

The 18th meeting of the SUN Movement Network of SUN countries took place from March 23rd to March 26th 2015. The meeting involved 9 two-hour sessions by tele and videoconference: five in English, three in French and one in Spanish.

In all, there were 255 participants in the meeting from 43 countries [Bangladesh; Benin; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Comoros; Congo, Brazzaville; Congo, DRC; Côte d'Ivoire; El Salvador; Ghana; Guatemala; Guinea-Bissau; Guinea-Conakry; Indonesia; Kenya; Kyrgyz Republic; Lao PDR; Lesotho; Liberia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mali; Mauritania; Mozambique; Namibia; Nepal; Niger; Pakistan; Peru; Philippines (The); Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Swaziland; Tajikistan; Tanzania; The Gambia; Togo; Uganda; Yemen; Zambia; and Zimbabwe] including 9 who joined by videoconference system. Participants from Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Vietnam and the Indian State of Maharashtra, were not able to join.

40% of the participants were employed by their national governments, 29% came from United Nations entities, 12% from civil society, 4% from donors and 10% from business.

The Meeting agenda was as follows: 1) Thematic Discussion: “Business engagement in nutrition”; 2) Information about current priorities of the SUN Movement Secretariat: Update on the Independent and Comprehensive Evaluation of the SUN Movement; Organization of 2015 Self-Assessment workshops; Update on the financial tracking exercise (3 steps approach); Update on Conflict of Interest; Update on nutrition in the post-2105 Development Agenda.

Thematic discussion: “Business engagement in nutrition”

The ICE report notes the challenges in building practical action with private sector. This issue has also been raised with the SUN Movement Secretariat by countries directly. Participants were invited to consider the following questions when preparing for the call:

- *What might practical action with the private sector look like in your country? Please provide concrete examples.*
- *If you talk about the private sector: who are the actors that you consider, are they organised in a specific way and are you engaged in dialogue with them?*
- *What challenges do you envisage and/or face when engaging and working with the private sector? What steps may be taken to overcome them? Can you give any examples from your country perspective?*

I) Presentation from Jonathan Tench, SUN Business Network Manager

Reminding all participants that the SUN Movement does not enter in partnership or support entering in partnership with any organisations or company that violates UN conventions and the International code on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes (BMS code), Jonathan Tench presented the work of the SUN Global Business network.

Please refer to SUN Global Business Network available on its website: <http://sunbusinessnetwork.org/>

II) Observations from countries

1. What might practical action look like in your country? Please provide concrete examples.

- Most of the countries (32 out of 43 who participated in the calls) reported to work with the Private sector on the **fortification of food products**, predominantly in Asia and Africa. 25 countries reported to have oil fortification (cotton, palm, etc.) and 28 countries implement flour fortification (wheat, rice, corn, etc.). Iodized salt (locally produced or imported) is consumed by the general population in 22 countries. Rice fortification is carried out in 9 countries (mostly in Asia and in Africa: Tanzania and Mozambique); 2 countries reported to fortify sugar (in East Africa: Malawi and Uganda); and Malawi also fortifies their butter.

14 countries mentioned that fortification was implemented **in partnerships with UN agencies; out of which** 9 of them also stated the involvement of **CSOs**.

19 countries in Asia and Africa have **legislations for fortification** and 13 countries have mandated **salt iodization**.

- 12 countries have enacted **legislations on food safety and quality** particularly for fortified products. However quality control still remains a challenge in many of the countries.

Only 3 countries (Lao PDR, Tajikistan and Peru) reported to have passed laws to **exempt taxes on fortified products**. Many others stated that detaxation was a topic of dispute and find it difficult to actualize the same.

- 9 countries are working with the Private sector to provide **micronutrient supplementation** (largely in Asia and few in Africa). 6 countries confirmed to have **mandated Vitamin A provision**.
- 6 countries including Guatemala, are engaging the Private sector for **distribution of food**. 5 of these countries (in Asia and Africa) involve businesses particularly in emergencies. 3 of these countries also mentioned to partner with UN agencies and CSOs along Private sector.
- 12 countries (in Asia and Africa) also confirmed the implementation of the **International Code for Breast Milk Substitutes (BMS)**. 13 other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America reported to involve the Private sector (small unites, women ...) to supplement or produce locally (5) **complementary foods** for children or to communicate about the appropriate use of complementary feeding.
- 23 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America expressed willingness and the need to **sensitize the Private sector** to ethical approaches for better nutrition. 16 of the countries reported to work with the Private sector to **disseminate messages to the population and communities on the importance of nutrition** - 6 mentioned the need to sensitize the **customs or border control** to insure the quality of the imported products. 10 mentioned their work on organizing **campaigns with the media**, 6 highlighted their work on **education programs** and 4 work in partnership for **telecommunications**.

- 8 countries in Asia and West Africa reported to **work with the Private sector for research** (5 mentioned their work on technical innovation and new product development).
- 9 countries involve the Private sector to ensure **labelling of products**, in particular the **use of logos** on fortified products.
- Only 4 countries (Guatemala, Kenya, Comoros and Zimbabwe) reported to have already done a **mapping of the actors** involved from the Private sector and 4 other countries (The Philippines, Ghana, Niger and Uganda) highlighted that this still remains a challenging task.
- 5 countries (particularly in Latin America) highlighted the **involvement of the Private sector in the development of their national plans for nutrition**.

Overview:

Fortification is an opportunity for collaboration between the private sector, the government and other relevant actors (UN agencies and CSOs) in Asian and African SUN countries.

Many Asian countries already have legislations in place for BMS, fortification and micronutrient supplementation.

Partnerships with the Private sector have been established in Asian and Latin American countries to disseminate messages on the importance of good nutrition. Governments also stress the need to sensitize the Private sector itself to ensure harmonious collaborations for nutrition.

Latin American countries involve the Private sector in the development of their national plans for nutrition.

2. If you talk about the private sector: *who are the actors that you consider, are they organised in a specific way and are you engaged in dialogue with them?*

Different kind of actors are involved from the Private sector:

- 22 SUN countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America reported to engage with **small and medium enterprises (small farmers, small-scale mills, women workers, etc.)**; while 11 countries confirmed their work with **multinationals**, particularly in Asia and Latin America.
- 17 countries reported to work with **industries (mills, plant oil factories, etc.)** and 19 stated the involvement of **processed food companies**.
- **Importers** are closely working with the governments in 11 countries.
- 4 countries (mostly Latin American) also encourage the involvement of **exporters and/or traders**.

The following actors facilitate the dialogue between the national governments and the Private sector

- **The Ministry of Trade** (as reported by 7 countries) often makes the link with different businesses
- SUN countries also reach out to the **UN agencies (18) and civil society organizations (14)** to work in partnership with the private sector, especially on food fortification. **Development partners** are helping to bring together the government and the private sector in 8 countries.
- **Media** plays an important role in this dialogue and 7 countries mentioned that their involvement has proven to be successful

The private sector actors are organized through partnerships, alliances or networks:

- 13 countries mentioned that several partnerships exist between the different actors of private sector, however they do not necessarily focus on nutrition (inter-business alliances, employers, Chambers of Commerce, etc.): 4 African countries mentioned to be in contact with the respective **employers** to establish partnerships; **Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce** are involved with the governments in 8 countries (Asia and Africa)
- Very few countries (Indonesia, Guatemala and Tanzania) have partnerships or networks established with nutrition objectives, such as a **Business Network for Nutrition**. 11 countries expressed the willingness to **set up similar networks and the SUN Global Business network has agreed to support them in this task**.
- 19 countries confirmed to have **specific networks** in place bringing together similar businesses to support better nutrition (for example: 13 Asian and African SUN countries confirmed to have a functioning **National Fortification Alliance**; company-community partnerships for health, etc.).

3. *What challenges do you envisage and/or face when engaging and working with the private sector? What steps may be taken to overcome them? Can you give any examples from your country perspective?*

- One of the main challenges for countries in **engaging the Private sector** is the **'how-to'**. 18 countries specified the difficulties in defining the value addition of Private sector involvement for nutrition and the benefits of collaboration between multinationals and small companies. Engaging the non-food sector (5); encouraging Private sector participation in agriculture (2); and increasing the representation of women in Private sector (1) are some of the other hurdles that countries face in creating partnerships.
- 18 countries reported that they encounter problems in **organizing the Private sector on a common platform**. This can be attributed to the size and number of small companies and the geographic distribution of these companies that hinders the creation of a network to bring them together.
- The lack of **technical or financial capacities** all along the supply chain still remains as an obstacle in 7 countries.
- As mentioned earlier, nearly 14 countries are experiencing difficulties in regulating and controlling the **quality of imported products**.
- Countries expressed the need for all concerned stakeholders to understand what constitutes a **Conflict of Interest (Col)**; and the need to be adequately equipped to prevent and manage Col (as reported by 5 countries).
- 4 countries are currently developing a **Col policy and/or guidelines** to aid increased and improved engagement of the Private sector.

- 9 countries highlighted their challenges in **monitoring the compliance to regulations** such as the BMS code.
- **Exemption of taxes** for imported food products (especially fortified products) and facilitation of free trade were highlighted as key challenges in West Africa (8 countries).
- The Private sector is encouraged to collaborate with the State through **corporate social responsibility** (as reported by 5 countries).
- **Several other challenges that countries encounter include the following:** securing investment funds; accessing credit for small enterprises; creating a conducive environment with a legal framework; establishing a code of conduct for investors; establishing a common action plan for businesses; reinforcing research and innovation through appropriate technologies; mapping the actors involved; sensitizing the population; preventing involvement of junk food producers in school feeding programmes; promoting mandatory maternity leave for 6 months; and documenting the process to share the experiences.

III) Follow-up of the call by the SUN Global Business Network

Considering the various challenges identified by SUN countries, the SUN Global Business network will create specific guidelines on the creation of national fortification alliances and on the use of mobile technology for scaling up nutrition.

The SUN Global Business network will also gather cases studies on Universal Salt Iodization, flour, wheat and maize fortification and on partnerships in infant nutrition that ensure businesses comply with the international code on breastmilk substitutes.

The SUN Global Business network will also translate the most urgent documents into French and Spanish and disseminate them through its website.

Finally, the SUN Global Business network will answer to the bilateral requests made by countries, including 11 on support to develop a network and 18 on support to strengthen business engagement for nutrition.