

2022 SUN Movement Regional Gathering for Latin America and the Caribbean

13-15 December 2022, Panama City

Introduction and summary of the event

For three days, approximately 120 participants (85 in person and 35 virtually) representing ten countries from the region (six countries from the SUN Movement - Ecuador, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru, and four observer countries - Colombia, Cuba, Panama and the Dominican Republic) - met in Panama to agree on priorities and opportunities, establish nutrition goals as well as to share experiences and good practices in the fight against malnutrition in all its forms.



During the event, delegates participated in more than ten sessions covering key issues related to the effective implementation of [nutritional action](#). These topics include financing for nutrition and resource mobilization, the role of the private sector, implementation of Nutrition for Growth Summit commitments, multisectoral information systems for nutrition, systemic change through food systems transformation, development and implementation of a knowledge management plan, high-level advocacy, linking social protection and nutrition, and the potential of regional organizations.

During the regional gallery, which took place over the first two days after the sessions, countries exhibited and presented good practices implemented in their territories (in addition to those presented during regular sessions). Six countries submitted a total of nine good practices and three others were shared with the SUN Movement Secretariat.

In parallel, bilateral meetings were organized between the SUN Movement Coordinator, Gerda Verburg, and each delegation, including with the observer countries, and with representatives of UN agencies and regional groups.

Day 1 - Tuesday 13 December 2022

a) Taking stock of the region's progress under SUN 3.0 and priorities for the future

Countries recognized and appreciated the support provided for the advancement and strengthening of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition, high-level advocacy that put nutrition at the top of the political agenda, among other efforts. It was also mentioned that nutrition indicators have improved in recent years in relation to the accompaniment of the SUN Movement. One achievement that was mentioned was the development of a methodology to measure investments in nutrition and technical assistance received.



As challenges and priorities, participants expressed the need for increased support both in resource mobilization, including collaboration with the private sector, as well as the strengthening of subnational governance structures. The importance of reinforcing the use of information (in particular with regard to the evaluation of the impact of the actions implemented), and of generating material to be able to share key messages with different audiences was also mentioned.

b) Session 1: Innovative methods for resource mobilization and collaboration with the private sector and the SUN Business Network (Presentations)

This session, led by the World Food Programme, facilitated understanding of the role of the private sector in the SUN Movement countries and its potential in the region, as well as the importance of involving the private sector in the discussion on nutrition issues. The experiences of Peru, Guatemala and Ecuador, all of which have developed joint actions with the private sector, were presented; IFAD also shared lessons learned from projects with smallholder farmers that aim at nutritional improvements.



During the discussion, it was mentioned that despite the existence of potential conflicts of interest that arise when involving the private sector, it is important to establish dialogue to build bridges and find a common goal. Involvement of the private sector is key to finding solutions to multi-causal problems, such as child malnutrition, that require multi-sectoral solutions (including the private sector, which can contribute to improving supply chains). In terms of resources, the importance of the first funds invested being domestic government funds was highlighted. The issue of resource efficiency is crucial. Therefore, the use of evidence has a very important role to play in investing in the actions that give results. Similarly, it is crucial to work with a bottom-up approach to generate change and exchange good practices.

c) Deep Dive 1: Strategies for Optimizing Nutrition Finance-Oriented Resources - Results-Budgeting (Presentations)

The session introduced the topic of results-based budgeting, accountability and government management aimed at intervention sustainability. Following initial presentations by Ecuador and Peru on the implementation of a results-based budgeting strategy, countries worked as a group to discuss critical nodes identified such as prioritization of goods and services, budgeting and resource allocation, nominal tracking and monitoring tools, and social participation.

The challenges presented by the implementation of the results-based budget strategy included a lack of multisectoral information, public procurement that is not correctly prioritized or which does not meet real needs, and the lack of qualified personnel for the implementation of policies and interventions. The importance of shared governance for the implementation of a results-based budgeting scheme was also highlighted. In terms of nominal monitoring and tracking tools, the importance of strengthening automated information systems and establishing alliances with academia was mentioned, so that this



can translate into research and scientific evidence.

The role of young people in the positioning of work in favor of nutrition and collaborative surveillance was emphasized, as is the case in Peru. They also have an important role in the dissemination of key messages that are adapted to communicate to the general population as effectively as possible

in different media (such as social networking sites). Finally, the lack of coordination of packages of goods and services which do not always take into account the importance of a more personal approach was identified as another challenge.

Day 2 - Wednesday 14 December 2022

a) [N4G webinar – Nutrition for Growth, Accountability in the Region \(Presentations and webinar recording\)](#)

The Global Nutrition Report presented the results of its 2022 annual report and the Nutrition Accountability Framework (NAF).

Progress in meeting commitments was highlighted. It was mentioned that governments are prioritizing MIYCN (Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding Nutrition) targets, while NCD (Non-communicable diseases) targets were also prioritized by higher-income countries. The use of the NAF will help advance compliance with commitments through public and transparent monitoring.



El Salvador and Guatemala presented the progress they have achieved with respect to the commitments they made at the last N4G summit. In Honduras, commitments are based on the decentralization of nutrition services and strengthening municipal management while also establishing an information system. Advances have focused on improving the breastfeeding law as well as regulating processed and ultra-processed products.

Guatemala has an annual operational plan through which they seek to guarantee the nutrition budget through 17 government institutions. The existence of multisector food and nutrition security commissions that meet to analyze processes and progress was mentioned. Similarly, there are subnational territorial councils where indicators and results of the inclusion of people in the programmes are shared.

In El Salvador, in fulfilling commitments, civil society has contributed to research for decision-making and supported the government in continuing to strengthen nutrition.

Looking to the future and the upcoming N4G summit, France as the organizing country reiterated the importance of working together in a multi-sectoral manner to meet nutrition commitments, strengthening the capacity of civil society and empowering those most affected.

b) Session 2: Multisectoral Information Systems and Better Indicators for Nutrition (Presentations)



The session presented a general framework on the region's nutritional problems in their countries with respect to global indicators. Ecuador's experience on multisectoral information systems for nutrition (Unified and Universal Multisectoral Tracking System) was shared. The platform enables the information to arrive within 24 hours through an alert to the institution that provides the service to the target population. The system incentivised the public sector to approach the general population, and not the other way around. At the learning level, emphasis was placed on the fact that investment (in this case, through cooperation funds) and political will are pillars for implementing these interventions. The importance of multisectoral, multi-level systems, the use of information at the subnational level, having legitimately open information systems in the country, and involving multidisciplinary teams (not only technical, but also personnel with effective communication skills) was highlighted. The session ended with comments from Vital Strategies to

promote equitable and effective public health systems.

c) Session 3: Systemic Change, Development of an Action Plan for the Food Systems Pathways (Presentations)

Following a presentation by the FAO subregional office on the conceptual framework on food systems, the UNICEF regional office presented the organization's work on food systems and in particular the Innocenti Framework on food systems for children and adolescents, which works on the protection and promotion of adequate food and child-focused services and practices. The determinants that represent the processes and conditions in the food system were mentioned to improve the diets of children and adolescents as well as the joint work of UNICEF and GAIN in the development of a common narrative. WFP presented the work of the regional follow-up task force (FAO, IFAD, WFP, ECLAC). The task force accompanied the coordination of regional and local events such as national dialogues and was reactivated for the follow-up of the pathways.



El Salvador (CONASAN) and Costa Rica (FAO) presented how they designed and now implement their pathways. In El Salvador, they mentioned the prioritization of four lines of work. The political dialogue and the development of the courses of action included the participation of children and youth, who leveraged their experiences to contribute to this construction. In Costa Rica, there was already a focus on food systems work led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Regarding the development of the pathway in Costa Rica, four national dialogues were held, during which several key themes were discussed (e.g. digital innovation in agriculture). Currently, priorities are being established for the monitoring of actions (in particular the implementation of the food based dietary guidelines with a focus on food systems and the preparation of the decree to incorporate the regulation of the list of goods that make up the food basket for family welfare).

Delegations had the opportunity to reflect on opportunities and challenges in creating synergies between food systems transformation and nutrition and health agendas. They also identified the most urgent actions needed to ensure that the implementation of food systems transformation leads to better nutrition in their respective countries.

d) Session 4: Development and implementation of a national knowledge management action plan (Presentations)



The session began with a presentation on the key elements of knowledge management in the context of the SUN Movement. Key principles such as the importance of integrating an approach to learning from the outset were mentioned. The SUN Movement Secretariat presented the various stages for the development of a national action plan for knowledge management. Participants then joined in working groups for each country to develop a draft action plan for knowledge management.

During the presentations of the group work, countries highlighted several elements, for example the importance of adapting information to the audience, of defining indicators to measure the impact of training, education and knowledge management processes, and also to measure the cost of good practices during their compilation in order to better understand the cost-benefit. Additionally, the importance of defining criteria for archiving information was mentioned (in particular establishing minimum standards and involving civil society and academia in the process).

Day 3 - Thursday 15 December 2022

a) Deep Dive 2: Advocacy: Speaking with one voice to influence nutrition decisions (Presentations)

The session consisted of bringing delegations together by country to work on advocacy processes and common messages that they can use collectively as part of their action plans. Each country delegation carried out a mapping of actors to direct their advocacy, before developing advocacy messages adapted to each actor according to their level of power, influence and support. Each delegation shared its messages with the other delegations and discussed the context in which they operate.



It is important to highlight the role of each stakeholder in assuming their responsibilities and commitments based on their level of power, influence and support for the issue of nutrition. It is essential to empower each stakeholder to use their status and opportunities to accelerate pro-nutrition progress.

It was concluded that multi-stakeholder collaboration and political will are essential for accelerating progress. Advocacy is not just a matter for civil society and the youth, but for all stakeholders to make commitments for nutrition.

b) Session 5: Linking Social Protection and Nutrition in LAC: Evidence, Opportunities and Challenges (Presentations)

The session began with an introduction on the importance and urgency of linking social protection and nutrition, highlighting the role of social protection in the context of a prolonged and complex crisis in the region, and how multidimensional poverty is connected to food insecurity as well as the additional toll taken by malnutrition. There is evidence showing that social protection can have both positive and negative impacts on the acquisition of household food supplies. Therefore, the need to review and integrate evidence to inform policies and programmes was highlighted.



The session continued with cases of countries adapting their social protection systems to have an impact on nutrition. Peru shared its experience with the reform of its social programmes, which since 2008 have included nutrition indicators. The need to include nutrition as a human capital base was highlighted. The Qali Warma school nutrition programme initially focused on education and closing energy gaps, before including nutrition indicators. The programme now integrates education, nutrition, social protection and local economy indicators, and has become a comprehensive social protection platform. Similarly, the Dominican Republic incorporated food and nutrition education into its programmes to address both malnutrition and obesity, and emphasized the importance of having scientific evidence available. Ecuador explained how it has expanded its social protection mechanisms during the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the need for a multisectoral integration of social protection programmes.

The session concluded with country presentations in which the main opportunities for and barriers to moving the nutrition-sensitive social protection agenda in the region were discussed, and priority actions for the future were identified.

c) Where We Are Headed (Final Reflections, Exchanges and Regional Potentials) and Closing Remarks

During this last session, countries had the opportunity to reflect on the future and their priorities in the fight against malnutrition. Among other challenges, they mentioned, for example, the need to consolidate work in their countries at the subnational level, to continue working on the institutionalization of nutrition, to strengthen partnerships, including with more actors, to continue sharing and documenting good practices, and to generate and use evidence to promote nutrition. The decline in nutrition positioning due to political changes was another major challenge affecting certain countries in the region.

The crucial importance of working together, as a region, to be able to face these challenges was highlighted. The co-chairs of the SUN Movement Executive Committee and the SUN Coordinator highlighted this fundamental aspect. Similarly, it is important to promote and fund the participation of civil society and the youth in efforts to improve nutrition.

