Nutrition work spans entails multiple sectors, including agriculture and health, and involves multiple roles within each. Nutrition also involves multiple different types of stakeholders, including government, civil society, the UN agencies, academia and the private sector. All of these sectors and stakeholders are involved in different ways in influencing nutrition outcomes within a country. Recognizing this, the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) embarked on a mission to document good practices on well-functioning multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral platforms.

The case study documentation addresses five key questions:

1. What is the local definition of a multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral platform?
2. What are the governance arrangements for multi-stakeholder/ multi-sectoral platforms across varied settings?
3. How are the multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral platforms structured at country-level?
4. What are key achievements and emerging challenges faced by multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral platforms?
5. How do we ensure that gains made by well-functioning multi-stakeholder/multi-sectoral platforms are sustained?

Five countries have been identified, spanning different geographic settings, including Anglophone Africa, Asia, Francophone Africa, Latin America, and the thematic Convergence Hub. The approach to documenting the good practice is summarized in Annex 1.

This case study places a spotlight on the Multi-Stakeholder and Multisectoral Platforms (MSPs) in Tanzania.
The case of Tanzania

In 2010, Tanzania became one of the first countries to join the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. The country has been an active member, committed to addressing malnutrition through a multisectoral approach and in alignment with the SUN Movement’s principles and objectives. Committed to the SUN Movement, Tanzania developed the National Nutrition Strategy for Tanzania (2011–2016) to guide nutrition interventions in the country and improve nutrition outcomes, particularly among women and children. The plan recognized the importance of multisectoral coordination to achieving its goals and identified the need for a coordination mechanism to facilitate synergies and collaboration among the various nutrition sectors and stakeholders.

Overall, the coordination mechanism for nutrition in Tanzania has evolved since the development of the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS 2011/12 – 2015/16). When the strategy was developed, the coordination mechanism for nutrition in Tanzania was led by the Ministry responsible for Health, which was responsible for overall coordination, technical leadership and guidance on the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. The strategy identified the need to strengthen the capacity of the multisectoral coordination in the implementation of nutrition interventions at all levels effectively.

Since the development of the National Nutrition Strategy, the coordination mechanism for nutrition in Tanzania has continued to evolve. The establishment of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan in 2016 and its subsequent second phase in 2021 reflected a renewed commitment to multisectoral coordination and collaboration for improving nutrition outcomes in the country. Under the second phase of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan, the scope of Nutrition Unit within the Ministry of Health was enhanced to facilitate additional support in the expansion of high-quality and equitable health services – including prevention, curative and rehabilitation services and health promotion – that are crucial for scaling up nutrition across the country, from health facilities to communities. The Unit is also responsible for streamlining the implementation, monitoring and coordination of essential health interventions for improving nutrition at all levels through the development of policies, strategies, plans and legislation that align with the Health Sector Strategic Plan.

With an emphasis placed on strengthening mechanisms for nutrition coordination at RS and LGAs, the establishment of nutrition coordination committees in all 26 regions and 184 councils in the country enhanced coordination and collaboration of various sectors and actors. This reflected the importance of local-level engagement and coordination in improving nutrition outcomes.

Objectives of the case study

The objective of this case study is to document the experience of the MSP in Tanzania.

Period covered

The case study covers the period 2010 to present.
Overall, nutrition coordination in Tanzania involves a multisectoral approach that emphasizes collaboration and integration across sectors and stakeholders. The High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition in Tanzania (HLSCN), chaired by the Office of the Prime Minister, plays a critical role in the effective implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan. Membership strictly comprises permanent secretaries from line ministries (not delegated personnel), United Nations agencies, donors, academia, civil society and business networks (mainly executive officers).

Specifically, the Committee is responsible for:

- Providing overall guidance and direction for the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan
- Facilitating the coordination and collaboration of sectors and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan
- Overseeing the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan and ensuring its alignment with national development plans and policies
- Mobilizing resources and advocating for increased investment in nutrition programmes and interventions
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan and reporting on progress to the relevant authorities

The President’s Office – Regional Administration and Local Government, accountable to the president of Tanzania, is responsible for the subnational coordination in the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan. Its primary responsibility is to provide leadership and coordination of nutrition interventions at the local government level, mobilize resources, strengthen capacities for nutrition governance and coordination, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of nutrition interventions. Annex 2 provides a detailed summary of additional roles and responsibilities.
Subnational level nutrition coordination

The President’s Office – Regional Administration and Local Government Authorities (PORALG) in Tanzania works closely with the Regional Steering Committees on Nutrition and the Council Steering Committees on Nutrition to ensure the effective implementation of nutrition interventions at the regional and council levels. PORALG is responsible for coordination, supervision, support, guidance and monitoring of the activities at the regional and local government authorities. It is also responsible for coordination and monitoring nutrition interventions by all actors in the regional and local government authorities using the principle of the three ones: one plan, one coordinating mechanism and one monitoring and evaluation framework.

Subnational level nutrition coordination

The United Nations

The United Nations, which plays an important role in supporting nutrition coordination efforts in Tanzania, has a seat on the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition. Specifically, the United Nations works closely with the Government of Tanzania and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance and expertise, mobilize resources, coordinate nutrition activities and promote advocacy and communication.

The Academia

The role of academia in the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition is to support nutrition coordination efforts in Tanzania through research, training and knowledge dissemination. They are also responsible for reviewing and updating pre-service, in-service, and continuing education curricula to ensure that nutrition is adequately integrated and to increase opportunities for training in nutrition.

The role of SUN Movement members

The United Nations

The United Nations, which plays an important role in supporting nutrition coordination efforts in Tanzania, has a seat on the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition. Specifically, the United Nations works closely with the Government of Tanzania and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance and expertise, mobilize resources, coordinate nutrition activities and promote advocacy and communication.

The Civil Society Alliance

The Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania, also known as the SUN Civil Society Network in Tanzania, supports nutrition coordination efforts in the country. It advocated for and contributed to the design of the nutrition coordination mechanism and spearheaded advocacy efforts that resulted in all networks sitting on the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition. Overall, the role of civil society in nutrition coordination is critical for advocacy, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity-strengthening to improve nutrition outcomes in Tanzania. Through collaboration with other stakeholders, civil society organizations can help build a strong and effective multisectoral approach to address malnutrition.
SUN Business Network

In Tanzania, the SUN Business Network engages businesses in nutrition coordination efforts by promoting nutrition-sensitive business practices and supporting the development of a market for nutritious foods. The primary objective of this network is to support government and community actions and efforts geared towards the implementation of the NMNAP II.

SUN Donor Network

The role of nutrition donors in the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition is to provide financial, technical and other forms of support to nutrition programmes and initiatives in Tanzania. Donors provide expertise and guidance on nutrition policies and strategies and the monitoring and evaluation of nutrition programmes. Donors can include bilateral and multilateral agencies, international non-governmental organizations, and private sector organizations. Nutrition donors work closely with the Government and other stakeholders to coordinate efforts and ensure that resources are effectively utilized to address nutrition challenges. They also support the implementation of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan and other nutrition-related policies and programmes.

Nutrition donors play a crucial role in efforts to improve nutrition outcomes; their support helps build the capacities of local organizations and communities to implement effective nutrition interventions and sustain these efforts on into the future.

Key challenges in nutrition coordination

While coordination structures have been established at national, regional and council levels, there is varied capacity at the local level to effectively implement nutrition interventions, including technical capacity, staffing and resources. Additionally, while the private sector is a critical stakeholder in nutrition interventions, its involvement in the coordination structures has been limited, and this has reduced the capacity of these structures to mobilize resources and technical support from the private sector.

Interventions applied by the various coordinating agencies

Bringing together stakeholders from different sectors has resulted in several improvements in Tanzania, including:

- Reductions in the prevalence of stunting: Tanzania has made significant progress in reducing the prevalence of stunting among children younger than 5. The stunting prevalence rate dropped from 42% in 2010 to 34% in 2018 and further to 30% in 2022, according to the Tanzania National Nutrition Survey and the Tanzania Demographic Health Survey.

- The scaling up of nutrition interventions: Tanzania has been able to scale up key nutrition interventions, including the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, the provision of vitamin A supplements and the distribution of micronutrient powders.

- Improvements in coordination and monitoring: The establishment of a High Level Steering Committee for Nutrition in Tanzania has improved the coordination and monitoring of nutrition interventions by helping unite stakeholders from various sectors and ensuring that nutrition is integrated into programmes and policies.

- The development of policies and strategic frameworks: Tanzania has developed a number of policies and frameworks that prioritize nutrition, including nutrition plans and strategies for resource mobilization, advocacy and communications.

- Engagement with the private sector: Tanzania has successfully engaged the private sector in nutrition interventions through the SUN Business Network, which has helped to increase private-sector investment in nutrition.
What the country would have done differently

Among the actions having the greatest impact on increasing political will and commitment to nutrition is the Nutrition Compact Agreement in Tanzania, initiated in 2018. The Compact aims to accelerate efforts to improve nutrition by strengthening coordination, and enhancing transparency and accountability to nutrition interventions, and increasing domestic resources for nutrition at RS and LGAs levels. It provides a framework for collaboration by the Government, development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector at subnational levels. The President of Tanzania signs this agreement annually with all the Regional Commissioners to ensure the proper management of funds. Through the Compact, stakeholders have coordinated efforts, shared best practices and leveraged each other’s strengths and resources to achieve greater impact. It has helped increase political commitment and leadership for nutrition in Tanzania, as evidenced by increased budget allocations for nutrition and the joint accountability among the leaders at RS and LGAs.

All of these coordination mechanisms have contributed to Tanzania being among the pacesetters in ending all forms of malnutrition with a robust nutrition coordination mechanism that is not only institutionalized but also inclusive. It provides an opportunity for effective coordination and engagement across multiple sectors and levels within the Government and among stakeholders throughout the country. Though declines in malnutrition are keeping pace with goals, much remains to be done.

A brainstorming session of MSP members resulted in the identification of the following challenges:

- Coordination at the subnational level is weaker than at the national level. This requires strengthening.
- There are limited resources, especially at the subnational level, including funding and staff time. This can make it difficult to carry out activities and implement interventions effectively. To overcome this, stakeholders could work together to mobilize additional resources, prioritize activities that are most likely to have the greatest impact, and streamline processes to increase efficiency. In addition, the country is considering learning from Kenya and Ethiopia on the Nutrition Investment Case Model, which resulted in the increased allocation of resources at both national and subnational levels in those countries.
- Fragmented communication and decision-making can result in the duplication of efforts and conflicting priorities. To address this, stakeholders have established clear lines of communication, identified key decision makers and communication channels, and ensured that all stakeholders are kept informed and engaged.

- Without political will, it can be difficult to prioritize nutrition interventions and secure the necessary resources and support. To address this, stakeholders can engage political leaders and decision makers, raise awareness about the importance of nutrition, and make a strong case for investing in nutrition.
- Some stakeholders may have limited capacity to contribute to the MSP, which can hinder the effectiveness of the committees. To address this, capacity-strengthening efforts can be undertaken to build the skills and knowledge of stakeholders, and support can be provided to help them participate effectively in the MSP.
- Resistance to change also can be a challenge, particularly if stakeholders are accustomed to working in silos or have different priorities. To overcome this, stakeholders can engage in open and transparent dialogue, seek common ground and shared goals, and work collaboratively to address concerns and find solutions.
- Inadequate infrastructure – including poor road networks, limited storage facilities and inadequate transport systems – has made it difficult to deliver nutrition interventions to the most vulnerable populations.
To overcome these challenges, Tanzania has taken several steps, including:

- Increasing its budget allocation for nutrition programmes by establishing a formal funding framework to facilitate planning and budgeting within MDAs and mobilizing resources from development partners to support the implementation of nutrition interventions.

- Investing in training (CPDs) and capacity-strengthening for health workers, nutrition officers and other stakeholders involved in nutrition interventions. This has improved the quality of nutrition services and increased the coverage of interventions.

- Improving multisectoral collaboration. The Government has adopted multisectoral approach and hence established a multisectoral coordination mechanism involving the food, health, education, social protection and WASH systems to coordinate nutrition interventions. This has resulted in the more efficient and effective delivery of nutrition interventions.

- Enhancing infrastructure. The Government has invested in improving infrastructure, including through the construction of modern health facilities and food storage facilities, the rehabilitation of road networks and the expansion of transport systems. This has improved the delivery of nutrition interventions to the most vulnerable populations.

It is important to sustain an institutionalized nutrition coordination mechanism that includes not only government sectors but also stakeholders in the United Nations, donors, civil society, academia and the private sector to ensure the total buy-in of all stakeholders.

The role of national Nutrition coordination should continue to be placed at the highest possible office in the country, and involving by providing a seat for all relevant stakeholders. It is important that decision makers themselves, rather than delegated personnel, attend these meetings.

Equal investment should be made in subnational nutrition coordination, because implementation is done at the community level.

It is critical to ensure, maintain and facilitate an accountability mechanism from the community level to the highest coordination structure.

Nutrition coordination requires strong political will. Countries should take the time needed to invest in getting the necessary political will, not only at the highest level in the country but also from the subnational governance structures and leadership. This could mean the development of investment cases, costed multisectoral nutrition action plans, etc. More importantly, countries should allow stakeholders to use their channels of influence to promote and advocate for nutrition. United Nations agencies, donor organizations, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector each have critical roles.

Adapting and applying the interventions in other settings
The role of the SUN Movement in supporting this good practice

The SUN Civil Society Network and the SUN Business Network provided the history of the SUN Movement in Tanzania, including all the milestones achieved in the country.

UN-Nutrition provided critical insight into what works in Tanzania and the mechanisms the country could tap into to facilitate the scaling up of nutrition actions. The United Nations also requested SUN support to ensure that Tanzania receives funding to deliver nutrition actions at scale.

The SUN Donor Network highlighted critical elements that have contributed to the success of the SUN Movement in Tanzania. The Tanzania academia network provided insights into the various information tools in the country and the wealth of information and knowledge that can be and is used to inform nutrition actions.

All of the SUN networks participated in an in-depth discussion on the functionality of the MSP and the next steps.

Conclusion and next steps

The SUN Government Focal Point will convene the High-Level Steering Committee on Nutrition to discuss the next steps for Tanzania regarding the development of subnational investment cases and an accelerated and scaled up implementation plan, including how to effectively engage more the President of UR of Tanzania on the matter.

The country will also reply to the SUN Movement with a detailed overview of the specific support requested from the Movement.
This case study was developed based on a series of discussions with national counterparts during country visits and regular interactions with the Tanzania country team, with tremendous thanks to the following contributors:

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References

The following documents, along with key informant interviews, guided the development of the case study:

Annex 1: Roles and responsibilities of line ministries

The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children is the lead agency for nutrition coordination in Tanzania. The ministry is responsible for developing and implementing policies, strategies and programmes to improve nutrition outcomes. It also coordinates with other ministries and stakeholders to implement the NMNAP and ensure effective nutrition coordination.

The Ministry of Agriculture promotes agriculture production and ensures food security in Tanzania. The ministry works with other stakeholders to ensure the availability of nutritious foods and promote the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for ensuring that schools provide nutritious meals and promote good nutrition practices. The ministry also coordinates with other stakeholders to promote school nutrition education and awareness.

The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries is responsible for promoting the production of animal-source foods, an important nutrition source in Tanzania.

The Ministry of Water is responsible for promoting access to safe water and sanitation, important for good nutrition outcomes.

The President’s Office - Regional Administration and Local Government coordinates and supervises regional and local government authorities in Tanzania. The office works with other stakeholders to ensure effective nutrition coordination at the local level.

The Prime Minister’s Office - Regional Administration and Local Government is responsible for coordinating regional and local government authorities in Tanzania. The office works with other stakeholders to ensure effective nutrition coordination at the local level.

The President’s Office - Regional Administration and Local Government provides leadership and coordination of nutrition interventions at the local level, working closely with local government authorities to ensure the effective implementation of nutrition interventions and programmes at the grass-roots level. This includes providing leadership and technical support to local government authorities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of nutrition interventions.

The office also works with stakeholders, including development partners and the private sector, to mobilize resources for the implementation of nutrition interventions and programmes at the local level.

Annex 2: Responsibilities of the President’s Office - Regional Administration and Local Government

The President’s Office - Regional Administration and Local Government also is responsible for strengthening the capacities of local government authorities to effectively govern and coordinate nutrition interventions. This includes providing training and technical assistance to in nutrition governance, planning and monitoring.

The office also is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of nutrition interventions and programmes at the local level. This includes collecting and analysing data on nutrition indicators and reporting on progress to higher authorities.