Adviser Senior Adviser, Department for Climate, Energy, Environment and Research, Section for Environment and Food Security
Kristin	Dypedokk	Norad	
Heike	Henn	BMZ	Head of Division
Chris	Leather	MQSUN+	interim SDN Facilitator
Melanie	Bruns	SDC	in coming SDN Facilitator

Virtual participants for some sessions

Adam	Loyer	Embassy of Canada in Senegal	Second Secretary - Development
Meghan	Anson	USAID	Nutrition Adviser
Liz	Buckingham	U.S. Department of State	Secretary's Office of Global Food Security (S/GFS)