

Overview

The SUN Movement Lead Group gathered for its annual meeting at UNICEF headquarters in New York which took place on the margins of the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations.

The meeting was the first in-person meeting since 2019 and the first for the newly composed Lead Group under the recently appointed chair, Ms. Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director. Following their nomination by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 9 new and 15 returning members were [announced](#) to serve until December 2024.

The Lead Group discussed how external factors, such as the global food and nutrition crisis, COVID-19 response and recovery, climate shocks, humanitarian crises and famine, are shaping SUN Countries' pathways for scaling up nutrition and the required responses. The Lead Group members reinforced their commitment to the value of the SUN country-driven multistakeholder, multisectoral approach and reflected on the ways in which this is helping countries to protect themselves from the worst consequences of multiple crises and build forward better. A number of Lead Group members announced specific [commitments](#) whilst others plan to share their intended areas of action after the meeting.

Follow-up actions

- The Lead Group will support a joint statement in response to the current crises in the run up to COP 27, advocating for a global response anchored in the food systems approach, with a nutrition lens.
- Lead Group members committed to reframe what is widely perceived as a global food security crisis, as a global food and nutrition security crisis
 - IPU Secretary-General to advocate for the interlinkages between nutrition, health and climate change and the unfolding food and nutrition security crisis at the upcoming P20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit [[6 October 2022 in Jakarta](#)].
 - Honorable Minister Sajjan and IPU S-G Martin Chungong will advocate for a stronger nutrition emphasis at the upcoming high level government summits / conferences, i.e. the COP27 in Sharm El Sheik (6-18 November 2022) as well as the G20 Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia (15-16 November 2022)
- Dr. Sania Nishtar and the SUN Movement to explore pathways towards a better and more institutional integration of nutrition in the social protection agenda.
- IsDB to sensitize Ministers of Finance of the countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the importance of prioritizing climate and nutrition sensitive food systems programming, and anchoring multisectoral nutrition interventions in both, the short and long term planning. IsDB is very open to using its model for south-south exchange to increase awareness and dialogue on nutrition amongst its members.
- Minister Almheiri aims to position food systems transformation, and nutrition as a central part of the UAE hosted COP28.

- SUN Movement to engage with Amref on the [Africa Health Agenda International Conference \(AHAIC\) 2023](#) taking place in Kigali from March 6 to 18, 2023 to discuss the integration of nutrition into Universal Health Coverage in Africa.
- SUN Movement to explore avenues to further harness south-south cooperation (knowledge sharing, capacity strengthening) through the UAE based International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) researching climate resilient crops with high nutritious value.
- Lead Group members and their teams work closely with the SUN Movement Secretariat and Global Support System to finalise their commitments and take action on nutrition.

Context

The September 2022 Lead Group meeting took place against the backdrop of unprecedented challenges brought on by the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and growing conflict. Progress made over the last two decades, – a one-third reduction in child stunting and a decrease in the number of stunted children by 55 million – is threatened. In the 15 countries worst affected by the food and nutrition crises, there are almost 200 million people facing severe food insecurity, including 27 million children.

In the face of these interrelated crises, the country-led, multisectoral, multistakeholder approach of the SUN Movement is more relevant than ever. The SUN Lead Group's role is to guide the Movement and to mobilize stakeholders from governments, the UN, civil society, international financing and philanthropic institutions and the private sector to collectively ensure that nutrition remains a priority on the global agenda and response.

Key conclusions

1. The world is facing a food **AND** nutrition security crisis which requires the prioritization of nutrition.

Lead Group members reflected on how inflationary pressures, supply chain disruptions in agriculture, conflict, commodity shortages, the economic impacts of COVID and climate-related shocks contribute to the unfolding global food and nutrition crisis, which is hitting the most vulnerable the hardest.

The Lead Group called for global leaders to spell out the centrality of nutrition security when framing the global response. They recalled the learning from the 2008 crisis, which led to high levels of malnutrition and mortality simply because nutrition was not prioritized. Lead Group members committed to advocate for the inclusion of nutrition in the response, with a particular focus on the needs of women and children. It was agreed that advocacy for nutrition - at all levels - needs to have a compelling narrative which highlights not only the importance of investing in nutrition for human development, but also the political and financial costs of inaction. The SUN Movement should coordinate its efforts and expertise to support countries in **translating available research and data into** evidence-based lines of arguments on how the costs of inaction are higher than the cost of dealing with the unfolding hunger crisis. This is also a critical opportunity to progress the implementation of national pathways for food systems transformation.

As the response to COVID-19 has shown, compelling story-telling can also be a great source of inspiration for action at the grassroots level. From women's groups to smallholder farmers associations, awareness of the importance and transformative power of nutrition has led to action and inspired policy change.

2. Nutrition results in SUN countries depend on the interrelated actions of diverse stakeholders. Sustainable results require a food systems approach and the integration of agendas, starting at the country level.

In 2021, the Year of Action on Nutrition, the world has come together at two key events, the UN Food Systems (UNFSS) and the Nutrition for Growth Summits. Building on the UN Food Systems Summit the Lead Group urged the SUN Movement to continue to support country-owned and led integrated strategies building on national food systems pathways that came out of UNFSS. 71% of SUN countries have already developed national pathways for food systems transformation, and 14 SUN Country Focal Points have served as national food systems conveners in the lead up to the UNFSS and its follow up.

The food systems approach breaks down silos, harnesses multisectoral collaboration in addressing malnutrition and is best suited for the integration of different agendas through a country lens. These systems must be sustainable, resilient, equitable, just and inclusive in order to deliver essential nutrition for children, women and the most vulnerable.

3. The social protection and nutrition agendas intersect. The SUN Movement should facilitate the further integration of nutrition into social protection programs and create a convening space for countries to exchange knowledge and innovative practices.

There have long been strong interlinkages between social protection and nutrition interventions and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has led to innovative integrated approaches in many SUN countries. Recognizing this, the SUN Movement should explore avenues for establishing an institutional space for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and innovative approaches that could accelerate convergence between nutrition and social protection.

4. The Lead Group reaffirmed its commitment to align its support behind country priorities, advocate for the inclusion of all sectors and strengthen country ownership.

Lead Group members discussed the importance of aligning priorities of global constituents behind national priorities and nutrition plans. Building and sustaining country ownership requires creating and maintaining meaningful and safe opportunities for civil society to engage. Through the adequate involvement of parliaments, national ownership of priorities and interventions can be fostered. Sensitizing also Ministers of Finance to the broad benefits of nutrition investment is key to increasing domestic funding and creating greater country ownership.

To support the country-led and country-owned nature of the SUN Movement, the Lead Group can play a role in ensuring adequate support and resourcing for capacity strengthening of local actors to build and pursue their own nutrition action plans.

5. Climate change is directly and increasingly impacting food and nutrition security and progress. It is vital to integrate food and nutrition in all global climate change adaptation and mitigation negotiations and action.

The global food and nutrition security crises the world now faces is not only exacerbated by broken and unsustainable food systems but also by the contribution of climate change-related extreme weather events which are occurring with alarming frequency.

The Lead Group highlighted the importance of advocating at all levels for the transformation to just food systems that deliver food security and nutrition for all and in a way that does not compromise the economic, social and environmental foundations to generate the same economic and social welfare for future generations.

The unfolding energy, finance and food and nutrition security crisis, has led several countries to consider rolling back on environmental regulations in order to scale up food production. This will not solve the crisis and move the world further away from reliable food systems that are delivering healthy and nutritious diets to everyone, everywhere.

Lead Group members will leverage their leadership to ensure the UN Climate Conference of Parties (COP) provides tangible opportunities to reach the right stakeholders and decision makers to ensure adequate integration of the nutrition agenda as part of food systems transformation.

6. In the wake of increasing climate change and conflict-related crises affecting SUN countries, the SUN Movement should strengthen its focus on humanitarian settings.

The SUN Movement is often perceived as a development actor. Growing humanitarian needs call for greater engagement with humanitarian actors to support coordinated action across humanitarian and development action especially through 'nutrition inclusive' social protection

7. The meaningful participation of youth, and inclusion of youth as a target group of nutrition interventions, should be given higher priority and consideration.

Youth account for 15 percent of the global population –1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years – and are often unable to afford and access healthy and nutritious diets. The Lead Group reaffirmed the importance of having young people at the table where decisions are made, and the need to be more inclusive of youth in order to ensure that their needs and leadership are leveraged.

The SUN Movement should also ensure that national food systems transformation pathways in SUN countries are inclusive of youth.

8. More resilient and self-reliant regional and national food systems are critical to protect and expand nutrition gains.

The current global food and nutrition crisis has demonstrated the risks of dependence on a few global suppliers and producers for food supplies.

All leaders and decision makers, including multilateral development banks and the private sector, should support the improvement of local, national and regional food system resilience, by investing in the production of nutritious and climate-sensitive crops that increase overall food resilience. Nutrition advocacy - such as through the African Union's year of nutrition - has to be consolidated, to ensure that governments prioritize nutrition, learn from each other and invest in scalable models for improved nutrition outcomes. Scaling public-private partnerships, particularly those which aim to support local ownership, production and consumption, must be emphasized towards increasing food and nutrition resilience in Africa and everywhere.

9. Increasing recognition of obesity as a growing dimension of malnutrition requires more action.

Once considered a problem only in high-income countries, overweight, obesity and related NCDs are now dramatically on the rise in low- and middle-income countries. The vast majority of overweight or obese children live in developing countries, where the rate of increase has been more than 30% higher than that of developed countries.

The Lead Group wants the SUN Movement and its member countries to focus more on addressing obesity as a dimension of malnutrition, and to learn from best practices and policy interventions, including through fiscal policies, such as taxation of certain foods, improved market regulation and opportunities to make healthy food more available and affordable.

10. Importance of education and breastfeeding as foundations for good nutrition during the critical 1,000 days window was reaffirmed.

Nutrition, especially during the first 1,000 days of human life (from conception to 2 years of age), is key for physical health, cognitive development and mental wellbeing. Promoting the right to breastfeeding for all mothers in both the public and private sector needs to be enshrined in public policies to eliminate all forms of malnutrition. The importance of education, awareness and behavior change on healthy and climate-sensitive diets was highlighted from nutrition during girls adolescence, women's pregnancy, to breastfeeding to early childhood development.

Lead Group member commitments

Lead Group member	Commitment
<p>Inger Ashing, Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children International</p>	<p>I will champion the principle of being child and youth led, to improve the SUN Movement’s focus on children’s voices and rights, and support young leaders to advocate on nutrition. This is in line with Save the Children’s strategic ambition to support children to influence change and hold decision-makers to account to deliver on their obligations.</p> <p>I will use my own platform to advocate for the prioritization of adolescent and maternal nutrition with focus on equity and leaving no one behind. Prioritizing the most marginalized and deprived groups of children is at the core of Save the Children’s global strategy. We have the ambition to catalyze positive change for children left behind, including girls, and contribute to achieving the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind.</p> <p>As Save the Children International, we will strengthen research, advocacy and programmatic efforts on health and nutrition, with a focus on the most deprived and marginalized.</p> <p>I will continue to champion and help strengthen the SUN Civil Society Network, which we host at Save the Children UK.</p>
<p>Cherrie Atilano, CEO and President, AGREA Agricultural Systems International, Inc</p>	<p><u>Women in the food systems</u></p> <p>Support the GrowHer initiative and help share best practices of the Women Food Producers Associations to empower more women agripreneurs and community leaders to be agents of creating sustainable livelihoods and build better nutrition on a household level.</p> <p><u>Smallholder Farmers Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the food and agriculture sector</u></p> <p>Work with the government to support the success of Agrea Farm School to graduate an additional 5,000 smallholder farmers across the Philippines over the next 3 years, building knowledge on sustainable agriculture, better nutrition, mindset change from farmers to entrepreneurs and more importantly to help develop their farms towards regenerative agriculture.</p> <p>Support smallholder farmers to have access to the market by working together with more SMEs and the SUN Business Network, boosting local production. “Nourishing the Workforce sourced from Well-nourished Farmers”</p> <p><u>Youth in agriculture</u></p> <p>Engage with youth - the future of agribusiness- developing products that contribute to better the nutrition of our people and protect our planet. Support Association of Colleges in Agriculture in the Philippines to influence students to do community and</p>

	<p>extension work in different farming and fishing communities. Encourage out-of-school youth to grow their own food, act as local champions and food heroes to establish food gardens and help youth in the farming communities to have opportunities and access to training on sustainable agriculture practices and better nutrition.</p>
<p>David Beasley, Executive Director, UN World Food Programme</p>	<p>To respond to the unprecedented food and nutrition needs, WFP commits to scale up its efforts this year by aiming to assist a record number of 152 million people, including 35 million women and children – across many SUN countries – with lifesaving malnutrition prevention and treatment activities.</p> <p>In line with SUN’s country-led and multisectoral approach, WFP also commits to increase its support to governments in delivering long-term solutions aimed at strengthening national systems – health, education, social protection, agriculture and food systems – striving for long-lasting nutrition gains. This includes, among others, leveraging national social protection systems to enable access to nutritious foods for vulnerable groups and working with over 40 governments to improve availability of fortified staples to help fill critical nutrient gaps.</p> <p>WFP re-commits to the principles of SUN and will work towards the successful implementation of the SUN Movement Strategy for 2021-2025, by coordinating action and working closely with other SUN networks in support of governments’ policy and programming processes, particularly through UN Nutrition and in support of the SUN Business Network.</p>
<p>Martin Chungong, Secretary- General, Inter- Parliamentary Union</p>	<p>During my new term as SUN Movement Lead Group member, I will mobilize the Inter-Parliamentary Union to promote regional and global parliamentary debates on the inter-linkages between health and climate change and continue rolling out and popularizing the handbook for parliamentarians on food systems and nutrition to foster holistic approaches to nutrition at the country level. I will endeavor to mainstream nutrition in the deliberations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.</p>
<p>Gabriela de Bukele, First Lady of El Salvador</p>	<p>Continue to strengthen sustainable public policies and build a solid platform that aligns multisectoral efforts, to eliminate all forms of malnutrition in El Salvador and regionally.</p> <p>Continue to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding. Good nutrition and health grow stronger when it is prioritized from the first thousand days of life, and starts by providing proper preparation, education, and accurate information to mothers, families, communities, and all other stakeholders involved. Breastfeeding is “love turned into food”.</p> <p>Develop good practices in El Salvador to share our experiences and lessons learned to inspire others to join the SUN Movement.</p>

<p>Alfredo Rimoch, CEO, Laboratorios Liomont</p>	<p>Supporting optimal breastfeeding is one of the most important interventions to reduce mortality and prevent all forms of malnutrition, especially obesity! Businesses have a key role to play here!</p> <p>Firstly, by promoting and protecting breastfeeding in the workplace, companies will benefit working mothers, who are the ones who breastfeed their children less.</p> <p>Companies can provide adequate spaces for breastfeeding at the work environment and support the working mothers with information on the benefits of breastfeeding, extended maternity leave, and support teleworking when possible. Supporting working mothers will also contribute to retain their talents: it is very clear today how companies greatly benefit from increasing employment and leadership opportunities for women.</p> <p>Secondly, businesses should be a loud voice in support of breastfeeding policies. Regulating the marketing of milk substitutes is crucial, as misleading advertising pushes families to choose milk formula when this is not needed, and this can have very serious consequences for their babies.</p> <p>Today, I renew my commitment to support breastfeeding in Mexico and globally: only through a joint effort between Government, civil society, and the private sector, we can succeed!</p>
<p>Ndidi Nwuneli, Executive Chair, Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition</p>	<p>My commitment is to actively incorporate nutrition awareness into the training curriculum for African small and medium-sized enterprises agripreneurs via the African Food Changemakers Hub which supports businesses in 37 African countries.</p>
<p>Catherine Russell, SUN Movement Lead Group Chair, UNICEF Executive Director</p>	<p>To implement UNICEF's Acceleration Plan for the prevention and treatment of child wasting. Through the newly established Child Nutrition Fund, we will deliver lifesaving nutrition programmes to prevent, detect and treat child wasting in the 15 countries worst affected by the global food and nutrition crisis.</p> <p>To improve the diets of all children through a Global Alliance for Children's Diets. The Alliance will work with public and private-sector partners to transform food systems to better meet children's nutrition rights and needs.</p> <p>To promote proper nutrition for girls and women. UNICEF will launch in the first quarter of 2023 a flagship report to advocate for better nutrition policies, programmes and actions for women over the course of their lives.</p>
<p>Hon. Mr. Harjit Sajjan, Minister of International Development & Minister</p>	<p>Commit to supporting countries with their own nutrition plans and priorities through Canada's international assistance. This includes strengthening both health systems and food systems to integrate nutrition priorities and services. Health systems and food systems will be more effective with the integration of nutrition, and nutrition</p>

<p>responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada</p>	<p>programming will have greater lasting impact as part of broader systems.</p> <p>Commit to championing women’s empowerment as a critical link to improved nutrition. Canada will prioritize nutrition projects that integrate gender equality considerations to prevent malnutrition in all its forms, and commit to promoting gender equality at all convening opportunities. Dismantling gender barriers is a critical step and recently Canada extended support to the Standing Together for Nutrition consortium to continue research on the impact of various crises on nutrition and provide gender-sensitive recommendations on mitigating this impact on women and children.</p> <p>Commit to increased inclusion of nutrition in high level discussions at global, regional and national levels with decision makers across a range of sectors. Canada will work with other SUN stakeholders to coordinate messaging in advance of events to maximize impact. We will also provide feedback when possible to other Lead Group members and the SUN Coordinator on key discussions.</p>
<p>Dr. Githinji GITAH, CEO, AMREF Health Africa</p>	<p>To galvanize civil society and relevant stakeholder voices, to curate solutions and scale up coordinated action on the national nutrition agenda with the view to addressing malnutrition as one of the most pressing health challenges, as well as hold leaders to account to implementing nutrition policies and commitments in their countries. Ostensibly, Amref commits to promoting the SUN Movement approach as an effective way of working collaboratively to end malnutrition in high-burden countries and globally.</p> <p>To engage in research and sharing of lessons and best practices to highlight the impact of climate changes on food systems. Communities can then use this evidence to introduce or scale up actions which will economically empower them to address malnutrition.</p> <p>Engage with SUN stakeholders during visits to any of the 65 SUN Countries and four Indian States to accelerate action towards SUN Movement strategic objectives through facilitating technical assistance to national MSPs and SUN networks through Lead Group member’s organisations/institutions/companies.</p>
<p>Dr. Mansur Muhtar, Vice President Operations of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)</p>	<p>As a SUN Lead Group Member and Vice President Operations of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), I commit to ensuring that:</p> <p>IsDB systematically explores a nutrition sensitive programming to its agriculture and health projects in an integrated and multisectoral approach. This strategy will be deployed by breaking down the silos between sectors and type of resources, developing synergies internally and with external partners as well as widening horizons and perspectives to program design.</p> <p>IsDB works with the WFP, The Power of Nutrition and potential new partners to bring the 1,000 Days initiative to fruition.</p>

	<p>IsDB makes its fora available to foster multilateral dialogue, but also advocate on bilateral basis with its interlocutors - the ministers of finance - to sensitize them on the importance of nutrition.</p> <p>IsDB explores supporting specific areas of capacity strengthening to nutrition related topics and programming, by providing platforms to share knowledge, perspectives and experience among OIC countries under its existing programs for south-south cooperation and through new initiatives.</p>
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