

Side-event on SUN Movement

World Nutrition Rio 2012 Conference, 30th April, 9-10.30, Auditorium 113

Chairperson: Denise Costa Coitinho Delmuè

Panellists: Pak Minarto (Indonesia); Edna Possolo (Mozambique); Namukolo Covic (Zambia); Laura Astete (Peru); Jessica Blankenship (Helen Keller International); Arnould Laillou (GAIN); Bjorn Ljungqvist (REACH)

Summary Note

As introduction to the panel discussion the Chairperson outlined the role of UNSCN within the SUN Movement. The organizational structure of the SUN Movement at global and country level was also briefly outlined.

There were four nutrition specialists on the panel from four countries currently involved in the SUN movement- Indonesia, Mozambique, Zambia and Peru - as well as representatives from Helen Keller International (HKI) and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), two organizations in SUN global Networks. The country panelists highlighted each of their respective country's commitments, experiences and viewpoints, stressing the importance of country-led efforts being central to the SUN Movement.

In presenting their experiences, the Country panellists emphasized how their countries' involvement in the SUN Movement had increased understanding, visibility and commitments around nutrition among national leaders and development partners. According to Pak Minarto, the participation of Indonesia in the SUN Movement and the involvement of their Vice Ministry of Planning in the Lead Group provided the political leverage for a presidential decree to establish four working groups focusing on nutrition outcomes. According to Edna Possolo, Mozambique's participation in the Movement was a key factor for her country "to progress and have donors convening around a joint response". A tangible result was that around 100 million USD was mobilized for nutrition in less than two years. According to Namukolo Covic, in Zambia the launch of the SUN Movement has come at an opportune moment as it had coincided with the development of a National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan into which SUN activities could be incorporated to maximize goodwill around an agreed multi-sectoral plan. Laura Astete from Peru welcomed the inclusion of their First Lady in the SUN Movement Lead Group, as "she is a leading example of social activism" and will help sustain high-level political commitment for nutrition both in Peru and globally. She added that the Peruvian experience showed a coalition of Civil Society groups has more "weight" to convince stakeholders to prioritize nutrition on the national agenda.

The panellists stressed the value of learning from other countries and their experiences in tackling similar problems and presenting ways forward grounded in reality. They believe the SUN Movement as a whole would gain in strength through the sharing of country examples - such as the well-established advocacy campaign of the Child Malnutrition Initiative in Peru, the visibility provided by Mozambique's campaign to forgo 1% of foreign debt for nutrition investment, and Zambia's nutrition leadership capacity development project.

The Chair pointed out that the six-weekly conference call among SUN Countries was a key mechanism, within the SUN Movement, for the sharing and analysis of experiences by member countries. The Chair also noted that stakeholders who support SUN Countries are organizing themselves into five networks - donors, civil society, business,

knowledge and learning and the UN system- so as to better align their support for country priorities and programs.

Jessica Blankenship from HKI, emphasized that civil society organizations in the CSO Network were increasingly focusing their attention on three key areas, namely the support to in-country multi-stakeholder platforms to mobilize partners and resources around national priorities, the need for mutual accountability of all duty bearers and the centrality of capacity development. The Chair added to this the importance of 'grass-roots' involvement. Arnould Lailou from GAIN presented their experience in Indonesia and Mozambique in supporting the private sector to work with the Ministry of Health on critical areas like salt iodization, vegetable oil and flour fortification. Bjorn Ljungqvist from REACH talked on behalf of the UN System Network and emphasized the importance of stakeholders aligning with country plans. He emphasised priorities for improved nutrition taking full advantage of the current momentum that recognizes the centrality of nutrition-sensitive community-centred development. The one area where he felt perhaps more attention was needed concerned the establishment of the Knowledge Network and he extended an invitation to participants to think of ways in which this could be done by building on existing platforms and opportunities.

Participants in the event expressed concern about a number of issues. The most critical was the involvement of industry in the SUN Movement. Pak Minarto from the Indonesian Ministry of Health said, "we have a lot of private companies in Indonesia and we need to decide which ones are appropriate". Namukolo Covic reported a law-suit in Zambia related to a company's unacceptable advertising of a complementary food. Speaking from the panel Arnould Lailou shared participants' concern that the interests of industry should not dictate the partnership agenda and that Nutrition Professionals should direct the processes and that regulations were needed to provide guidance on who should and shouldn't be partnered with. The discussion indicated that countries within the SUN Movement are engaging with business and, as emphasized by the Chair, "knowing how to monitor, manage and avoid conflicts of interest is central". The recommendation to "exclude all private companies" was made by Patti Rundall (IBFAN), others thought it useful that guidelines be developed to assist countries in deciding how they could engage with industry to avoid conflicts of interest.

David Sanders, a participant from Western Cape University, South Africa, spoke of the need for the SUN Movement to ensure sharing of the knowledge and experience of in-country universities, research organizations and training institutes. This should be taken into account and made widely accessible to ensure sustainable development of capacity. Bjorn Ljungqvist emphasised that one of the key challenges for the SUN Knowledge Network will be "to fully incorporate and truly build on the wealth of learning that comes from academics and practitioners worldwide".

Claudio Schuftan from the People's Health Movement suggested that as the SUN Movement Roadmap is revised, it must include human rights as the basis for a comprehensive accountability framework. Participants also suggested that there be more visibility on how comments and suggestions by countries will be incorporated in the Roadmap.

Open discussion among participants highlighted areas that need clarification. These include an anxiety that the Movement will introduce its own "SUN activities" in countries. Namukolo Covic clarified that in Zambia a decision was taken to focus attention and budgetary commitments on stunting reduction with an emphasis on the "1000-days window of opportunity" in the form of a programme. This was done because of the high impact it can have on reducing stunting. It was suggested that this focus might be too narrow as all women should be able to realize their rights. It was further

clarified that the 1000 days programme was only one component of many other activities that form part of Zambia's National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan.

The SUN Movement Coordinator, David Nabarro, provided written material and gave opening remarks by a video-address. He emphasised the importance of analysing the differential impacts of poor nutrition on men and women so as to establish the gender dimension of policies and actions to scale up nutrition. He also mentioned the importance – for improved nutrition - of women being empowered as agents of change to tackle problems relating to nutrition. These will increasingly be at the core of policies, strategies and plans.

In closing, the Chair emphasized that the SUN Movement does not have ready-to-use solutions. She highlighted a remark by panellist Bjorn Ljungqvist: "The SUN Movement has succeeded in making nutrition a mainstream political concern and not just the business of the Ministry of Health". The Chair stressed that the SUN Movement aims to promote and maintain a space where actors within countries can debate these issues among themselves and that the Movement should enable them to access the latest evidence-based guidance so they can decide on best solutions for their own context.