

## Effectively Engaging Multiple Stakeholders



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# Introduction

“ No single organization, no single government can act alone to achieve the goal of ending hunger and global malnutrition. Working together, we have the ability to establish powerful partnerships that change the global landscape, from one of hunger to one of hope, country-by-country, community-by-community, family-by-family and child-by-child; until no one goes hungry. ”

**Ertharin Cousin, WFP Executive Director and SUN Lead Group**

This series of briefings – entitled *Scaling Up Nutrition in Practice* - presents the experiences of SUN country governments, and other national stakeholders, as they scale up their efforts to ensure all people enjoy good nutrition. Each briefing in the series focuses on a theme selected by SUN country government focal points as a focus for sharing their experience during the meetings of the focal points and country teams that take place every two months by teleconference.

The first briefing focuses on ways to **bring people together so that they work effectively through functioning multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs)**. This is the first of four strategic processes that underpin the SUN approach.<sup>1</sup>

Six stakeholders from SUN countries have contributed accounts of how MSPs are being established in their countries and how different stakeholders are working together to achieve results. Key lessons have been identified in each of the country articles. These, together with extensive information drawn from teleconference calls with SUN country government focal points and their teams, form the basis of the observations in the final article.

## Engagement in National Multi-Stakeholder Platforms

All SUN countries have established or are in the process of setting up Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) at the national level.

- 17:** are within the office of the Prime Minister, the President, the Vice-President or the First Lady;
- 12:** are within particular ministries (normally the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Agriculture);
- 4:** are independent and have a multi-stakeholder mandate or function;
- 3:** are under the National Planning Commission or the Ministry for Development.
- 10:** are in the planning phase.

MSPs in all countries seek to ensure multi-sectoral government engagement by having representation from a range of ministries. Stakeholder groups outside the government are also represented.

- 25:** include civil society;
- 26:** include UN agencies;
- 21:** include donors;
- Few** include the private sector;
- Some** have engaged academic and training institutions;
- Increasingly,** parliamentarians are engaging;
- And** a growing number of SUN countries are establishing MSPs at district and community level.

## Why is multi-stakeholder engagement important for nutrition?

When different groups combine their skills and resources, they can achieve much more than if they work alone. Uniting the efforts of multiple sectors and stakeholders is fundamental to the SUN Movement and one of seven principles to which all those within the SUN Movement commit.<sup>2</sup>

### Be inclusive: through open multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring proven solutions and interventions to scale.

Second principle of engagement,  
SUN Strategy 2012-2015.

The importance of involving multiple **sectors** to address malnutrition is well recognised. The causes of malnutrition are complex and inter-connected. Sustainable solutions therefore rely on different sectors of government – together with the stakeholders that support them - working together in a coherent and coordinated fashion. The health, agricultural and social protection sectors are important service delivery providers, planning and finance provide the systems and investment for nutrition, local government is critical for scaling up nutrition in districts and communities, while the offices of prime ministers and presidents give political leadership and commitment to improving nutrition. There are other sectors that impact on nutrition in different ways depending upon the context of the country.

Multi-sectoral collaboration requires the engagement of multiple **stakeholders** from across government and outside government. A range of government ministries representing different sectors need to work in a coherent way supported by external organisations that are strengthening government-led endeavours to improve nutrition. These include United Nations (UN) agencies that provide technical support to governments, donors who are investing in national development, civil society organisations who work closely with communities ensuring that marginalized groups are reached, businesses with their potential resources for improving nutrition, academic and science institutions that are involved in training and research related to nutrition. Members of Parliament who can use their positions of authority to maintain and spread commitment to nutrition also have a crucial role to play.

## What are multi-stakeholder platforms?

In SUN countries, stakeholders work together to improve nutrition in multi-stakeholder groups or platforms (MSPs). SUN countries take their own unique approach to setting up MSPs. There is no prescribed method. This issue of *Scaling Up Nutrition: In Practice* describes the approaches in five countries and the Indian State of Maharashtra. **Chad**, one of the newest countries in the SUN Movement is swiftly creating an effective national MSP and harnessing the power of parliamentarians to build commitment and mobilise resources for nutrition. In **Guatemala**, MSPs are being de-centralized and set up at department, municipal and community level helping to create greater awareness of nutrition throughout the country. In some countries, stakeholder groups convene their own separate platforms as well as participating in MSPs. SUN civil society alliances, for example, are now established in 29 countries. **Zambia** has a strong civil society alliance that works with other stakeholder groups in a variety of ways to advocate for improvements in nutrition. **Benin** has institutionalized its national MSP with a Presidential Decree while promoting multi-stakeholder coordination for nutrition programming at community level.

Creating a space for all actors to play their role in supporting government efforts to address undernutrition, may create opportunities for some involved to prioritise their own interest over the collective goal, leading to potential, real or perceived conflicts of interest. Government ministries, development agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector all have different perspectives, which should be respected. Putting in place policies and frameworks for cooperation and ensuring they are understood and enforced, and ensuring that all activities take place in an open and transparent way are key to preventing and managing conflicts of interest. In the **Indian State of Maharashtra**, a partner in the SUN Movement, efforts are being made to involve the private sector in a constructive and concerted effort to improve nutrition. **Malawi** has successfully brought different groups together by creating a coordinating framework linking nutrition with HIV and AIDs.

While governments establish their own distinctive mechanisms for multi-stakeholder engagement in nutrition, they have several common features and face a number of similar challenges. Dr. David Nabarro, Coordinator of the SUN Movement outlines some of these in the final article of this brief.

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# Country Articles



Multi-sectoral planning in Neno District, Malawi





# CHAD

## Harnessing the Power of Parliamentarians



*Chad has recently joined the SUN Movement and is in the early stages of setting up multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition.*

*Mahamat Bechir Mahamat, Head of the National Centre for Nutrition and Food Technology outlines progress so far...*

**"In Chad we consider that malnutrition is an epidemic disease and we are mobilising ourselves to fight it"**

**Mahamat Ahmed Djidda, Minister of Health**

### CHILDREN UNDER 5

Stunting:	<b>38.7%</b>
Wasting:	<b>15.7%</b>
Overweight:	<b>2.8%</b>
Low birth weight:	<b>20.0%</b>
Exclusive breastfeeding:	<b>3.4%</b>

Source: MICS 2010

As one of the newest countries in the SUN Movement, from May 2013, Chad has swiftly taken action to establish a new approach to scaling up nutrition. Through Government Decree 266 passed in July 2013, the Ministry of Public Health appointed a new team to take charge of the National Centre for Nutrition and Food Technology (CNNTA), which is the government's operational body for nutrition.

The CNNTA was restructured and the new team were charged with implementing the new approach and preparing an action plan. Five divisions were created:

- nutrition surveillance
- infant and young child nutrition
- micronutrients and prevention of malnutrition
- food hygiene
- monitoring & evaluation.

The new head of CNNTA, who has experience in cross-sectoral work, was appointed as the SUN Focal Point.

Currently, Chad is dealing with a humanitarian crisis and major influx of refugees due to regional food insecurity, price hikes and climate changes. As a result there are a large number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – around 18 – providing humanitarian nutrition support.

These NGOs published a report on the nutrition situation in Chad in June 2013 requesting donor support without the permission of the government. This angered the government at a high level. In September 2013, the Ministry of Public Health issued a circular for the attention of partners active in the field of nutrition. The circular urged partners to inform the CNNTA about their nutrition plans and programmes and to periodically share information on their nutrition activities. This effectively resolved the conflict.



## A new multi-stakeholder platform

A preliminary multi-stakeholder platform for nutrition had been set up in May 2013 by the previous team at CNNTA with the support of REACH<sup>3</sup>. The purpose was to assess the nutrition situation and develop a nutrition policy. The process was accelerated with the new team at CNNTA who hired a consultant to develop the **National Nutrition and Food Policy** and the Inter-sectoral Nutrition and Food Action Plan. The policy was validated during a workshop in November 2013 and is awaiting adoption by the government. The budget for the action plan is not yet complete.

A multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform was established called the Permanent Technical Committee on Nutrition and Food (PTCNF). To formalise the PTCNF, a terms of reference and a government decree has been drafted and submitted for signature by the Prime Minister.

## Functions of the multi-stakeholder platform

The PTCNF receives technical support from United Nations agencies (REACH, UNICEF, FAO, WHO and WFP) and donor representatives. The specific functions are to:

- contribute to the identification of priority areas, objectives and multi-sectoral strategies to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in Chad
- contribute to a comprehensive analysis of the food and nutrition situation by providing updated information
- contribute to the development of multi-sectoral strategies and action plans, and participate in their validation
- ensure that sectoral action plans are aligned and reflect strategic objectives and priority actions
- coordinate and stimulate the implementation of various action plans (through the Inter-sectoral Nutrition and Food Action Plan)
- support the development and updating of a database on nutrition and food
- inform the government through the ministries of health and agriculture about implementation of nutrition and food strategies, plans and programmes
- coordinate and ensure complementarity between ongoing initiatives related to nutrition, food and agriculture e.g. REACH, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, Sahel Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) and Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Collaboration between sectors has been fostered by joint missions undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Production and Statistics) and the Ministry of Public Health (CNNTA) to the annual SUN Global Gatherings and two regional workshops run by AGIR.

## Involvement of civil society

International NGOs and UN agencies are very active in the PTCNF. This is partly due to the presence of the Nutrition Cluster<sup>4</sup> and NGO involvement in the management of the on-going emergency. In contrast, national civil society organisations and associations are less visible. These national organizations include: the Consumers' Association and the Association of Pastoralists. The pastoralists are a nomadic population with very limited access to basic services and are therefore considered vulnerable.

## The power of parliamentarians

Four parliamentarians were invited to the workshop in November to validate the National Nutrition and Food Policy for Chad. Two of these were members of the Health Committee, a third was a member of the Rural Development Committee and a fourth was a member of the Finance Committee. These parliamentarians played an important role during the workshop, including leading the work in plenary.



President of Chad participating in a child health campaign

Subsequently, three parliamentarians – including two who were at the validation workshop – were invited to participate in a Regional Training Workshop on Nutrition for Parliamentarians held in November 2013 in Brazzaville, Congo and organised by UNICEF. The purpose was to enable parliamentarians to acquire a better understanding of malnutrition and its effects on human and economic development of countries. Members of Parliament from West and Central Africa (Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic and Chad) took part.



At the end of the three day workshop, the parliamentarians decided to create a Regional Network of Parliamentarians on Nutrition and implement national networks with the view to pooling their efforts to eradicate malnutrition in the region. An interim executive was set up led by a parliamentarian from Niger with a parliamentarian from Chad serving as rapporteur.

The group of three Chadian parliamentarians have defined their own action plan which is as follows:

- organize a day of nutrition information to Parliament
- lobby the Ministry of Public Health Committee for the creation of a specific budget line for nutrition
- undertake advocacy for nutrition in the regions
- establish regional networks to raise awareness about nutrition.

### Members of the Permanent Technical Committee on Nutrition and Food

#### At the level of Secretary Generals or their representatives;

- President: Ministry of Public Health
- Vice-President: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
- Rapporteur: Ministry of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation
- Senior Vice Rapporteur: Ministry of Pastoral Development and Animal Production
- Second Vice Rapporteur: Representatives from civil society organizations

#### Representatives from the following ministries

- Social Action, National Solidarity and Family
- Environment and Water Resources
- Higher Education and Scientific Research
- Secondary and Professional Education
- Urban and Rural Water Supply
- Trade and Industry
- Communication, Government spokesperson

#### Representatives from:

- CNNTA
- University of N'Djamena
- Centre for Control of Food Quality
- Chadian Institute of Agronomic Research
- National Food Security Agency
- National Office of Rural Development
- Women's organisations
- National NGOs working in the field of nutrition
- Producer organizations
- Consumer organizations
- International NGOs working in the field of nutrition

## Rapid progress

Despite the relative 'youth' of the national multi-stakeholder platform in Chad, much has already been achieved.

Policies and plans are in place which will be endorsed by the government. The PTCNF has been given legal status and has successfully brought development partners together to work with government on nutrition issues.

The power of parliamentarians has been harnessed to advocate for nutrition. Big challenges remain, especially in terms of involvement of the private sector, but Chad has made a flying start in bringing diverse groups together in concerted action to improve nutrition.

## Key Lessons

- Multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition is empowered to act when it are formalized and given legal status.
- Parliamentarians can play an active role in lobbying to improve nutrition and contributing to the actions of the multi-stakeholder platform.
- Conflict with non-governmental partners can be effectively resolved and diverse groups brought together in concerted action when the government gives authority to the multi-stakeholder platform.
- Preparing and validating nutrition policies, strategies and action plans are key achievements of multi-stakeholder platforms.







# GUATEMALA

## Extending Out to Communities



*Guatemala has established an ambitious system of de-centralised Food Security and Nutrition Commissions that bring together different groups and sectors.*

*Iván Mendoza, ex-Advisor at the Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN), Government of Guatemala describes the system...*

**“An intergenerational change can only take place with the collective commitment to one common goal: the eradication of malnutrition. Interagency coordination is a prerequisite for this change”**

**Luis Enrique Monterroso, Secretary of SESAN**

### CHILDREN UNDER 5

Stunting:	49.8%
Wasting:	1.4%
Overweight:	4.9%
Low birth weight:	11.4%
Exclusive breastfeeding:	49.6%

Source: ENSMI 2008-2009

**When the President of Guatemala, Otto Pérez Molina, learned that less than 1% of Guatemala’s population believed their country had a problem with malnutrition, he instructed his entire cabinet to live in rural areas for a week with a family facing chronic food shortages and malnutrition. The result was the launch of the whole-of-government ‘Zero Hunger Pact’ in 2012 together with a mobilization campaign known as ‘The 1,000 Days Window’.**

The ‘Zero Hunger Pact’ enshrines a bold, multi-sectoral plan to reduce stunting by 10% in children by 2015. The plan includes specific nutrition interventions such as the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, increase in access to fortified food, and to health and nutrition services as well as programmes that address the underlying causes of malnutrition such as the creation of income generation opportunities, improved water and sanitation facilities and better education for women.

The ‘Zero Hunger Pact’ is the official government instrument for implementing Guatemala’s Food Security and Nutrition Policy. Established in 2005, the policy sets out the thematic areas, principles, strategies and programmes to tackle food and nutrition insecurity in

a holistic and coordinated manner. A year later, a law was passed to institutionalize a National System for Food Security and Nutrition. Article 34 of the law lays down the basis for de-centralization of the system at departmental, municipal and community levels. It states that urban and rural Development Councils will set up Food Security and Nutrition Commissions to implement the strategic policy through related programmes, projects and activities.

The national system is implemented by the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONASAN) with technical support from the Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN). CONASAN meets every three months and is chaired by the Vice-President of



Guatemala. It has broad inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral participation from nine ministries, five other government bodies, representatives from the private sector and civil society.

## De-centralizing multi-stakeholder platforms

The introduction of the 'Zero Hunger Pact' included provision for decentralized Food Security and Nutrition Commissions at the departmental, municipal, and community levels. As new dynamic multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition. They have become the platforms for coordination and roll out of the 'Zero Hunger Pact'.

In 2006, an extensive advocacy campaign was launched. At departmental level, SESAN delegates presented an analysis of the nutrition and food security situation and highlighted the need for joint efforts to address the problems at Departmental Development Council meetings.

By the end of 2008, each of the 22 departments in Guatemala had legally formed a **Departmental Food Security and Nutrition Commission (CODESAN)**. Departmental governors currently exercise leadership in CODESAN meetings that are attended by directors of sectoral institutions and civil society organization representatives.

CODESAN is responsible for leading the planning, implementation and monitoring of actions taking place at departmental level and ensuring that progress on meeting the goals related to the 'Zero Hunger Pact' are

reported by implementing institutions. In addition, it acts as a platform for harmonising information systems and training processes.

Similar advocacy efforts were undertaken at the **municipal** level. Municipal SESAN monitors, with the support of the departmental delegate, raised awareness and advocated for nutrition with mayors, Municipal Development Councils and organizations working in the municipality.

In 2011, five years after endorsement of the Food Security and Nutrition Policy, 316 out of 334 municipalities have formed official Municipal Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (COMUSAN). Around 80-90% of these commissions are fully operational in that they meet regularly and discuss food security and nutrition issues from the different perspectives of members of the commission. Effective multi-sectoral coordination, under municipal leadership, remains a challenge, however, and requires strengthening. In addition, it is a priority to ensure that the Municipal Development Councils prioritize, incorporate and allocate funding for food security and nutrition in Municipal Development Plans. It can be challenging to ensure that all government institutions represented in COMUSAN provide appropriate services of good quality and in a timely manner.

At **community** level, the formation of Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (COCOSAN) came later, and was initially focused in those communities where acute malnutrition affected the population most intensely. There are currently 543 COCOSAN organized and operating. A challenge for the country is to continue to form COCOSAN in more communities.

### Support from United Nations agencies

**The World Food Programme (WFP)**, as part of a Joint United Nations (UN) Programme being implemented in the Department of Totonicapán, has been strengthening Food Security and Nutrition Municipal Commissions. This has included support for the development of strategic and operational plans, the improvement of the competences of members of the COMUSAN for programme implementation; as well as the creation of spaces for analysis and discussion on the local nutrition situation in the eight municipalities of the department.

**The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, within the same joint UN framework of cooperation, and with the aim of improving dietary practices and child care, has incorporated a communication's strategy for development, linked to the COMUSAN.

The process began with the organization of a Diploma in Communication for Development for municipal health and education delegates, and for representatives of SESAN, which combined the development of theoretical content with the implementation of interventions at the community level.

As a result of the training process, a 'Sub-Committee on Communications', linked to the COMUSAN, was established. This committee, based on local analyses, develops and implements a participatory communication plan that promotes participation and empowerment by local stakeholders.

The process began in the Department of Totonicapán with six municipalities and to date has been extended to 55 municipalities in the country.

# Functions of multi-stakeholder platforms

The functions of the Food Security and Nutrition Commissions are wide-ranging from sensitization about malnutrition and food insecurity to institutional strengthening, coordination to support implementation, monitoring and surveillance systems. The specific functions are to:

- coordinate development of food security and nutrition operational plans to meet the needs of the vulnerable population with the participation of governmental and other stakeholder groups present at field level
- prioritize support for diagnostic studies and assessments of food security and nutrition vulnerability at field level
- develop coordinated operational planning
- manage, design and develop food security and nutrition-related programmes and projects with government budgets.
- establish food security and nutrition surveillance and early warning methods (this includes establishing sentinel sites for timely identification of at-risk situations or food crisis, forecasting and responding to food security and nutrition emergencies as set out in the strategy and protocols for addressing seasonal hunger and providing humanitarian aid)
- coordinate food assistance to families affected by natural disasters and at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.

At the municipal level, technical offices have been opened with designated human and financial resources to enable the COMUSAN to effectively fulfill its roles. At the community level, roles are achieved through the COCOSANs and through attending meetings of the COMUSAN, which allows involvement in decision making and ensures that needs are met as quickly as possible.

## De-centralized multi-stakeholder platforms

**National System for Food Security and Nutrition, implemented by the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONASAN)**

**Technical support from the Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN)**

**22:** Departmental Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (CODESAN)

**316:** Municipal Level Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (COMUSAN)

**543:** Community level Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (COCOSAN)

Sensitizing communities about nutrition in Guatemala



## Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder action in Escuintla

President Otto Perez Molina and the Cabinet participated in the eighteenth session of the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONASAN) which was held in the Department of Escuintla on 23rd November 2013. Progress of the 'Zero Hunger Pact' in Escuintla was set out. In eight of the 13 municipalities, ZERO deaths from malnutrition were reported. Activation of 106 Food Security and Nutrition Commissions (COCOSAN) has been achieved. Eleven of the 13 municipalities are deemed priority in terms of the level of acute malnutrition. Fundazúcar' (a programme to support human development set up as part of the corporate social

responsibility by the Association of Sugar Producers in Guatemala) has been a key ally for the 'Zero Hunger Pact' in these municipalities of Escuintla through its 'Best Families' initiative where community counseling and implementation of productive projects is provided.. Escuintla had a stunting level of 25% recorded in 2009 which was the second highest of all departments in Guatemala. The integrated information management system supported by government, UN and civil society agencies and the successful follow up of cases of acute malnutrition done by different institutions, meant that of 1,637 cases of acute malnutrition, 686 cases (42%) were cured.

### Key Stakeholders in Municipal Food Security and Nutrition Commissions

#### Municipality

- Mayor or his representative
- Representative from Municipal Planning
- Representatives of the Development Council

#### Government Institutions

- Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food
- Ministry of Development
- Ministry of Communication
- Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
- Other Ministries represented in the Department
- Secretariat for Social Work of the First Lady
- Secretariat General for Planning
- Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN)

#### Civil Society Organisations

- Non-governmental organisations
- Women's and young Peoples groups
- Church representatives
- Organisations of indigenous people
- Community health volunteers (midwives)

### Signs of success

Working together through multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms in the form of Food Security and Nutrition Commissions appears to be contributing positively to the aims of the 'Zero Hunger Pact'. An example is the Department of Escuintla.

### Key Lessons

- The experience of setting up de-centralized MSPs for nutrition at departmental, municipal and community levels has positioned the issue of food and nutrition security at each point of the decision making process.
- When there are clear objectives and thematic actions agreed between government institutions and other stakeholders, there is greater commitment to accompany and support planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensuring that MSPs are enshrined within the Guatemalan legal framework has meant that they are institutionalised and establish processes which have greater consistency and sustainability.
- When local government and communities are actively involved in MSPs, it leads to greater participation in planning. This involvement means that actions are more easily monitored and sustained.









# ZAMBIA

## Unlocking the Potential of Civil Society Engagement



*Civil society in Zambia is well-organised and actively involved in multi-stakeholder activities.*

*William Chilufya, Country Coordinator, SUN Civil Society Network and Marjolein Mwanamwenge, Nutrition coordinator, Concern Worldwide provide insight about what has happened and the challenges faced...*

“Civil society has a vital role in tackling under-nutrition. Local and international organizations can mobilize additional resources, develop and share innovative models and effective approaches to be scaled up by others, and influence policy makers, parliamentarians or the media in ways that government nutrition champions do not always have the freedom to do”

**Jay Goulden**, Assistant Country Director, CARE Zambia

### CHILDREN UNDER 5

Stunting:	45.4%
Wasting:	5.2%
Overweight:	7.9%
Low birth weight:	4.4%
Exclusive breastfeeding:	50.9%

Source: DHS 2007

Chronic malnutrition still remains a fundamental threat to the sustainable economic development of Zambia. The government recognizes the importance of investing in nutrition as an integral part of national economic development and thus was among the first countries to participate in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in early 2011. This has given Zambia a solid foundation to advance the nutrition agenda throughout the country.

The Government of Zambia has encouraged a multi-sectoral response to the problem of malnutrition by establishing a governance framework coordinated by the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC). As a result a National Food and Nutrition Multi-Stakeholder Committee or platform (MSP) has been in existence since 2011. This platform comprises senior

officials from implementing agencies from various institutions including the key line ministries (health; agriculture & livestock; education, technology & science vocational training, early education; community development, mother & child health; and local government & housing), bilateral agencies, United Nations system agencies and civil society organisations.



The private sector, academia and research institutions and parliamentarians, however, have not actively been involved in the MSP.

The MSP has defined terms of reference and meets bi-annually. The permanent secretaries from the five key line ministries chair the meetings on a rotational basis whilst the NFNC is the secretariat.

The main tasks of the MSP are to:

- analyze resource utilization by the respective sectors
- build consensus on priority actions for annual work plans from various stakeholders
- review and recommend actions for capacity building for the implementing agencies
- provide guidance to the national steering committee and provide feedback to the provincial MSPs.

## Reaching the districts

At provincial and district levels, MSPs, called Nutrition Coordinating Committees, have been established. These support implementation of the First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme, which was launched by the Vice President of Zambia in April 2013. Provincial and district-level MSPs have not yet been formally endorsed by the government though their terms of references have been clearly defined.

## Collaborative efforts with civil society

Civil society is playing an important role in bringing different stakeholders to work together to improve nutrition in Zambia. The SUN civil society alliance for Zambia (CSO-SUN-Zambia) has been very active over the last six months organizing joint events to heighten awareness about nutrition.

In May 2013, CSO-SUN-Zambia held a nutrition champions meeting with Members of Parliament to increase political commitment to address malnutrition. In June 2013, a 'Nutrition for Development Concert' was organized by CSO-SUN-Zambia involving as many as 1,000 people from the community. In August 2013, together with the government (NFNC), CSO-SUN-Zambia took part in a radio panel to highlight the importance of breastfeeding and ensuring that the environment is right to be able to support breastfeeding.

In December 2013, the CSO-SUN-Zambia held an awards event for nutrition champions to recognize the Vice President, the First Lady, five parliamentarians, and the media for their contribution to nutrition progress in Zambia. The Minister of Health was invited to participate as the event's guest of honour.

Members of the business community including banks and food manufacturers (with the hope to further engage them on nutrition issues) were invited to attend the event as well as civil society organisations, media houses and donors. Following the event, the Vice President has agreed to meet with CSO-SUN-Zambia to discuss ways in which he can champion nutrition as a central goal for the post-2015 development agenda.

### Building stronger district level collaboration

**The RAIN (Re-aligning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition) project is a collaborative effort between civil society (Concern Worldwide) and academia (IFPRI) together with the Mumbwa Child Development Agency (a local community-based organisation), and Zambian government (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Ministry of Health). The project aims to reduce the prevalence of stunting in children through integrated agriculture, health and nutrition interventions during the critical period from pregnancy up to two years of age. As part of the project, Concern Worldwide facilitated the formation of the District Nutrition Coordinating Committee in Mumbwa District, Central Province. The purpose was to bridge the inter-sectoral gap and engage different partners at district level to support implementation across sectors. Early lessons demonstrate that it is crucial for the success of the MSP to rely on formalized sector commitments. Furthermore, the different roles of partners in creating sector synergies require the involvement of the district leadership to provide direction.**

*Source: Concern Worldwide (2013) District Nutrition Coordination Committee - establishment challenges and recommendations paper*



Children carrying water in Chongwe district, Zambia

## Achievements and challenges

The MSP has been instrumental in bringing together partners across sectors to support Zambia's First 1000 Most Critical Days Programme. It has provided a common platform for harmonization, resource mobilization and multi-sector synergies for effective nutrition response. There is still a long way to go, however, in ensuring effective stakeholder coordination in the sector.

The main challenges are:

- weak private sector engagement in driving the nutrition agenda forward
- poor linkages between platforms in coordination and leveraging resources for nutrition response
- unclear mechanisms on how the various platforms can feed into the MSP to influence government thinking, renewed commitments and resource mobilization for nutrition response
- the limited role of parliamentarians in enhancing nutrition actions with a view to promoting legislation conducive to improved nutrition
- although traditional leaders play a critical role as gate keepers to the uptake and support of nutrition interventions by the community, no deliberate strategies exist to ensure active participation in community mobilisation.

An MSP that is participatory, inclusive, transparent, mutually responsible and accountable, and builds ownership from all stakeholders both state and non-state actors will be core to addressing key challenges at the country-level in Zambia like ensuring nutrition becomes a priority for everyone and effective rolling out of the 1000 Most Critical Days Programme to district level reaching every household.

## Key Lessons

- Setting up de-centralized MSPs for nutrition in the form at departmental, municipal and community levels, positions the issue of food and nutrition security at all levels of decision-making (political, technical and operational).
- When there are clear objectives and thematic actions agreed between government institutions and other stakeholders, there is greater commitment to accompany and support planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- When MSPs are enshrined within a legal frameworkx they are institutionalized and can establish processes which have greater consistency and sustainability.
- When local government and communities are actively involved in MSPs, it leads to greater participation in planning. This involvement means that actions are more easily monitored and and sustained.







# BENIN

## Let's Act Together Now!



*Benin has institutionalized MSPs for nutrition with a Presidential Decree.*

*Jean Cokou Tossa, President of the National Council of Food and Nutrition and Government Focal Point for SUN describes how multi-stakeholder action works at national and community level...*

**"We call upon all States, organizations regional and international civil society, including NGOs, for a strong mobilization against under-nutrition in Benin and Africa..."**

**Declaration of Cotonou**

### CHILDREN UNDER 5

Stunting:	<b>37.0%</b>
Wasting:	<b>4.7%</b>
Overweight:	<b>9.0%</b>
Low birth weight:	<b>12.5%</b>
Exclusive breastfeeding:	<b>43.1%</b>

Source: DHS 2006: AGVSAN 2008

The power of bringing together multiple actors to tackle malnutrition in Benin was highlighted in February 2013, during an event to draw attention to the importance of nutrition for health and development. The event was jointly organised by the Government of Benin (National Council of Food and Nutrition), civil society (CARE International) and the United Nations (UNICEF Benin). Participants included health and agriculture ministries, the Office of the President, UN agencies, representatives from civil society, foundations, donors and the media. Helene Gayle, President and Chief Executive Officer of CARE USA and SUN Lead Group Member, presented the Declaration of Cotonou calling on all stakeholders to take action and ensure accountability for progress on nutrition with the catch phrase 'Agissons Tous Ensemble Maintenant!' 'Let's Act Together Now!' The event in February 2013 is testament to government efforts in Benin to build a truly multi-stakeholder approach to improving nutrition.

### Institutionalising a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform for nutrition

The government of Benin established by Decree 245 in June 2009, the **National Council of Food and Nutrition (CAN)**. It is a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform of 17 members under the authority of the President and includes representatives from:

the ministries of agriculture, health, social protection, development, finance, de-centralization, trade, the National Association of Communes in Benin, the Association of Food Manufacturers, training and research institutions for food and nutrition, civil society

(consumer associations and non-governmental organisations specializing in nutrition), the National Chamber of Agriculture and professional agricultural organisations.

CAN is an inclusive platform, open to any new stakeholder who is concerned with, or whose activities are relevant to food and nutrition. CAN provides synergy of actions aimed at improving the nutritional status of vulnerable groups (children under five years, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women) and is responsible for:

- developing the National Policy on Food and Nutrition
- ensuring implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan for Food and Nutrition
- coordinating actions relating to food and nutrition.

The responsibilities, organization and functions of CAN were set out in a reference document linked to Decree 245 in which the duties of ministerial departments in agriculture, health and social protection are outlined. Other ministerial departments of trade and industry, finance, development and local government provide support through developing regulation, and mobilizing resources for nutrition.

The appointment of a Permanent Secretary and recruitment of staff in March 2013 has strengthened CAN. Plenary meetings are held twice a year, in addition to external meetings of technical working groups.

### Mobilising grandmothers through multi-stakeholder efforts

The Community Nutrition Education Project is an innovative project and part of the Strategic Development Plan for Food and Nutrition established by the Government of Benin in 2007.

In ten communes where chronic malnutrition rates are particularly high, grandmothers have been marshaled to keep a watchful eye on the health of young children and to educate the whole village about the importance of proper nutrition. Launched in January 2012, the initiative is a multi-stakeholder endeavour. It falls under the broader strategy of the government with World Bank support and financed by the Japan Social Development Fund.

The project is implemented by local civil society groups under the aegis of Plan Bénin, an international non-governmental organisation. A total of 12,607 grandmothers have received training in the health and well-being of pregnant women and young children. Their mission is to convince the entire village of the need to adopt sound nutritional practices. The project outreach is not limited to grandmothers— 17,823 mothers received training on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. The project has restored the nutritional health of 5,485 children between 0 and 59 months plagued with moderate malnutrition and 222 additional children suffering from acute malnutrition.

*Source: In Benin, Grandmothers Lead the Fight against Malnutrition World Bank. October 2013*

## Complementary platforms

In addition to CAN, there are active inter-ministerial sub-committees. One of these is the Benin Food Fortification Commission, which works with the private sector on salt iodization, oil and flour mills (for fortification of oil with vitamin A and wheat flour with iron, zinc, and B vitamins).

A separate platform for technical and financial partners has been established that brings together the World Bank, United Nations (UN) system agencies (UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA), bilateral and multilateral development partners and non-governmental organisations. UNICEF was selected to lead this platform in 2012 and 2013.

## Working in the communes

Multi-stakeholder platforms have been created in the ten communes (out of a total of 77 communes) where the **Community Nutrition Education Project** is being implemented. Coordinated by the Municipal Mayor, they are consultative entities giving guidance to the surveillance committees monitoring food and nutrition actions in 160 villages. These platforms have been formalized and bring together public and non-public service programmes in agriculture, health and social protection, operating in each commune.



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## Achievements and challenges

The main achievements of CAN have been:

- ➔ tracking the actions of the Community Nutrition Education Project
- ➔ inclusion of a specific budget line for nutrition in the national budget since 2012
- ➔ adoption of Decree 245 by the Council of Ministers to establish CAN
- ➔ participation by Benin in several international meetings giving more visibility to the issue of food security and nutrition.

Focus areas for the future include: mobilization of resources for implementation of the Food and Nutrition Results-Based Programme (PANAR) valued at US \$ 135 million over 4 years; advocacy with the public and decision-makers to ensure a critical mass of attention for addressing malnutrition through behaviour change; establishment of an information and surveillance system that is unique and multi-sectoral (at central and local level); the prevention and, where appropriate, the management of conflicts between actors in order to promote synergy in nutrition interventions.

## Key Lessons

- ➔ The personal commitment and team spirit of members of MSPs who come from diverse backgrounds, is critical for success.
- ➔ The creation of a platform of technical and financial partners to work in harmony and synergy with the MSP is beneficial.
- ➔ Though multi-stakeholder support, communities can be successfully mobilized to protect and improve nutrition.





# MAHARASHTRA

## Constructive Private Sector Engagement



*The Indian State of Maharashtra has recently started to consider how to involve private sector stakeholders in its efforts to improve nutrition.*

*Vandana Krishna, Director General, Health and Nutrition Mission provides insight about what has happened and the challenges faced...*

**“(The) Government of Maharashtra is politically committed to addressing child malnutrition as a top priority. We welcome partnerships with the private sector and the community for this noble cause”**

**Shri Prithviraj Chavan, Honorable Chief Minister of Maharashtra**

### CHILDREN UNDER 2

Stunting:	22.8%
Wasting:	15.5%
Low birth weight:	19.9%
Exclusive breastfeeding:	50.9%

*Source: Comprehensive Nutrition Survey in Maharashtra. 2012*

The Government of Maharashtra set up an independent mission in 2005 with the support of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). It is called *Rajmata Jijau* Mother Child Health and Nutrition Mission (RJMCHN) and is the first nutrition mission in India. The primary objective is to create a platform for strengthening inter-sectoral coordination between government departments and also to bring in expertise through multi-stakeholder involvement. The formation of the Mission was stimulated by a visit of the ‘**Citizen’s Alliance against Malnutrition**’ established at the national level in 2006-2007 and represented by a group of young and motivated members of the Indian Parliament from different political parties together with media personalities and development practitioners. This high profile team visited the least advanced districts in the country and provided suggestions to the Prime Minister for appropriate action, thus positioning an urgent but invisible issue on the political map.

### Establishing a multi-stakeholder platform

Under the guidance of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, RJMCHN took the lead in creating a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) by bringing in Members of Parliament, business leaders and leading media personalities to form the Maharashtra Alliance against Malnutrition (MAAM). A round table consultation with the participation of young parliamentarians, key business leaders, media personalities, UNICEF, government departments and representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was held in November 2013. This was the first time that such a diverse group had been assembled to share their views and commitment to working together in the fight against malnutrition.



The MAAM plans to meet every three months to monitor the nutrition situation, review policy and provide various leads for action. It has resolved to improve nutrition with a five point programme;

- reduce anaemia among adolescent girls by half in 5 years
- reduce the incidence of low birth weight by half by ensuring quality care during pregnancy
- improve timely initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth and exclusive breast feeding for six months
- improve the quality of complementary foods during 6 to 24 months of life
- provide effective therapeutic food for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition by implementing globally accepted protocol.

## Constructive engagement with multiple stakeholder groups

Partnerships between different stakeholder groups to improve nutrition are increasing in Maharashtra. The Sion Hospital (one of Mumbai Municipal Corporation's hospitals) is experimenting with locally manufactured therapeutic foods for treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition from Dharavi (Mumbai's slums). The hospital has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai and some non-resident Indians to finance the cost of the micro-nutrient premix: an essential ingredient of therapeutic food.

The RJMCHN is also involved in designing pilots, one of which will be to try out locally produced therapeutic food for about 2,000 to 4,000 children in Nandurbar, a tribal district of Maharashtra. Another example is the partnership between RJMCHN and academia through a number of colleges of social work. A nutrition survey was conducted of 180,000 children, about 100 each from 1,980 anganwadis (pre-school nurseries) in August to September 2013. Students from the colleges were mobilised to visit villages and take measurements of the weight, height and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of children in

### Acting together for behaviour change with mobile phone technology

A unique experiment involving a tripartite partnership between the government (Public Health Department), private sector (Riddhi Management Services Pvt. Ltd) and the United Nations (UNICEF) is set to change the way health services are delivered and monitored in Katol block, Maharashtra.

The partnership, involving 60 health workers, focuses on fifteen high burden districts, and aims to ensure that each mother, new born and child up to five years of age is tracked and provided essential health and nutrition services. After consultation with Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, Riddhi has designed and introduced a mobile phone technology called 'Janani' (meaning mother).

Through a combination of internet telephony and a server based computer programme, front-line health workers can record more than 200 data fields by speaking into their mobile phones.

The voice data are recorded on a memory card and the system automatically transfers these data to a web server whenever there is internet connectivity (which is sporadic).

The Riddhi technical team provided intensive training to health workers and on-field support to ensure smooth implementation. "All innovations are driven from the field. Everything that happened here is because of the demand that emerged from the field and we only implemented solutions based on the demand" KK Pal of Riddhi Management Services Pvt. Ltd.

In addition to tracking, the phone is loaded with six videos in Marathi (the local language) on infant feeding, hand washing, use of oral rehydration solution with zinc for diarrhoea management, and importance of routine immunization, breast crawl and ten steps for making hospitals baby friendly.

The most commonly used videos are those on breastfeeding and hand washing. Mothers find these videos extremely educative and they are proving crucial in bringing about behavioural changes in the community.

During the last year of implementation in Katol block, 1,506 pregnancies have been registered and 511 deliveries have taken place. Of these 209 were identified as high risk pregnancies and 81 low birth weight children were identified.

Source: Strengthening Mother and Child Tracking System in Maharashtra. UNICEF



A child receives mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurement in Maharashtra State, India.

the 0-6 age group. The purpose was to verify and validate government data collected through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)<sup>5</sup> on the extent of malnutrition: under-weight, stunting and wasting. RJMCHN will work with academic institutions to analyse the data.

The MAAM is an MSP involving actors from across government and external to government. There has recently been a consultation to explore the potential for private sector participation. Rajmata Jijau is leading the process of coordinating between government departments and the corporate social responsibility (CSR) wings of businesses. One-to-one talks have been initiated focusing on social development as part of CSR.

The Indian Government introduced 'The Companies Act' in September 2013 which includes a new provision on CSR. It stipulates that a company earning profits over a set amount must, in every financial year, allocate at least 2% of those profit towards CSR giving preference to the local area where the company operates. The act sets out 10 activities which may be included by companies in their CSR policy, the first of which is to support eradication of hunger and poverty. India is the first country in the world to mandate CSR under national law.

A further aim is to strengthen partnerships with media houses as they are well versed in behaviour change communication. A strong advertisement campaign has already been initiated involving the leading film personality, Aamir Khan, in collaboration with UNICEF. Videos around key behaviours are being dubbed in local languages and tribal dialects to reach out to a larger audience.

## Working together in communities

Multi-stakeholder platforms have emerged even at the grass root level in Maharashtra in the last two to three years, as is evident from the initiatives in some districts where community participation has worked with great success. Elected representatives from Panchayats (local government assemblies) and donors have come together to contribute to the fight against malnutrition by donating food-grains and also by helping to strengthen the infrastructure at anganwadis (nutrition centres or nurseries) in the villages. There are many examples of these kinds of community 'best practices'.



## Challenges of working with private sector stakeholders

There are a number of challenges of working in multi-stakeholder groups. There can be different views about preferred interventions. Ministers may prefer investments in infrastructure, while businesses may have different ideas. Standardised projects rarely work in practice and it is important to customise interventions for each organization.

Delays in decision-making and in finalising Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) can occur. Businesses may prefer to work without entering into MOUs or signing formal agreements. While this seems to be the faster and easier option, some firms prefer to sign MOUs before committing resources, however. There are often delays in finalising the paper work, and some firms lose interest and back out.

There can be a lack of clear government policy guidelines on partnerships which lead to questions in relations to whether power to sign MOU's rests with state or district level officials. District or sub-district officials may not be willing to take decisions or to enter into partnerships in the absence of clear guidelines, and many opportunities could be lost. RJMCHN is currently advocating for a clear government policy in this regard.

There can be lack of clarity or vision among businesses.

- ➔ Should they enter the nutrition arena even if it is not their 'core competency'?
- ➔ Should they outsource CSR activities to NGOs, or should they become more closely involved in implementation?
- ➔ Should they invest large resources in an uncertain political climate?
- ➔ Should they work with government or independently?
- ➔ Should they start small pilot projects in selected villages, which rarely get scaled up?
- ➔ Should they concentrate on showing results in a small area through intensive and qualitative efforts, even though such efforts may not be scalable?

There are challenges in designing projects which are viable and sustainable. Firms want to take up projects which can be continued through the regular government (or NGO) machinery even after the pilot project has ended. RJMCHN efforts are to ensure that interventions are designed in such a way that projects can become integrated into large scale government programmes.

Lack of consensus on the use of therapeutic food for treating severe acute malnutrition remains a problem. Many States such as Jharkhand and Maharashtra are keen to develop and use therapeutic or 'special feeds'.



The Chief Minister of Maharashtra has declared that the state will provide therapeutic food as per international protocol which may be produced through small, local units.

## Working together to scale up nutrition for a common result

Despite the challenges, the Rajmata Jijau and its multi-stakeholder partners are contributing to improvements in nutritional status. A recent nutrition survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai in 2012 showed marked reductions in the levels of stunting, wasting and under-weight in children below two years of age over the last six to seven years.



Rajmata Jijau Mother Child Health and Nutrition Mission

Women are shown how to use mobile phones  
for nutrition behaviour change  
Maharashtra State, India

## Key Lessons

- Bringing different stakeholders together results in more people talking about nutrition, and increases the visibility and importance of nutrition.
- The media plays a critical role in stimulating the public debate which can influence policy and decision-making.
- Partners outside the government are sometimes more effective in persuading political parties to take up nutrition and include it in their political agenda than those in government.
- Involving a broad group of stakeholders including the private sector opens opportunities for increasing resources for nutrition.
- There are practical and ethical challenges to working with the private sector which have to be addressed.





# MALAWI

## Aligning for Positive Change



*Malawi has established a coordinating framework linking nutrition with HIV and AIDs.*

*Edith Mkawa, Secretary for Nutrition, HIV and AIDS describes the system and its achievements...*

“Nearly half the children in Malawi are affected by stunting. This figure has not changed significantly over the last three decades. This is alarming, disturbing and not acceptable. It is for this reason that I personally took up the responsibility of being the minister of nutrition in order to provide the highest political leadership and support to accelerate efforts to combat malnutrition and its consequences.”

President **Joyce Banda**

Determined to take action against the high rates of malnutrition and HIV and in recognition of the strong relationship between nutrition, HIV and AIDS, the Government of Malawi established the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA) in the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) in August 2004.

Her Excellency the President Dr Joyce Banda is the Minister responsible for Nutrition, HIV and AIDS while the Principal Secretary is the head of the DNHA and also the Focal Point for the SUN Movement in Malawi. By positioning the DNHA in the OPC, nutrition was given the highest level of political support. The DNHA holds the mandate for overall policy direction, oversight and supervision of nutrition. As a result of this political

CHILDREN UNDER 5	
Stunting:	47.1%
Wasting:	4.0%
Overweight:	8.3%
Low birth weight:	12.3%
Exclusive breastfeeding:	71.4%
Source: DHS 2010	

endorsement, nutrition gets considerable attention at national and district level.

There are multiple levels and platforms for coordinating stakeholders involved in nutrition in Malawi. At the highest level, there are three political committees that provide oversight for nutrition, HIV and AIDS at cabinet, parliamentary and principal secretary levels.



## National multi-stakeholder platforms for nutrition

Two similar multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) have been set up to coordinate nutrition plans and actions. Both are composed of a cross section of stakeholders including representatives of key sectoral ministries, development partners, civil society organizations, academics, private sector and other institutions implementing nutrition.

The **National Nutrition Committee (NNC)** chaired by the Permanent Secretary in DNHA and co-chaired by UNICEF provides technical oversight and guidance on implementation and operationalization of the National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan within sectors. Under the NNC, there are seven technical working groups (TWGs). The TWGs meet and report to the NNC on a quarterly basis. The chair for the NNC provide updates to the three government committees on nutrition.

The seven technical working groups involve a wide range of agencies. These groups report to the NNC and are responsible for;

- Targeted Nutrition Programme chaired by the Ministry of Health and co-chaired by WFP
- Micronutrients chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and co-chaired by UNICEF
- Infant and Young Child Feeding chaired by the DNHA and co-chaired by USAID
- Integrated Nutrition and Food Security Surveillance chaired by the DNHA and co-chaired by WFP
- Nutrition Education, Training and Research chaired by Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and co-chaired by DNHA
- Nutrition Care Treatment and Support chaired by DNHA and co-chaired by the Ministry of Health
- School Health and Nutrition chaired by the Ministry of Education and co-chaired by GIZ (German International Cooperation).

The Technical Working Groups provide technical assistance, monitoring and implementation on nutrition activities according to their mandate.

A **SUN Task Force** was established soon after Malawi became a participant in the SUN Movement, the taskforce was mandated to facilitate the scaling up of nutrition and strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms. The taskforce specifically supports the operationalization of the National Nutrition Education and Communication Strategy (NECS) which is the backbone for scaling up nutrition at all levels. The taskforce is composed of technical officers from government, donors, civil society and other groups.

Malawi held a SUN launch in July 2011 under the theme 'Unite to End Stunting'. This strengthened the political visibility of nutrition and mobilized resources.

### Composition of national SUN Task Force

- DNHA (Chair);
- Nine line ministries including health, agriculture, education, gender, local government and civic education each with designated officers who are responsible for nutrition and who report to the Task Force;
- UN agencies including United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);
- Donors including technical experts from IrishAid, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union and the GIZ.
- Civil society including representatives from the SUN civil society alliance.
- Business community including VALID International; Rab Processors Limited; Consumer association; and Illovo Sugar Company and Consumer Association of Malawi.
- Academia including the University of Malawi; and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources



Boys playing in Malawi

## Independent stakeholder platforms for nutrition

There are several independent stakeholder platforms for nutrition.

The **Government-Development Partners Nutrition Committee (Multi-lateral and Bilateral)** is a high level committee convened by the Principal Secretary for Nutrition, HIV and AIDS with heads of development partners on a quarterly basis. The objective is to promote and identify funding resources for nutrition and promote joint resource mobilization. The Principal Secretary reports key outcomes of the NNC to this committee.

The **Donor Nutrition Security** group, popularly known as the DoNuts brings together technical nutrition experts from the donors, UN agencies and a representative from the civil society alliance. The group meets monthly and provides support to the government for its scaling up nutrition efforts. The DoNuts also discuss opportunities for joint cooperation and co-funding between development partners in nutrition, and present a coherent voice on policy. The DoNuts link with donors in other sectors to highlight the importance of nutrition participants from DNHA participate in DONUTS as required.

The **SUN Civil Society Alliance** is composed of over 20 organisations from farmer organizations, education, social protection, community-based organizations, livelihoods orientated non-governmental organisations, academia and other alliances and networks.

The Alliance is convened and chaired by Concern Worldwide with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and meets every two months. It receives funding through the SUN Movement Multi-Partner Trust Fund<sup>6</sup> and has a full-time coordinator. The Alliance builds consensus on nutrition policy and actions with the DNHA, encourages sharing of best practices and lessons learnt, and the alliance also advocates for mobilization of funding for nutrition and has started to map nutrition actors and programmes at district level and to identify nutrition champions.

The **United Nations** has a five year strategic plan, namely the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2012 - 2016) and an implementation plan for the UNDAF. The UNDAF has five priority areas namely;

- ➔ sustainable economic development and food security
- ➔ social protection and disaster reduction
- ➔ social development
- ➔ HIV and AIDS
- ➔ good governance.

These priorities reflect areas where the UN has a comparative advantage in supporting national ownership, coordination and alignment of assistance behind the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. The implementation of the UNDAF is coordinated and monitored by the UNDAF Joint Steering Committee and supported by Cluster Leaders who coordinate development responses in the five priority areas above. The nutrition component of the implementation plan is coordinated through the UN Nutrition Coordination Group that reports to the UNDAF Cluster Lead for priority two mentioned above. UNICEF is the lead of the UN Nutrition Coordination Group, which also includes WFP, FAO, and WHO. The group coordinates SUN activities supported by UN partners.

The **business community** has a platform through the Malawi Chamber of Commerce and the National Fortification Alliance (NFA). The NFA is responsible for ensuring fortification standards for centrally processed foods such as sugar, wheat and maize flour, salt etc. VALID International, a company managing the local production of Ready-to-Use

### Role of the District SUN Core Teams

- Establish district multi-sectoral platforms
- Conduct orientations for staff
- Assess the nutrition situation using a standard tool
- Conduct district SUN planning workshops
- Launch SUN to create awareness
- Train district teams
- Convene meetings to share lessons and track implementation
- Identify and train Community Leaders for Action in Nutrition (CLAN)
- Mobilise community
- Support community growth monitoring
- Support community activities around the 1000 days period (theme based discussions, seasonality calendar, cooking demonstrations, infant and young child feeding counseling, dietary diversity, immunization, WASH activities, micronutrients, maternal nutrition etc.)
- Conduct communication activities (community radio, theatre groups)
- Monitor and review

### Government, business and development partners work together to reduce vitamin A deficiency

The programme to fortify sugar with vitamin A in Malawi is being implemented by Illovo, a leading sugar producer and is being coordinated by the DNHA in the Office of the President and Cabinet. The programme was supported by Irish Aid, UNICEF, and USAID for two years and later Illovo absorbed the costs of fortificants and roll-out within their own budget. This is a very unique example of a public private partnership in Malawi. It is expected that 90 per cent of all households that use sugar in Malawi will consume adequately fortified sugar by 2015.



Harvested crops  
in Mzimba District, Malawi

© Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation / Frederic Courbet

Food is the convener for the business community. The Consumer Association and the Malawi Bureau of Standards are responsible for the monitoring, management and anticipation of potential conflicts of interest. The business community contributes to quality assurance, coordination and also supports resource mobilization.

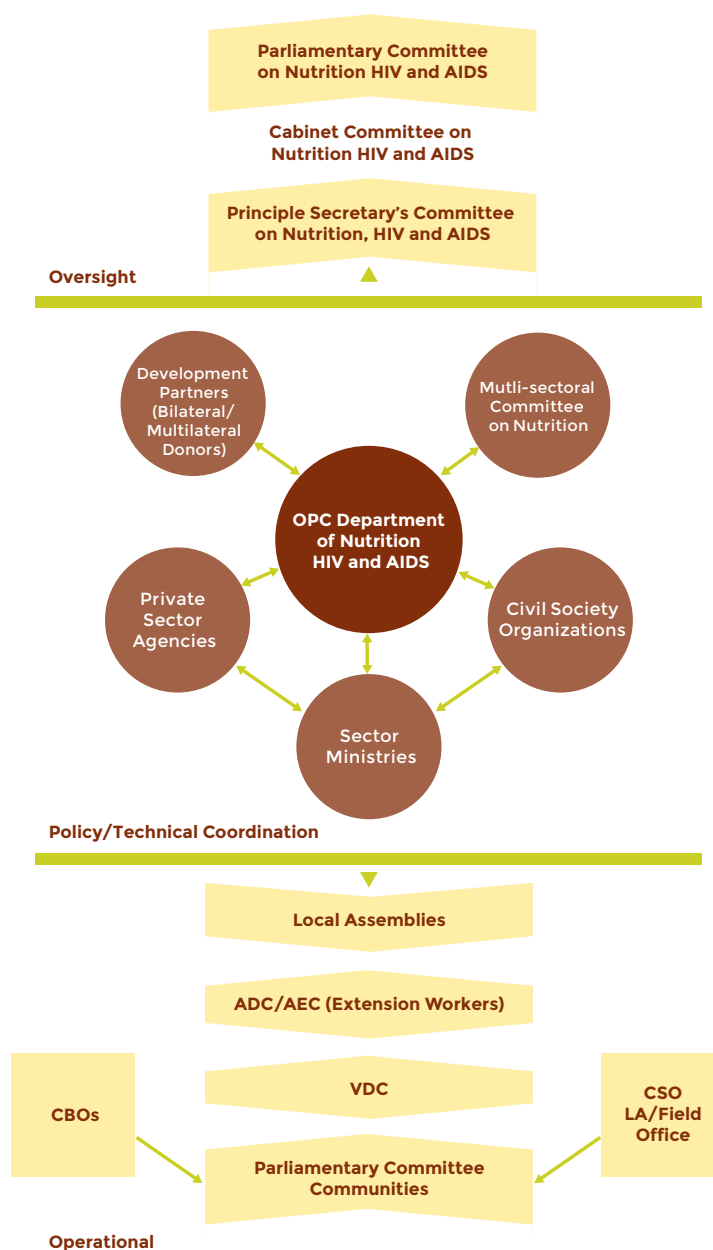
## Multi-stakeholders working in districts and communities

District commissioners are in charge of all activities implemented at district level including nutrition with support from the District Executive Committee.

District level coordination of nutrition issues is done through the District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC), which has representatives from key sector departments, civil society and the private sector.

Like all the other technical committees at the district level, the DNCC is a sub-committee of the District Executive Committee in the Local Assembly (LA) and provides technical advice to the LA, in addition to coordinating district-wide nutrition issues. The DNCC is also responsible for supporting the roll out the NECS. There are plans to strengthen the nutrition MSPs at local and community level through Area and Village Development Committees.

## Malawi Coordination Framework





## Achievements

The role played by MSPs in bringing together the skills, expertise and resources of different sectors and groups, complemented by the leadership of President Banda has resulted in significantly greater attention and commitment to nutrition in Malawi.

The MSPs act as fora for sectors and stakeholders to come together for mutual support and to share their experiences in the implementation of nutrition interventions. They have boosted efforts to coordinate implementation of nutrition interventions. In addition President Banda has put in place a presidential committee to champion nutrition, composed of eight influential traditional leaders and three technical experts, whose objective is to mobilise and sensitize traditional leaders about nutrition.

The Government of Malawi has pledged to increase resources for nutrition across multiple sectors. There are already budget lines for nutrition in some sectors and the government has pledged to increase resources for nutrition. The government has also committed to strengthen public private partnerships on nutrition, building on successful examples such as the work with Illovo on sugar fortification with Vitamin A.

Because of the high-level political commitment and clear strategy for reducing stunting, the government has been able to leverage resources from multiple donors. This was coordinated through the Government – Development Partners Committee. Current support is from the following partners: Government of Malawi, World Bank-CIDA pooled funding. Additional support is from USAID, DFID, EU, Irish Aid, UNICEF, FAO and WFP, who together support all districts.

Nutrition has now been given priority at district level where nutrition has been included in the district implementation plans. Some districts have been able to conduct joint planning and supervision and have pooled resources. All districts have district implementation plans though the allocation of resources for nutrition is not adequate.

A key triumph in nutrition in Malawi has been the roll out of the NECS through the MSPs with a range of achievements from capacity building at national level to community implementation. A one-day SUN Learning Forum was convened by the DNHA in August 2013 which reviewed progress of the NECS in seven districts (Nkhatabay, Neno, Ntchisi, Mzimba, Kasungu, Dedza and Balaka). Significant progress was reported by districts in mobilizing for action and sensitizing stakeholders to the issue of nutrition. Rapid assessments of the nutrition situation have been carried out in some districts and bottle necks have been identified at sub-district level which has resulted in more accurate planning for scaling up nutrition activities. Traditional community based structures such as chiefs and volunteers have been instrumental in community sensitization and mobilization of communities around nutrition.

## Challenges

There are challenges, however.

- inadequate financial and human capacity at district and community level.
- nutrition-sensitive strategies are not yet in place within some sectors particularly the ministries of: local governments, agriculture and gender.
- stakeholder mapping - which identifies partners, their main activities and resources - is incomplete yet critical for avoiding duplication.
- MSPs have been set up at national and district level but have yet to be institutionalized at local and sub- district level.

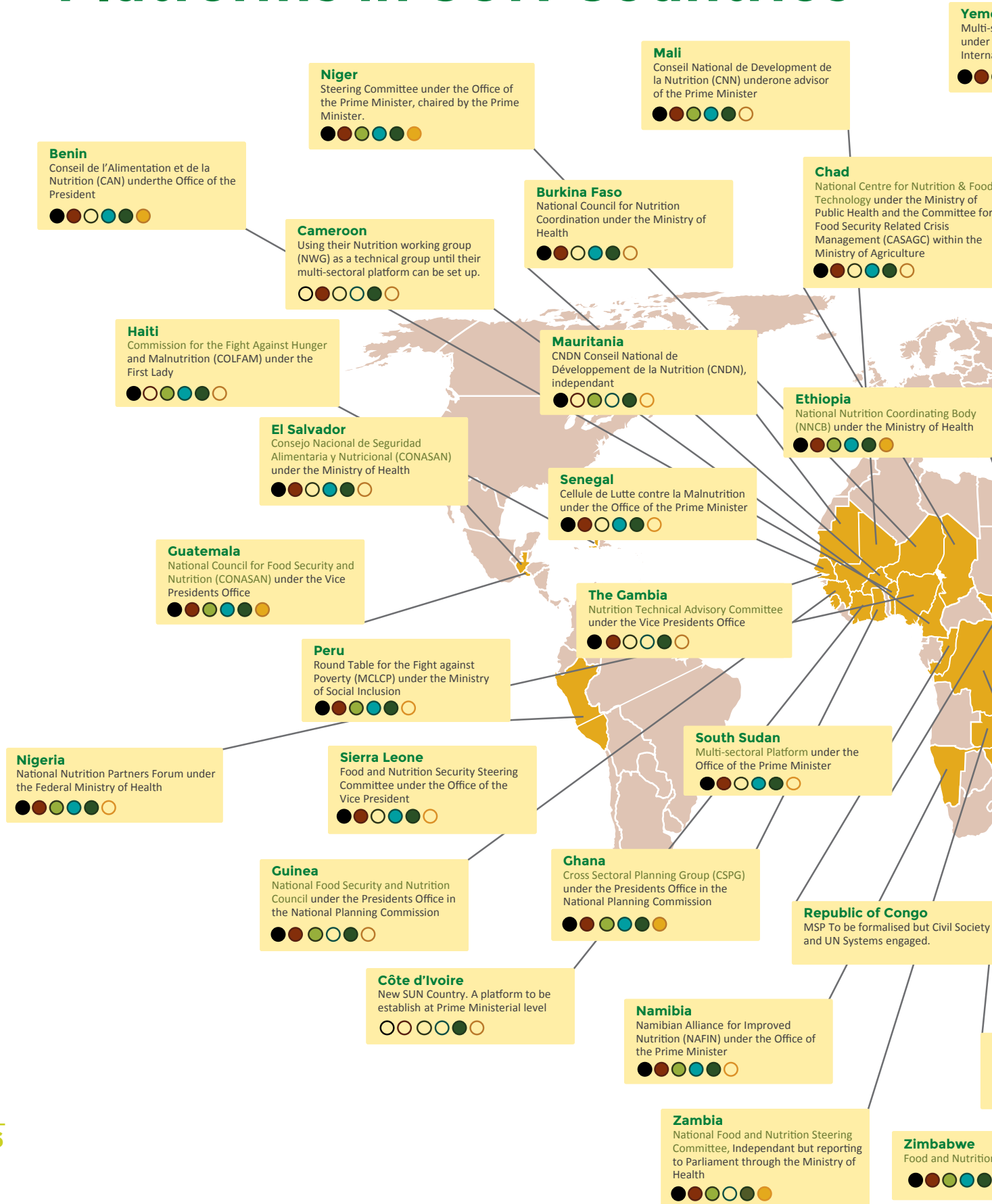


Man with child who has recovered from malnutrition

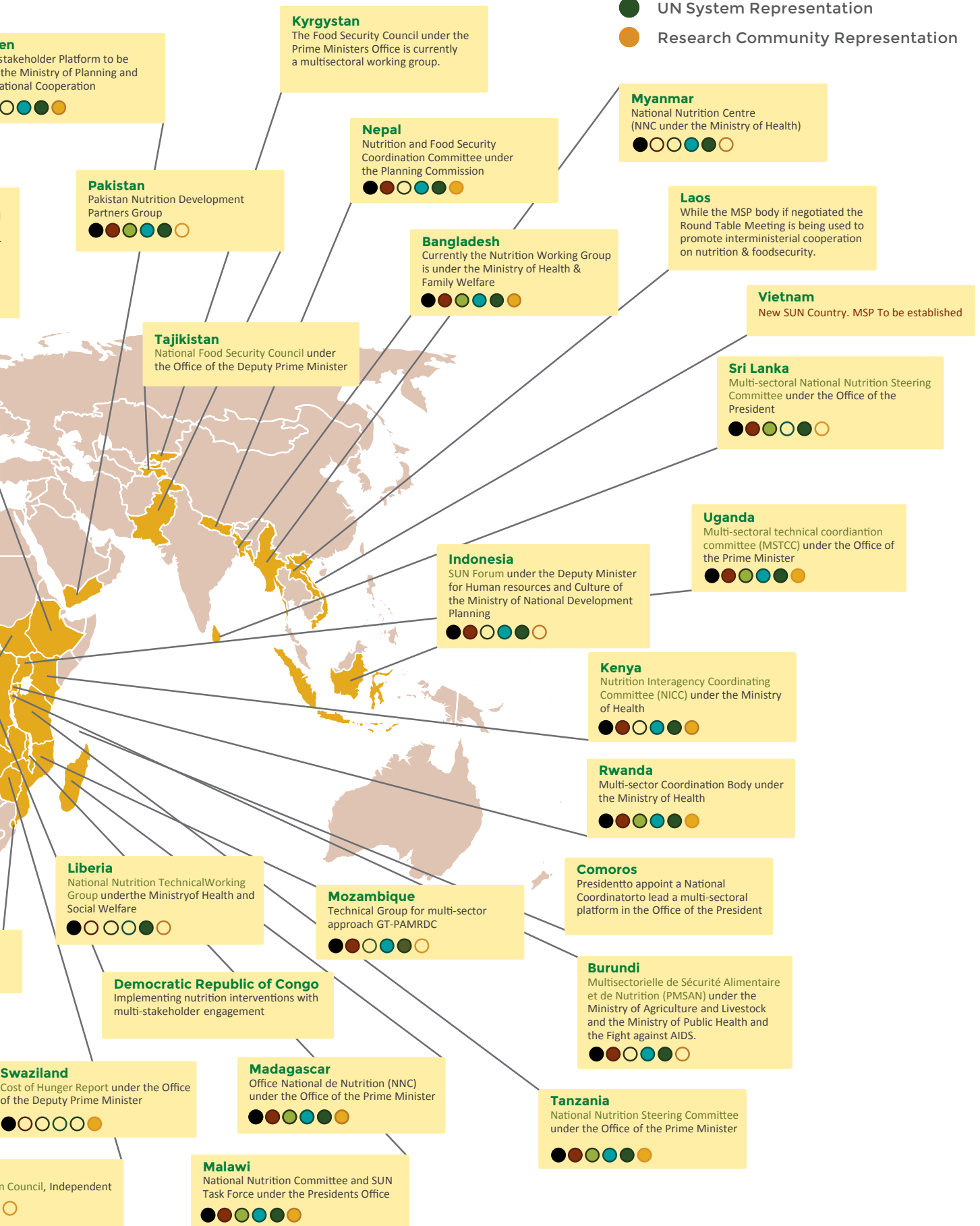
## Key Lessons

- High level coordination helps to enhance political will and commitment to nutrition at national level.
- Coordination has helped to target and mobilize resources from development partners.
- Decentralized coordination structures are crucial to empower communities so that they can play a role in implementing sustainable programmes.
- Strengthening district and community level coordination structures requires effort
- Acting together is critical to ensure scaling up of interventions at all levels.

# National Multi-stakeholder Platforms in SUN Countries



- Multiple Line Ministries
- Civil Society Representation
- Private Sector Representation
- Donor Representation
- UN System Representation
- Research Community Representation







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# What has been learnt?



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# Stakeholders working together for nutrition: What has been learnt?



*Observations by  
David Nabarro,  
Coordinator of the  
SUN Movement*

When the SUN Movement started in September 2010 many different groups decided to come together and scale up the actions needed to ensure all people enjoy good nutrition. One of the first actions by countries that join the Movement is to make it easy for different groups to come together and be effective. In some cases they use mechanisms that already convene government, civil society, business or development partners. On other occasions they set up new arrangements that bring different stakeholders together for nutrition - at national and local levels.

The groups work with different government ministries, as well as from within and outside government, from development partners and from regional organizations. Increasingly governments take the view that – when enabling people to enjoy good nutrition – they should seek to unite organizations with different capabilities around a single purpose. They should assist with focusing on the activities that work best, planning and organizing, managing implementation and monitoring progress, and demonstrating results. These kinds of arrangements are described by the general term “multi-stakeholder platforms or MSPs”: the articles in this bulletin explain how MSPs have been set up and made to work.

## The ability to convene across multiple sectors

Each country in the SUN Movement is establishing a national MSP. The structure, hosting arrangements, breadth of participation and working procedures vary greatly from country to country. Countries participating in the SUN Movement set up MSPs in ways that reflect the national context: there is no standardized approach.

But there are some emerging patterns. Until recently responsibility for nutrition has rested within a line ministry

usually the Ministry of Health. Sometimes it is within a para-statal institution that is associated with the Health Ministry. The line ministry convened a committee of stakeholders – a national Nutrition Committee.

The term “nutrition committee” is gradually being superseded by Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP). Several of the Nutrition MSPs within SUN countries are convened by the Office of the Head of State or Government. Others are sponsored by government bodies that span all sectors – such as the Planning Commission or Finance Ministry. This positioning enables the MSP to convene across a range of ministries. This is helpful because nutrition is in every sector and every sector is in nutrition. It also demonstrates the extent of political commitment to nutrition.

The Government of **Kenya** recently decided to move the national MSP – the National Inter-agency Coordinating Committee – from the Ministry of Health to the Office of the President.

Several of the MSPs from SUN countries have been announced in presidential or prime ministerial decrees: this gives them clear legal status and it enables them to take the initiative and bring stakeholders together. When MSPs are legally endorsed they are more durable. The MSP in **Nigeria** is being formalized with the national launch of the Movement for Scaling Up Nutrition.

## Participation in MSPs broadens over time

The number and breadth of organizations participating in MSPs varies considerably. In countries that have just joined the SUN Movement, the national MSP may be dominated by a few government Ministries with limited engagement from other Ministries or of groups outside government. Over time, additional ministries and non-governmental groups become involved, as do UN system agencies, civil society organizations and donor agencies. Business and academic institutions are usually less likely to be part of national MSPs.

## MSPs can assist in resolving conflicts of interest

There are challenges to ensuring that many stakeholders with varying agenda participate in MSPs for scaling-up nutrition. At the same time, MSPs serve as a useful venue for the prevention, identification and resolution of any conflicts that may emerge. This was the case in **Chad** when the government-led MSP was given the legal status to promote joint action and avoid a fragmented response to emergency and longer-term nutrition problems.

## Countries are increasingly de-centralizing their MSPs

Many countries are now moving towards decentralized systems for scaling up nutrition. They convene MSPs at district and community levels, rolling out national nutrition plans while adapting them so that they reflect the interests of local communities. The involvement of different government departments (home affairs, interior or local government) is important for mobilizing communities so that they engage in advocacy, planning and actions to improve nutrition.

Local ownership is vital if large-scale programmes are to be advanced at community level as is happening in **Malawi, Guatemala, Indonesia** and **Sierra Leone**. Local ownership means that monitoring systems are more easily set up and sustained. Civil society plays a key role in linking local communities to national government, and helping different stakeholder groups come together at local level with a focus on nutrition. In **Peru**, those implementing the Joint Nutrition Plan set regional and local goals. Funding for local authorities is dependent on the progress they make in achieving these goals: the results-based approach has contributed to the success of actions for people to enjoy good nutrition.

## MSP mandates influence nutritional outcomes

A range of key functions are now being performed by MSPs in SUN Movement countries. They include: identifying priorities, development of strategies, multi-sectoral planning, mapping of different stakeholder resources; aligning actions of multiple stakeholders, and joint monitoring of progress. When the MSP has clear objectives and actions are agreed among stakeholders, joint working contributes to effective action and the achievement of results. Stakeholders in the **Cote d'Ivoire** MSP hold regular meetings on priority themes to develop approaches and establish terms of reference for different stakeholder groups in the MSP.

## The benefits of working through MSPs

MSPs increase the visibility of nutrition and people's awareness of its significance. If there are parliamentarians and non-governmental partners in the MSP, they stimulate public debate and influence the agenda of different political parties.

First, MSPs are increasingly engaging parliamentarians for nutrition in **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda** and **Zambia**.

Second, the engagement of many stakeholders including development partners, and businesses, increases opportunities for mobilizing financial and technical resources for nutrition. The Indian State of Maharashtra is exploring such opportunities.

Third, MSPs are spaces for sharing experiences and learning lessons. The engagement of multiple stakeholders and their frequent interaction – all via the MSP - facilitates information exchange, transparency of action and mutual accountability.

## Platforms for action

Within the SUN Movement, national multi-stakeholder platforms engage stakeholders, help them to work together in synergy, focus on action, and yield results. The focus is on action and results, and not just on processes platforms. The benefit is on actions rather than institutions. SUN Movement MSPs involve multiple sectors, many organizations and numerous practitioners. The examples suggest a high level of common learning and focused effort to achieve a shared result.

Articles within this 'Scaling Up Nutrition: In Practice' show how good nutrition is being supported through groups actively working together in a coherent and coordinated fashion.



## Multiple challenges remain

Progress is being made: systems and structures are rapidly being put in place. However they do not always work as planned. Participation of stakeholder groups in national MSPs is irregular. Often they do not share an understanding of how to devise and implement nutrition-sensitive approaches and they still face challenges with engaging different sectors in the work of MSPs. This is work in progress and we hope that this set of case studies helps different SUN countries to explore how best to get MSPs working to their maximum potential.

Sometimes the members of MSPs seek new skills so that they can participate in MSPs to their full effect. Sometimes they are snowed under with increasing workloads and no increase in human capacity. Heavy workloads, unstable political situations and difficulties with transport can make it difficult for people to get together for meetings. UN and donor agencies, however, are helpful in making their telephone and video-conferencing facilities available for governments, civil society, business and other groups.

SUN focal points have pointed out that many members of national SUN platforms need additional skills to be capable of handling the increased workload both effectively and efficiently. Several countries are handling such challenges imaginatively. In Nepal, training of trainers will be held early 2014 at central and district level to support capacity building for sector focal points.

Competing interests between donors, governments, private sector and civil society could be a source of conflict within MSPs. However, guidance on handling such conflicts is being developed through consultations undertaken by the Geneva-based Global Social Observatory (independent forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue established in 2004). This process will yield reference documents and support services platforms. The benefit is on actions countries as they seek to address conflicts of interest if and when they occur within MSPs.

Sustaining MSP engagement through times of instability is difficult for governments and other partners, especially when there are many competing demands. Yet, during instability, it is especially important that nutrition information is shared equitably and transparently; this directly contributes to the achievement of better results.

## Concluding remarks

The extent to which different groups engage in multi-stakeholder platforms depends on the degree of their passion and expectations around the total elimination of malnutrition. The personal commitment of individuals who make up the large number of emerging platforms is remarkable and critical for success. Platform members come from diverse backgrounds yet are united by one goal. The more their multi-stakeholder groups can act in unison, the greater the chance that exemplary results will be achieved.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Countries are working through four strategic processes to get results.

1. Bringing people together to work effectively through functioning multi-sector, multi-stakeholder platforms;
2. Putting policies and laws in place to establish a coherent policy and legal framework;
3. Implementing and aligning programmes with common objectives and an agreed framework for results; and
4. Mobilising resources from domestic sources supplemented by external assistance.

Source: SUN Movement Strategy 2012-2015 <http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SUN-MOVEMENT-STRATEGY-ENG.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders within and outside SUN countries commit to seven principles which are fundamental to the achievement of these objectives:

- Be transparent about impact: all stakeholders to transparently and honestly demonstrate the impact of collective action.
- Be inclusive: through open multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring proven solutions and interventions to scale.
- Be rights-based: act in line with a commitment to uphold the equity and rights of all women, men and their children.
- Be willing to negotiate: when conflicts arise, as can be expected with diverse partners working together, hold the intention to resolve conflicts and reach a way forward.
- Be mutually accountable: act so all stakeholders feel responsible for and are held collectively accountable to the joint commitments.
- Be cost-effective: establish priorities on evidenced-based analysis of what will have the greatest and most sustainable impact for the least cost.
- Be continuously communicative: to learn and adapt through regular sharing of the relevant critical lessons, what works and what does not, across sectors, countries and stakeholders.

Source: SUN Movement Strategy 2012-2015 <http://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SUN-MOVEMENT-STRATEGY-ENG.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> REACH Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger and Malnutrition is a country-led approach to scale-up proven and effective interventions addressing child under-nutrition through the partnership and coordinated action of UN agencies and other agencies under the leadership of national governments.

<sup>4</sup> The Global Nutrition Cluster was established in 2006 with a vision to safeguard and improve the nutritional status of emergency affected populations by ensuring a coordinated, appropriate response that is predictable, timely, effective and at scale. The Global Nutrition Cluster is made up of 40 partner organizations and two organisations-observers. Country-level Nutrition Clusters are activated during nutritional emergencies.

<sup>5</sup> Guatemala is divided into 22 departments (departamentos) which are in turn divided into 332 municipalities.

<sup>6</sup> The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) is a Government of India sponsored programme, and is India's primary social welfare scheme to tackle malnutrition and health problems in children below six years of age and their mothers. The main components of the programme are (i) immunization (ii) supplementary nutrition (iii) health checkup (iv) referral services (v) pre-school non formal education (vi) nutrition and health information.

<sup>7</sup> The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was set up in 2012 to provide grants for governments, UN agencies, civil society groups, or other partners and support organizations participating in the SUN Movement. It is a fund to be used for catalytic actions to enable, initiate or develop SUN Movement activity at country or regional level, and provide appropriate global-level support, when other funding is not available. It is not designed to be a vertical nutrition fund for large scale investments in food and nutrition security, nor to replace existing funding pathways at country level.

**“ Lasting solutions to global problems no longer lie in the hands of governments alone. The United Nations of the 21st century must think in terms of networks and coalitions. The Scaling Up Nutrition movement is making inroads against malnutrition and childhood stunting.”**

**United Nations Secretary General  
Ban Ki-moon,**  
January 2013

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Go to [www.scalingupnutrition.org](http://www.scalingupnutrition.org)  
for more information about the SUN Movement.