



SCALING UP NUTRITION (SUN) MOVEMENT PRESS RELEASE

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Heads of State speak at High-Level Event of the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, 20 September, as part of UN General Assembly push on non-communicable diseases

Countries, UN organizations, civil society and the private sector will commit to investing in nutrition between pregnancy and age two

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK: On 20 and 21 September 2011, the leaders of up to 20 nations, and their development partners, are meeting at the United Nations in New York to focus on nutrition. One third of the world's children are under-nourished. This reduces their school performance and earning ability as adults. It also causes at least a quarter of deaths in childhood and contributes to obesity, diabetes and heart disease in later life. Good nutrition improves a nation's economic and social development.

The UN Secretary-General will host a High-Level Event on Nutrition at 11am on Tuesday, 20 September in Conference Room 2 at the United Nations. On 21 September, teams from their governments and civil society will work with officials from their development partners to share experiences on how best to scale up efforts for better nutrition.

The meetings take place one year after the Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched – to help poor communities achieve better nutrition by making development programmes sensitive to nutritional needs and increasing access to specific interventions that improve nutrition.

The SUN countries include Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. More than 100 institutions -- donor governments and organizations, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and research institutions -- are part of the SUN movement. Yet more countries will commit to scaling up nutrition in the coming months.

"We see the need to prioritize nutrition as we respond to the food insecurity being faced by millions following prolonged drought in the Horn of Africa. Those with under-nutrition are in greatest danger. National authorities need our support as they help vulnerable families realize their right to food, enjoy food and nutrition security, and resist the impact of climatic and other shocks," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the introduction to the report documenting progress over the past year. "I appreciate the SUN focus on interventions which directly empower women and their households to achieve better nutrition while encouraging all government policies – including those for agriculture, health, social protection, education and employment – to be sensitive to nutritional needs," he added.

Partners at the two events represent the broad array of experience and expertise that is determined to reduce under-nutrition. Drawn from a range of sectors including agriculture, social welfare, health,

education and employment, they have agreed to work together in support of national action, with a strong focus on results. They are all working for an increased global investment in better nutrition.

“Governments want to prioritize nutrition, and are taking action: I appreciate the way in which international organizations, civil society, development partners and businesses are working in support of national plans. It is particularly gratifying to see this emphasis in countries that have been experiencing protracted crises with support for resilient food systems and special attention to the needs of pregnant women and children,” said Dr. David Nabarro, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition.

There is increasing international recognition that food and nutrition security is not only a human right but also the basis for economic, social and human development. It is an under-recognized global challenge – undermining the cultural, social and economic fabric of humanity.

For a child, the foundation for a healthy and productive life is established in the 1,000 days between the mother’s pregnancy and age two. Proper nutrition during this critical window gives children a strong start at life. Improving breastfeeding and infant feeding practices, and ensuring that mothers and children have access to the right balance of food and the necessary vitamins and minerals, gives children, families and nations an opportunity to thrive.

There are proven and cost-effective ways for enabling women and children to be better nourished: better nutrition is a sound investment that improves the growth and development of coming generations and drives a nation’s progress.

“The Government of Nepal is fully aware of the development challenge posed by malnutrition... It is clear to us that we need to scale up the well-proven direct nutrition interventions that can be delivered through the health sector... We must also seize opportunities to enhance the nutrition sensitivity of interventions in other sectors such as agriculture, social protection and education”, said Dr. Sudha Sharma of Nepal’s Ministry of Health and Population.

Action to scale up nutrition moves the world toward the Millennium Development Goal indicators of success around poverty, hunger, child mortality, maternal mortality and infectious disease.

“I strongly support this initiative, which aims at contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular to MDG 1: ‘Reduction of extreme poverty and hunger’,” said Senegal’s Prime Minister, Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye.

“The SUN Movement is a collective global commitment which will result in lasting change. It is led by developing countries. Civil society organizations are backing it. Development partners are engaged. The UN system and World Bank are fully involved,” said Dr. David Nabarro. “One year ago, the US and Irish governments launched the 1,000 Days partnership to refocus efforts on the critical period between pregnancy and a child’s second birthday. They challenged us to make a difference — by June 2013. There has been extraordinary progress this year: I anticipate even more in the years to come.”

For more information, visit www.scalingupnutrition.org

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