23rd Series of Country Network Teleconferences

Building and Sustaining Political Commitment for Nutrition Action

The Malawi experience

13th May 2016
SECURING POLITICAL COMMITMENT

- Malawi placed nutrition on the government development agenda as a key priority area for national development.

- The then President, Late Dr. Bingu WaMuthalika made himself Minister responsible for Nutrition

- A Permanent Secretary for Nutrition was appointed to ensure that Nutrition is given attention

- A directive was made to place nutrition under the Office of the President due to the multifaceted nature of nutrition
The Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA) was established in September 2004 in the Office of the President and Cabinet

- To provide visionary guidance and strategic direction for the implementation of the national response to nutrition disorders, HIV and AIDS in the country.

- All levels of political influence have been engaged in all the processes
SUSTAINING POLITICAL COMMITMENT

- The DNHA has remained a stand-alone department;
  - With clear mandate well defined within the national framework.
  - In July 2012 the DNHA was placed within the Ministry of Health as a reporting ministry
  - The roles and functions of the department have been maintained
  - Its coordination role remains broad and beyond the health sector
The DNHA ably provides oversight functions to all the line Ministries including MoH.

- **NOTE**: MoH has a nutrition unit under Department of clinical services whose core function is mainly Management and treatment of Malnutrition.

There is continuous engagement between the DNHA and Parliamentarians through
- monitoring of nutrition programs by MPs
- continuous updates on the nutrition response
- Policy dialogue, among others.

CSONA is continuously engaged
Establish and convene coordinating structures at national level

- National Nutrition Committee (NNC)
- Parliamentary Committee on Nutrition HIV and AIDS
- Cabinet Committee
- Principal Secretaries Committee
- The Government – Development Partners Committee
Establish and convene coordinating structures at District level

- District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC)
- Area Nutrition Coordination Committee
- Village Nutrition Coordination Committee
- Community Leaders for action on nutrition groups
KEY STEPS TO COMMITMENT

Institutionalisation of:

- The coordinating office (DNHA)
- The high level multi-sector platforms (Cabinet Committee, Parliamentary committee, Principal secretary committee, Government development partner committee, the National nutrition Committee among others)

- The structures ensure continued visibility and support for nutrition.

- The government demonstrates commitment by ensuring that the operations of the DNHA are in place and all the coordination platforms are not disrupted.
Continued advocacy

- High-level advocacy meetings using evidence-based information provide understanding on the importance of coordination in nutrition.
  - Such as Cost of Hunger report, SUN movement information
  - Revision of the profiles
  - Development of national advocacy strategy and District specific advocacy plans

- Gracia Marshall’s visit to Malawi increased momentum for ensuring that nutrition is not medicalised; and that coordination should be key.
Policy document

- The development of the Multi-sectoral National Nutrition Policy provided conducive environment for better understanding of nutrition as a crosscutting issue.
- Harmonised M&E framework to track progress on implementation.
- Nutrition Resource Tracking system.
- It clearly outlined the different roles and responsibility of each sector.
KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR SUSTAINING COMMITMENT

- DNHA which worked very closely with CSONA through different platforms.
- Conducted meetings with economic planning department to ensure the placing of nutrition as priority among priorities in the Development agenda, which is under review.

- The World Bank provided financial support
  - for strengthening coordination
  - For conducting an institutional assessment to guide coordination and national nutrition response in the governance structure (plans underway).
KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR SUSTAINING COMMITMENT

- Irish aid has also been instrumental in supporting capacity building
- The United Nations Family has been involved at all levels of implementation
SOME ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH DNHA

- Development of a Multi-sectoral National Nutrition Policy and Strategic plan to guide the implementation of the National Nutrition Response.

- Nutrition has been integrated in sectors such as Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education, Gender, Natural Resources Climate change and Energy, Information and Civic Education and Local Government.

- Establishment of nutrition units within sectors, headed by a senior officer

- Rolled out the sugar fortification program
Developed strategies to operationalize the policy
- Nutrition Education and Communication Strategy
- Micronutrient
- IYCF
- CMAM
- Drafted Nutrition act among other

Nutrition had a vote in Parliament for the national budget

Reduction in some of the nutrition indicators for the first time after so many years. For instance, stunting reduced from 53% in 2004 to 42% in 2014 (MICS)
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen public sector involvement
- Strengthen District coordinating structures
- Strengthen CISONA Districts in advocacy