

Health and Nutrition: SUN Movement Message Grid [April 2025]

OVERARCHING MESSAGE

- **Nutrition is fundamental to health and human development—but malnutrition remains a global emergency.**
 - [Nearly half of child deaths under five are linked to undernutrition](#). [One in three women are anaemic](#), and [2.1 billion adults were overweight and obese in 2021](#).
- **Despite progress in some areas, the world remains off track to meet the global nutrition targets set by the World Health Assembly.**
- **The first 1,000 days of life—from pregnancy to a child's second birthday—represent a critical window for intervention** laying the foundation for lifelong health.
- **Proven, cost-effective interventions**—such as six months exclusive breastfeeding, food fortification, wasting treatment, and micronutrient supplementation—can **save lives and deliver strong returns**. [Universal exclusive breastfeeding alone could prevent over 800,000 child deaths](#) annually.
- **Without access to quality nutrition services, universal health coverage is out of reach.**
- **Malnutrition weakens immunity and increases vulnerability to infectious diseases** like HIV, TB, and malaria.
- At the same time, **overweight and obesity drive a surge in non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, [especially in LMICs, where nearly 75% of NCD deaths occur](#).
- These **health burdens also carry an economic cost**—[overweight and obesity alone cost the global economy 2.19% of global GDP](#).
- **Malnutrition is also tightly linked to food systems and climate change.** Unsustainable food systems drive emissions and poor diets, while climate change undermines food security and health. This cycle puts pressure on economies and public systems.
- **To tackle the malnutrition crisis, governments must work in partnerships with civil society, the private sector and consumer groups.**
- **SUN countries shoulder the majority of the global undernutrition burden.**
- **SUN brings together global health partners to put nutrition at the center of health and development, retain a focus on the WHA targets** and the power of investing in **evidence-based interventions in the first 1000 days of life.**
- SUN will play a convening role in the **Global Coalition for Nutrition Integration**, driving nutrition integration across sectors—from health and food systems to climate and crisis response.

Nutrition Specific	Integration of Nutrition across sectors	SUN's role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint efforts to scale up investment should include nutrition specific interventions recommended in the Lancet series on Maternal and Child Undernutrition, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Management of acute malnutrition is needed to treat wasting and reduce the risk of long-term developmental damage and death. ◦ Micronutrient supplementation for women and children, e.g. Vitamin A, Zinc, Iron or MMS efficiently reduce deficiencies, improve health outcomes and cognitive development. ◦ Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, complementary feeding and nutrition education help prevent neonatal deaths, reduce under five mortality, improve linear growth in children and reduce the risk of developing overweight and obesity later in life. • Deworming helps with anaemia reduction and improved weight gain and growth via improved nutrient absorption. • Taxation on sugar sweetened beverages, front-of-pack nutrition labelling and limiting the marketing of unhealthy foods allows consumers to make informed choices and aim at reducing their salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats intake. 	<p>Integrating nutrition into health systems can improve diets, prevent and treat undernutrition and chronic diseases, and deliver major health benefits at a low cost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundling together nutrition (vitamin A supplementation, nutritional screenings, infant and young child feeding counseling, and growth monitoring) and immunization services to provide continuous, comprehensive health care unlocks significant efficiency gains, cost benefits and strengthens the reach of strained health systems. • Frontline workers, especially community health workers, are essential for meeting the growing demand for integrated services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Worldwide only about half of the 13.7 million children under 5 years of age with severe acute malnutrition had access to treatment in 2022, yet a large number of these children can be treated in their communities without being admitted to a health facility. • Nutrition education: By integrating counselling on infant feeding, dietary diversity, and micronutrient intake into routine services, e.g. antenatal care and child growth monitoring, health systems can better prevent malnutrition and diet-related diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 148 million children under five are stunted globally, of which 90.7 million live in SUN countries (61.3%). 45 million are wasted (over 60% of SUN countries have medium, high, or very high rates of childhood wasting). One third of the 37 million children globally who are overweight and more than half of the 269 million children with anaemia live in a SUN country. • SUN supports countries in linking nutrition to health, food systems and climate policies and by integrating these aspects into National Nutrition and Development Plans. • SUN brokers technical knowledge with the help of its networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ In Zambia, the SUN Business Network and the National Food and Nutrition Commission brought together technical experts to develop a set of criteria to guide consumer food product selection. • SUN constituencies work alongside parliamentarians to incorporate nutrition into national laws and policies, and collaborate with humanitarian clusters to embed essential health interventions in universal health coverage (UHC) frameworks, enhancing resilience against emergencies. • SUN works on global advocacy in the health space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SUN played a significant role in the lead-up to the 2012 WHA, advocating for the six global nutrition targets for 2025. SUN has

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidies on fruits and vegetables, or incentives for producers and retailers encourage the production and accessibility of nutritious foods. 		<p>supported countries in the development of action plans to meet these targets and is now a leading advocate for the target extension to draw political attention to malnutrition .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Joint advocacy between the SUN Donor Network and the SUN Coordinator led to the integration of nutrition as a part of UHC in the G7 Nagasaki Health Ministers' Communiqué in 2023. . ◦ SUN, GAVI, Eleanor Crook Foundation, FCDO, held a high-level event during WHA77 to promote the potential of combining immunization and nutrition services, including examples from Somalia, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This helped integrate nutrition into GAVI's investment case 2026-2030.
SUPPORTING MESSAGES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetal and infant undernutrition are risk factors for later obesity, and obesity and its underlying factors are a risk factor for three of the four leading NCDs, including cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. • Children who are breastfed have a 27% lower chance of becoming overweight or obese later in life compared to those who were not breastfed. • In 2019, the estimated total costs associated with obesity, including both direct and indirect costs, ranged from US\$3-19 billion in low-income countries to \$1-33 trillion in high-income countries. • Globally, 1.9 million annual deaths are attributed to excess salt/sodium intake. Iodine deficiencies can reduce a child's IQ by 8-10 points. • 3.9 million deaths have been attributed to inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling up nutrition interventions could prevent 6.2 million child deaths and 980,000 stillbirths over the next decade • Together, nutrition sensitive and specific programs would avert 27 million cases of child stunting and 144 million cases of maternal anaemia. • Investing in health and wellbeing throughout people's lives, including the control of NCDs, could save 150 million lives and extend millions more by 2050, generating substantial economic benefits . • Investing in cost-effective NCD interventions in poorer countries will generate US\$350 billion in economic benefits and save 8.2 million lives by 2030. • Nutrition services in health systems need to be strengthened with a focus on inclusiveness and improvements in access, coverage, quality, efficiency and resilience to shocks and crises. • More than half of unvaccinated children live in 31 countries (25 of which are SUN countries) exposed to conflict and other vulnerabilities, disrupting access to nutrition and health services. The same children often miss out on both nutritional supplements and essential vaccines, meaning that integrated health services would solve two problems at once. • Globally, there are only 2.3 trained nutrition professionals per 100,000 people, with less than 20 hours of pre-service nutrition training for health workers in general. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUN countries advocate for streamlined integration of nutrition within primary healthcare systems, focusing especially on combating child wasting, improving maternal health, addressing anemia, preventing and reducing obesity. • SUN constituencies engage in aligning school feeding programs with broader health and nutrition advocacy initiatives <p>SUN works with countries to promote and implement measures to tackle malnutrition, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUN Asia hub hosted a P2P learning event on food labeling with representatives from eight countries of the region. • In El Salvador, SUN advocated for the “Growing together” initiative, which aims to ensure that all children reach their full developmental potential through quality, rights-based services. SUN supported the training of over 1,000 breastfeeding counsellors. • In Sierra Leone, the SMS supported the championing of the legislation of a bill on the regulation of marketing of breastmilk-substitutes. • In Pakistan and Nigeria, the SBN (in partnership with the International Food and Beverage Alliance) launched multi-stakeholder pilot projects to support the identification of industrially produced trans-fatty acids replacement solutions in the food value chain • SUN partners including ECF, UNICEF, the Power of Nutrition, GAVI, have been spearheading INI. For example, in Ethiopia: a joint programme between CIFF, GAVI and CNF and FCDO focuses on immunization, nutrition, and social support of zero dose children.