

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Government Focal Points' Meeting

Wednesday 26 September 2012 | 15:00-17:00

Labouisse Hall | UNICEF House

Three UN Plaza | New York

Summary Report

1. The SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS) hosted a meeting of SUN Government Focal Points (GFPs) in New York on 26 September. The meeting was one of two GFPs meetings taking place during the week of the United Nations General Assembly. The SUN Lead Group and the Secretary-General's High Level Meeting on Nutrition also took place during the week. The GFPs meetings both contributed to and reviewed the outcome of these meetings. The objective of the meeting on 26 September was to discuss the SMS's work on tracking progress across stages of preparation for scaling up nutrition.
2. The SUN Movement Coordinator, David Nabarro, welcomed GFPs and their delegations to the meeting (a full list of participants is attached). He noted the significant progress in Scaling Up Nutrition over the last year, and the continued high-level political profile of nutrition as an issue. He complemented the GFPs on their role in ensuring nutrition remained high on national and international agendas.
3. The SUN Movement Progress Tracking System was introduced. The importance of capturing and evaluating progress as a means to demonstrate results, share best practice and learning, mobilise resources and ultimately to ensure the success of the SUN Movement was underlined. The four processes that need to be working if a country is to have the systems in place for Scaling up Nutrition were introduced, as well as the indicators identified for each of the processes. These are:
 - I. Bringing people into a shared space for action (Multi-sector, Multi-stakeholder Platforms).
 - II. Ensuring a coherent policy and legal framework.
 - III. Aligning programmes around a Common Results Framework.
 - IV. Financial tracking and resource mobilisation (around a Common Results Framework).

The presentation showed how each of the indicators is made up of essential elements that are critical to successfully scaling up nutrition. The indicators are viewed together, and the overall state of all four indicators is used to indicate the stage of a country's preparedness. The three stages of preparedness, identified in the 2010 SUN Road Map are:

- I. Countries are taking stock.
- II. Preparing to Scale Up.
- III. Scaling up rapidly to deliver results.

The meeting discussed each of the four processes in turn with a presentation from the SUN Movement Secretariat (SMS - Patrizia Fracassi and Lina Mahy), with examples from individual countries serving to inform the discussion.

4. Bringing People into a Shared Space for Action¹: The SMS outlined the critical elements of this process, which focusses on creating a space where different actors can align their activities and take joint decisions for action. Strong high-level political support is necessary to ensure buy-in and to ensure the SUN Focal Point has the necessary convening power. Other stakeholders must be actively engaged. Benin and Tanzania outlined their experience of translating high level political will into effective multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral mechanisms aimed at building joint approaches to tackling undernutrition.
5. Ensuring a coherent Policy and Legal Framework: The SMS said that this process involved creating an enabling environment for nutrition by putting in place national policies and strategies for nutrition as well as ensuring sector policies include nutrition outcomes as an indicator of success. The presence of comprehensive legislation relevant to nutrition (on Breast-milk substitutes, food fortification, etc) and on the empowerment of women were also highlighted. Namibia and Uganda reported on their efforts to develop and gain approval for policies and legislation. The highlighted their experience of the need for a long term approach, and noted constraints such as mobilising resources and developing capacity for implementation.
6. Aligning Programmes around a Common Results Framework: The SMS emphasised the need for programmes to be aligned around shared goals captured in a common results framework. By aligning programmes and activities in both nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive development a sustainable scaling up of nutrition can take place. The presence of a common results framework allows countries to allocate resources, undertake joint action and address gaps. Bangladesh and Ethiopia shared their experiences of bringing together nutrition specific programmes and nutrition sensitive development around common results programmes. Ethiopia noted their approach which includes measuring common results at the district level.
7. Financial Tracking and Resource Mobilisation: The SMS underlined the importance of mobilising the necessary resources and tracking them for successful scaling up. This process involved identifying costs (based on aligned programmes) and identifying available domestic and external resources and gaps. Financial tracking to monitor investments and guide resource mobilisation were also identified as critical elements of this process. Peru and Nepal outlined their approaches to increasing resource mobilisation and financial tracking, including the need to ensure resources are mobilised across government departments to address nutrition specific and broader determinants of undernutrition.
8. It was reiterated that the Process Indicators, taken together, are used to indicate the stage of a country's preparedness. While it would take time to move through the stages, at the process of tracking would help identify constraints and the assistance

¹ For a more detailed explanation of each indicator, including essential elements, please refer to the *Background Note on the SUN Country Template and Staging of Preparation* (attached).

needed by a country to move forward. The process of tracking would help raise domestic and external resources for scaling up.

9. Opening the discussion segment of the meeting, David Nabarro noted the exceptional progress already made within the SUN Movement, which already covers 56 million stunted children, and the potential for a dramatic reduction in undernutrition amongst the most vulnerable. The key issues raised by the GFPs during the discussion are below. Some of these issues were covered during the meeting of GFPs on Friday 28 September, while others will continue to be discussed during the six-weekly meetings of the SUN Country Network.

10. Resource mobilisation and tracking finances for nutrition

- How do countries successfully persuade their governments to invest in nutrition? Cost-benefit analysis – what is the cost if we don't intervene and what is the benefit when intervening? Need a business plan.
- Need for innovative financing mechanisms. How will these mechanisms be set up?
- How can we use funds more effectively?
- How can nutrition budgets be protected in times of crises or budget cuts?
- Extremely challenging to track budgets in highly de-centralised systems. Expert support is needed to help keep track of these complex financial systems.
- Nutrition-sensitive approaches are difficult to cost. A log-frame is necessary to link common results framework (list of sensitive interventions) with outcomes and costs. The ability to measure and demonstrate results is essential. Expert support is needed to agree methods and do costings that are context-specific and linked to results
- Need better alignment of donors. What can be done to get donors and others to better align? How to get outsiders better aligned around national nutrition policies and targets.
- As contexts change – with stunting rates going down - resource allocations will also need to change and budgets need to be adapted.
- Increased donor funding brings more actors in. Stakeholder mapping showing who is doing what and where, is needed to ensure that national governments have an overview of what is happening in the country.

11. Nutrition-sensitive approaches

- Need to focus on nutrition-sensitive approaches and to understand better what they are.

- What is the difference between sensitive interventions and effective interventions?
- Focus of SUN may need to go beyond 1000 days to encompass, in particular, adolescent girls. (start before pregnancy)
- Good baseline data and causal analysis can facilitate dialogue with the different sectors.
- Support from outside the government has been instrumental in pulling sectors together and being able to focus on nutrition-sensitive approaches.
- How do increased budgets relate to increase in scaling up efforts and increased coverage?

12. De-centralisation

- How can we address inequities and address stunting at sub-national level.
- How can we better understand the nature of disparities in a country

13. Advocacy

- Advocacy has an important role to play in mobilising resources for nutrition.
- We should not ignore the grass-roots and focus too exclusively on policy. How do we effectively communicate with the grass-root levels through community health workers, and through extension workers in agriculture and other sectors? All have a role to play in communicating with families and communities about behaviour change just as has been done with HIV/AIDS.
- Child mortality rates have gone down but stunting rates have remained more static. This is difficult to explain when the advocacy message has been that by tackling stunting, mortality will be reduced.

14. Nutrition or Food Security and Nutrition

- Multi-sector platforms sometimes focus specifically on nutrition, in other countries on food security and nutrition. Which is better? Does a link with food security weaken the focus on nutrition?