

**CSO SUN Nutrition Awards Ceremony**  
**Mulungushi International Conference Center**  
**Lusaka, Zambia**

**Opening Remarks – Nutrition Awards Ceremony**

**By William Chilufya**

**National Coordinator-CSO SUN**

- Guest of Honor - Dr Joseph Kasonde
- Members of Parliament present
- Cooperating Partners

Good evening ladies and Gentlemen – I, on behalf of the Zambia Civil Society Organizations Scaling up Nutrition (CSO SUN) Alliance, welcome you to the First ever Nutrition Awards. Thank you for being here.

Before I proceed, let me thank our Minister of Health and Guest of Honor, Honorable Dr Joseph Kasonde,

Our Cooperating Partners, DFID and IRISH AID.

I would also like to thank Save the Children for hosting the Alliance and partnering with it in hosting this ceremony, the first of its kind.

The Nutrition Awards are an important initiative of raising the profile of nutrition in Zambia where 45.8 per cent of children under the age of five are stunted. Through the awards we would like to celebrate the power of

advocacy, communication and how innovative strategies can contribute to nutrition development.

The more we learn about key drivers of the growing momentum on nutrition, the more we understand the pivotal role of leadership. Countries that have managed to reduce malnutrition, notably Brazil and Peru had civil society identify high level champions in government (The President, Mayors, Members of Parliament, Ministers, among others) and outside Government (including eminent individuals) to exchange views, discuss new evidence and introduce items on the nutrition agenda. This is what we hope to achieve here in Zambia.

There are many different approaches to getting nutrition onto the development agenda and keeping it there, the nutrition awards you will be witnessing are just one of the ways.

These nutrition awards will be recognizing stakeholders in various fields whose efforts contribute significantly to improving nutrition of mothers and young children.

The CSO-SUN is one year old and since the start of program implementation we have been monitoring and documenting the work of individuals from the President to the household level.

These First ever Nutrition Awards in Zambia, are based on CSO-SUN Secretariat's results from the monitoring of stakeholders' work on nutrition. We have been inspired by the frequency and consistency in raising nutrition issues by the recipients of the awards. For a number of recipients it only takes you to have access to internet to find out what work they have done.

Therefore, we encourage other stakeholders as well to consider documenting their work for easier reference and information sharing.

I will conclude by emphasizing that Malnutrition is a result of the failure to realize people's basic human rights and addressing it is a matter of justice. It is also a matter of saving lives.

It is unacceptable that hundreds of children cannot fulfil their potential simply because they did not receive lifesaving treatment for acute malnutrition; or vitamin A supplementation, or because mothers are not supported to breastfeed; and simply because sanitation falls so short. Since we started implementation of the civil society agenda a year ago, the Government with stakeholders has made much progress and commitments have been made. This is very commendable.

We need to be transparent as well as accountable for our commitments. We must work together towards strengthened implementation and monitoring systems, improved nutrition governance, coordination of nutrition activities, and strengthening capacity that promote good nutrition.

We all need to maintain our commitment to ensuring that nobody is malnourished, and to strengthened policy, adequate financing and successful programme implementation ensuring good nutrition for all.

We stand and commit that the CSO-SUN will work together with Government, Members of Parliament, the Media, Private sector and all Cooperating Partners to support, encourage and enable the implementation of robust, successful, equitable and sustainable actions.

I wish you a good evening.

Thank you.