



SUN GLOBAL GATHERING 2013

The UN System Network for SUN organized two breakout sessions during the SUN Global Gathering in New York City, 23-24 September 2013, enabling an interactive dialogue with SUN country representatives and other stakeholders in the SUN Movement on optimal joint country support:

1. Session 4. 7 UN System Network for SUN - Better together for SUN: Sharing country experiences, successes, challenges and needs for improved multi-sectoral nutrition actions, on 24 September 2013 09.00 – 10.20

Objective of this session was, to share experiences and seek feedback from countries on how the UN can support strengthened, coordinated multi-sectoral nutrition governance and action. The session was well attended by 80 participants, with majority of representatives from SUN countries, and some members of other SUN Networks.

2. Session 4. 8 How can the UN System more effectively respond to country needs and offer better support for national efforts in nutrition? on 24 September 2013 10.40 – 12.00

The objective was to open the dialogue with participants on how to better respond to national needs (policy and programme and support to governance). This session was well attended by 50 participants with a good mix of country and network representatives.

The Director General of WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, participated in the second session. The UNSCN Secretariat Report on the 'Mapping of UN agencies nutrition actions in 21 SUN participating countries' was disseminated to participants at the end of the session.

How can the UN System more effectively respond to country needs

Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO

Dr Chan emphasized that the UN system approach must be country led and encouraged necessary changes to make this happen. She advocated for country leadership, ownership, and country plans. Countries are at the center and the UN system agencies need to revolve around them, like the other networks as well. Countries should have the courage to tell UN agencies what they want them to do and UN agencies need to listen to countries. 'Don't be too pleasant with us, be strong'. But she also stressed that countries must be coherent too – across government- with clear leadership and speaking with the same voice in all flora, so not to create the space for others.

Dr Chan highlighted the following with regard to better support of the UN system to countries. First she stressed that the UN system agencies need to be more coherent, more serious about how to work as One UN. She outlined that the UN system can help with evidence and knowledge. How can countries use evidence to address malnutrition and obesity? What are the most useful proven interventions to improve people's health? She also underlined that nutrition cannot stand alone; it is complex, multi-sectoral and needs multiple actors. There is the need to invest in and support national NGOs; also, the role of business is there. We can work together, but must avoid conflict of interest, must share responsibilities and values. Finally Dr Chan addressed the division of labour in the UN family. FAO and WHO will continue to be technical normative agencies – working together e.g on the Codex Alimentarius. They do respect UNICEF and WFP as implementers. Countries should remind the UN agencies about the division of labour.



Outcome of the discussion

1. How the UN System can better support national governments:

- Support country leadership and ownership and gear UN efforts to respond to country plans (demand driven approach),
- Use its credibility and neutrality for supporting highest level advocacy on nutrition, targeting parliamentarians and the political class
- Use the UN convening power for bringing on board all stakeholders and networks at country level
- Use the strength of UN system agencies joint work in multiple sectors relevant to nutrition to:
- Support resource mobilisation- building an investment case and advocate for increased funding (within and outside the country) to support national nutrition plans
- Support countries in knowledge sharing and learning at all levels, country, regional and global levels by documentation and dissemination of best practices, operational research, establishment of regional resource centres etc.
- UN system to expand its support to nutrition governance by expanding REACH partnership and / or other UN support tools to cover more countries
- Capacity development for strengthening country systems e.g. technical, administrative, procurements, logistics, cost-effective implementation strategies etc.
- Human resource capacity building – need for nutrition experts in all sectors for nutrition-sensitive programmes
- UN system to harmonize and clarify definitions on nutrition-sensitive, nutrition specific as well as key indicators and guidelines.

2. For this to take effect, it is important that the UN system:

- Provides leadership by uniting around a common causal analysis model and the national nutrition action plan to avoid duplication and overburdening of governments with multiple demands.
- Improves coordination of UN system in country, through:
 - Joint UN analysis, planning and programming (geographic convergence) and resource mobilisation building on multisectoral nature of the UN system.
 - Joint UN nutrition strategy (within the UNDAF) in country that details the roles and responsibilities of the various UN agencies vis a vis the national multi-sectoral nutrition efforts.
 - Presenting a unified ONE UN face and vision to government
 - Speaking with one voice benefiting the Resident Coordinators system and an identified (rotating) UN system nutrition leadership at political and technical level.
 - Broadening participation of the relevant UN agencies in nutrition work at country level, document which UN agencies are involved in nutrition and where mandates overlap.
- Consolidates efforts and resources of the UN system to effectively support roll-out of national nutrition plans
- Communicates clearly how UN system works and what is working
- At country level, explores how REACH can expand to other SUN countries who demand support for nutrition governance.
- At global level, develops and agrees on standards for nutrition specific and sensitive interventions;



- Links global – regional – country network to coordinate and harmonize approach and goals.
- Develops nutrition information management tools (including selected number of key multi-sectoral indicators) that can be adapted to different contexts.
 - Agree on joint framework and having fewer indicators that countries need themselves for decision making.
- Fosters knowledge sharing – national, regional and global; showcase results of joint UN actions.
- Identify concrete actions for next 2 years: quick wins, and addressing structural problems.

3. How can the countries help the UN system?

- Providing incentive for the UN system to align around country plans and strategies, to move from supply to demand driven, for countries to take the lead.
- Agree at country level on national goals, strategies and plans, and
- Speaking to the UN system agencies with ONE VOICE.