



1,000 DAYS TO SCALE UP NUTRITION FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN: Building political commitment

Summary and Highlights

June 13, 2011



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In September 2010, on the occasion of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ireland's then-Foreign Minister Micheál Martin launched *1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future Call to Action*.¹ 1,000 Days draws attention to the irreversible impact of maternal and child undernutrition during the 1,000-day critical "window of opportunity" from pregnancy to the age of two, and the priority actions and interventions needed to scale up nutrition.

"We have come together today with a very clear purpose. We want to do whatever we can individually and collectively to end the scandal that nearly 200 million children do not have adequate nutrition and that in consequence their future life prospects are compromised."

Tom Arnold, CEO, Concern Worldwide

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, and Tom Arnold, CEO of Concern Worldwide, were invited to speak at this joint U.S.-Irish government 1,000 Days event. Together, they committed to hosting a follow-up meeting nine months later, in June 2011, to strengthen the voice of civil society in the global effort to scale up nutrition and to sustain the political commitment and energy needed to address maternal and child undernutrition.

"Your collaboration and innovation at this conference is truly saving lives."

**Hillary Rodham Clinton,
U.S. Secretary of State**

"We are working [to improve child and maternal nutrition] so that someday, the bounty of our world will support every human being on the planet. We will not stop until that truth becomes reality."

**Maria Otero, U.S. Undersecretary for State
for Democracy and Global Affairs**

This follow-up meeting, "*1,000 Days to Scale Up Nutrition for Mothers and Children: Building Political Commitment*," took place June 13, 2011, in Washington, DC. Co-hosted by Bread for the World Institute and Concern Worldwide, it brought together more than 170 international nutrition stakeholders and 350 grassroots

hunger activists from the United States. The goals of the meeting were to assess progress on Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)² efforts already being made at the country level; identify challenges; and develop a joint advocacy agenda for upcoming global forums. The stakeholders included members of civil society (30 from SUN's "Early Riser" countries³ and 75 based in developed countries), representatives of the governments of developing and developed countries, and representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank, foundations, private sector organizations, donor agencies, and academic institutions.

"[This is] the start of a much larger global movement... to alleviate what is, I'm sure you all agree, this obscenity of global hunger, where tens, indeed hundreds of millions of people, and particularly pregnant women and children under 2 years of age simply do not have adequate amounts and quality of food to lead anything like normal lives."

**Kevin Farrell, Special Envoy for Hunger,
Ireland**

Participants heard presentations from a wide range of perspectives, representing the many stakeholders involved in SUN. Speakers and participants in the June 13 meeting welcomed the recent momentum to scale up nutrition and underscored the new knowledge and growing consensus around the urgency of reducing undernutrition in the 1,000 days from pregnancy to age two.

Participants then met in four working groups to address specific issues and questions around various aspects of the effort to scale up nutrition. These were: 1) Advocacy and Communications; 2) Capacity Building; 3) SUN Implementation at the Country Level; and 4) Nutrition Sensitive/Intersectoral Approaches. Each working group was led by two facilitators, at least one of whom was a representative of civil society.

To close the day, participants in the working groups reconvened to share observations from their respective groups and to summarize the themes addressed in both the plenary and working group sessions.

This summary report outlines the themes and key messages raised during the meeting and notes some of the opportunities and challenges we face in the process of scaling up nutrition at the national and global levels.

Bread for the World Institute and Concern Worldwide gratefully acknowledge the support of the following conference partners:

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- PepsiCo
- The U.K. Department for International Development (DFID)
- Irish Aid
- Share Our Strength
- The World Bank
- Save the Children
- The U.N. High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis
- 1,000 Days
- InterAction
- The CORE Group
- Helen Keller International

1. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Throughout the meeting, speakers and participants gave powerful examples of leadership on nutrition at the country level and stressed the importance of supporting country-owned and -led programs to scale up nutrition. Discussions in the working groups reinforced the message that ground-up planning approaches are fundamental to country ownership and to the long-term sustainability of SUN. Such approaches are better targeted, both geographically and programmatically. Recognizing that some countries with a high burden of undernutrition have already made significant strides to address maternal and child nutrition, the Scaling Up Nutrition movement does not aim to create new initiatives or programs, but rather to build on and scale up existing efforts, working where possible within existing mechanisms and structures. Representatives from Early Riser countries emphasized that though they may need outside donor funding and capacity building in certain technical areas, it is important that national governments put in place the legal, institutional, and policy framework to ensure that investments in nutrition have the broad support and long-term commitment needed to have a lasting impact.

Effective national-level SUN structures require active, dedicated leaders who will champion the cause of reducing undernutrition. There was a clear message from both plenary and working groups that improved child nutrition must become a core and consistent priority at the household and country levels. Since nutrition is

the foundation for the health and productivity of both individual children and the society as a whole, emphasis on child nutrition must extend beyond the duration of a campaign. It must become a mainstreamed part of the national culture.

Participants discussed examples of policy changes in Early Riser countries that have been important in mobilizing political will and internal resources. Uganda, for example, has included the right to food and nutrition in its constitution. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her video address to the meeting, and Irish Special Hunger Envoy Kevin Farrell spoke about U.S. and Irish support for the Tanzanian government's nutrition strategy.

Cassim Masi, executive director of the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) for the government of Zambia, described progress in Zambia since February 2011, when the NFNC organized a high-level food and nutrition forum around the theme of "accelerating nutrition actions." The government has since designated the NFNC as SUN's focal point in the country, and SUN's key messages and priorities have been incorporated into the draft National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan for 2011–2015. Zambia's first strategic direction is the prevention of stunting (low height for age due to malnutrition). The government has organized a series of meetings with the leadership of key government departments. Culturally relevant messages that the

government developed to popularize the importance of the first 1,000 days can now be found on banners throughout the country.

Shamim Hayder Talukder, director of Eminence Center for Health and Development Intelligence in Bangladesh, said that Bangladesh is on track to meet the fourth and fifth Millennium Development Goals (reducing child mortality and improving maternal health). In the last 10 years, the country has made slow progress against stunting and wasting (when children weigh too little for their height due to malnutrition). Bangladesh's prime minister has been a strong supporter of nutrition and has called on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to develop a nutrition plan. Eminence launched the Bangladesh Nutrition and Food Security Network. The organization regularly coordinates with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to support healthy infant and young child nutrition.

Tony Hall, executive director of the U.S. Alliance to End Hunger, noted that both the Honduran and Jordanian National Alliances Against Hunger have piloted 1,000 Days initiatives. The alliances developed their own national communications strategies and garnered the

support of the First Lady of Honduras and her Royal Highness of Jordan respectively. The National Alliance in each country will help coordinate relevant stakeholders and build national ownership.

Hall also noted that Ghana's National Alliance, the Ghana Hunger Alliance, lobbied the government to develop a national nutrition policy that focuses on the needs of children in the 1,000 Days window. The Hunger Alliance is working with the Parliamentary Hunger Caucus to build support for this policy.

Anna Lartey, associate professor and former head of department, Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana, and president-elect of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences, emphasized the factors that have put Ghana on track to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal (cutting hunger and extreme poverty in half by 2015). These include: good governance and a stable political system; sound agriculture policies; cash transfers to poor households; free maternal health services; and the promotion of nutrition-specific programs, including the National Food Fortification Program and school feeding programs.

2. COLLABORATION, COORDINATION, AND ALIGNMENT

Participants emphasized that undernutrition is a function of a complex set of issues and factors. Together, these result in lack of availability of, access to, and/or utilization of nutritious foods.

A substantial body of knowledge on implementing effective nutrition programs is now available. In order to scale up efforts, we must begin aligning actions at the national and community levels and in donor agencies. Progress on nutrition will require collaboration among a diverse network of stakeholders (including governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector) and across multiple sectors (including agriculture, health, social protection, and education). *All* relevant sectors need to make nutrition improvements a priority. In some cases, coordination among the various actors and sectors is at least as critical as the mobilization of new resources and funding.

"If we could get [SUN] mobilized, all the technical agencies that put it together said that we would probably keep a million children a year from dying, and many millions of children a year would be saved from the debilitation that comes from malnutrition. That's the idea."

**David Beckmann,
President, Bread for the World**

Among stakeholders

"Everyone needs to own the problem and the solution" was a theme raised by Lucy Martinez Sullivan, director of 1,000 Days, and reiterated throughout the meeting. Its accomplishment will require clarifying the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. Participants discussed the roles that different stakeholders can play:

- National governments provide the institutional framework and policy environment to scale up nutrition. They also coordinate programs at the national level, mobilize financial resources, and emphasize to donors the importance of nutrition-focused programs and funding.
- Regional institutions or frameworks such as the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) provide a platform for collaboration and for integrating nutrition into capacity-building, planning, and coordination at the regional level.

“Civil society needs to be mobilized, and then [we need to] strengthen the multisectoral approach, so that we can forge ahead and then start fighting the malnutrition with one voice. Aligning ministries is critical, [as well as] the private sector. The community also is critical.”

**Cassim Masi, executive director,
National Food and Nutrition Commission,
government of Zambia**

- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, both national and international, implement programs and so are positioned to assess and communicate the reality on the ground based on their own experiences. As many participants pointed out, international NGOs can help build indigenous capacity and strengthen their local partners; this is in fact essential for sustainability. Civil society can help develop unified messages and coordinate advocacy efforts.
- Bilateral development partners include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Irish Aid, the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), and others, while multilateral organizations include U.N. agencies, the World Bank, regional development banks such as the African Development Bank, and others. All of these can provide financial backing, share knowledge, and offer technical support.
- Individual/private philanthropic donors work through traditional philanthropy or innovative social investing models. Private donors can be large-scale, such as the large foundations that support high-impact philanthropy, or small-scale, such as grassroots movements of individuals who mobilize around a specific cause.
- The private sector can work on nutrition from a “shared value” perspective. For example, those

who work across the food value chain (including agricultural input providers, seed companies, fertilizer companies, supermarkets, and food processors) have a natural affinity with efforts to improve child nutrition. Public-private partnerships mobilize specific entities to bring complementary skills to achieve a specific objective.⁴

- Academic institutions can conduct research that strengthens the evidence base for multisectoral nutrition programming and best practices for scaling up.
- Faith-based organizations add a moral perspective and voice to advocacy efforts and in many communities are essential service providers.
- National and local media can influence government at all levels by raising awareness of the consequences of undernutrition, reporting on progress, and providing a platform for those who champion the cause of scaling up nutrition.

One of the working groups noted that SUN serves as an umbrella under which all stakeholders can feel comfortable. Though each stakeholder comes under the umbrella with a different perspective, SUN points out the areas of commonality among them. Collaboration is already taking place, and examples were shared at the meeting. Under President Lula da Silva’s leadership, Brazil successfully launched a unified and coordinated nutrition response with strong political leadership from different governmental departments and the participation of civil society. Charles McCormack, CEO of Save the Children U.S., highlighted a research collaboration to improve child nutrition in Bangladesh among an NGO (Save the Children), an academic institution (Tufts University), and a corporation (PepsiCo). In Malawi, a public-private partnership has begun to fortify sugar with Vitamin A. India has brought together academic institutions and local and international NGOs to discuss and collaborate on development for women and children. India has also launched a National Nutrition Surveillance Program.

Across sectors

Better integration of key sectors and relevant initiatives for child well-being is necessary in order to optimize nutritional outcomes. For example, the international community should find ways to leverage opportunities to include nutrition in efforts related to Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, such as the *Every Woman Every Child* initiative.⁵ The Ethiopian Public Health

Association offers a current example of combining health interventions on the ground: health extension workers whose primary responsibility is to provide preventive and curative malaria-related services are now starting to add nutrition-related work to their malaria work.

“Integrating across sectors...maximizing synergies with sectors outside of nutrition, particularly agriculture and social protection, is critical. We need to see nutrition as a common objective of our health work, of our agriculture work, of our poverty reduction and safety net programs work. We know that nutrition is critical to maternal and child health.”

**Paul Weisenfeld,
Assistant to the Administrator,
Bureau of Food Security, USAID**

There was much discussion in the working groups about the importance of removing disincentives or barriers to multisectoral approaches and about how to foster greater collaboration and coordination across sectors. Many speakers and participants spoke to the importance of an institutional framework at the country level that lays out a multisectoral approach and develops plans with a view to scaling up. Such a framework would help build support and inform budgeting and policy implementation decisions. The framework must extend beyond the national government to local governments and municipalities.

A significant challenge is the common practice of allocating budgets by ministry or department. Implementing a multisectoral approach means sharing limited resources with other ministries and defining who is responsible and accountable for nutrition outcomes. Additional tensions emerge in government with the potential for new donor funding—for example, over how the funding is to be allocated among ministries and which ministry would control it.

Another disincentive identified by the working groups is that it often takes longer to work with people from different sectors than to work alone. Donors increasingly want quick results, so there is a tradeoff between getting more people involved and demonstrating quick results.

In addition to multisectoral planning, working across sectors will require new approaches and a common language to facilitate communication. Participants pointed out that, generally, metrics and indicators drive program activities, but each sector has different ways of measuring impact. For example, agricultural scientists often measure yield—how much corn is produced—and have little understanding of common measures of impact in the health field, such as Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs). The expected timeframe to achieve results also varies across sectors. The challenge is to identify, from the outset, indicators that foster multisectoral programming, as well as a common language and shared expectations to help stakeholders agree on top priorities. Capacity building will be critical to creating this understanding and opportunities for collaboration.

3. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society has vast practical experience in implementing nutrition initiatives. This experience can inform government's process of establishing policies at the national and global levels, and, later, can help monitor and adjust programs. Participants at the meeting reiterated that civil society organizations (CSOs) are often strategically situated to connect policymakers at various levels with communities.

Filling a critical need

CSOs operate at the community level, working with individual households. They have an extensive reach into areas sometimes untouched by government programs

and structures. CSOs can tell the story of families and communities—an important perspective in understanding what factors cause undernutrition and allow it to persist. CSOs have a body of knowledge about what works—and what doesn't—that should be tapped in efforts to scale up.

“The SUN movement without the force of civil society would be like setting sail without the wind.”

**Anna Lartey, Associate Professor and
Former Head of Department, Nutrition
and Food Science, University of Ghana;
President-Elect of the International Union
of Nutritional Sciences**

Several working groups also identified civil society's unique ability to work across sectors and see integrated solutions. Using its long experience in participatory approaches, civil society can help break down silos by showing how the different sectoral components—such as access to health services, agricultural research, and social safety nets—intersect at the household level and why they should be considered interconnected. Because CSOs are often trusted partners at the community level, they can be strong allies and effective implementation partners within a community. They can also help monitor and evaluate nutrition programs.

Advocacy

Civil society has the opportunity to speak out at the international, national, and community levels to build sustained political commitment and influence policy. Meeting participants identified several upcoming international advocacy opportunities: the United Nations General Assembly Side Meeting on 1,000 Days/SUN, the G-20 summit, and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) meeting.

At the meeting, international leaders on development issues—including Robert B. Zoellick, president of the World Bank; Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State; Andrew Mitchell, U.K. Secretary of State for International Development; and Kevin Farrell, Special Envoy for Hunger, Ireland—restated the unequivocal support they had all previously expressed. SUN has garnered broad support from key stakeholders, including the U.N., donor governments, the World Bank, the private sector, and—most importantly—an increasing number of developing countries themselves. Nonetheless, participants agreed that “We are at a tipping point,” and civil society representatives shared and conveyed a sense of responsibility for continuing to keep nutrition on the agendas of policymakers around the world.

Civil society can advocate for making investments in child nutrition now by communicating to governments how society will benefit in the long run—financially and in terms of human resources. Civil society partners at the meeting agreed that they would continue to share their experiences with members of their governments. When officials are informed of previous nutrition efforts, current challenges, and their impact, they are better able to develop responsive and effective policies. CSOs can

also use democratic processes to push for policy change and transparency and to help ensure that codes and standards are followed. At the community level, CSOs can advocate through education campaigns, engaging communities in nutrition issues by communicating the importance of the first 1,000 Days.

Challenges

Participants noted some of the challenges facing CSOs. The scale of operations is often small, especially for local CSOs. It is difficult to have a broad-based impact without connecting to a larger group of stakeholders. Paul Weisenfeld, assistant to the administrator, Bureau for Food Security, USAID, urged civil society to align with country strategies, as donors are doing. He emphasized that “achieving outcomes in the range of 20 to 30 percent reductions in undernutrition, that requires great coordination and unity of effort among all actors.”

In some contexts, civil society is synonymous with political opposition. In one of the working groups, a CSO representative from an Early Riser country noted that the government could feel threatened by advocacy that it deemed too aggressive, and that the burden of civil society is “to prove that we are not talking about political human rights, but the rights of a child . . . to live to their full potential.”

In other contexts, the government strives to control and own national initiatives; it is hesitant to accept the support of people outside the government out of concern that this will weaken the image of the government as leader. In still other cases, advocacy efforts falter because of a lack of focus and lack of agreement among civil society representatives.

A representative of a Tanzanian CSO identified three key elements of effective advocacy:

1. Civil society advocates must be credible, accountable, and honest, and they must report activities to a central level.
2. Civil society representatives must not fear to meet ministers on every level.
3. Civil society representatives need to insist on a place at the table so that they can work and engage with government.

As a result of the international meeting, stakeholders issued a formal declaration supporting a collective call to action. The declaration, available in Annex A, urges immediate action on five key issues: 1) national

government leadership; 2) an international leadership structure for nutrition; 3) scaling up interventions; 4) building human capacity; and 5) accountability.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil society participants, while committing to redouble their efforts, identified actions and made recommendations that would improve the effectiveness of nutrition interventions. These include:

“Too many people in our world are hungry most of the time. That is much more than the unpleasant feeling we feel from time to time. It is a miserable, debilitating, humiliating, and frustrating sensation for all who experience it. It weakens, dampens, and saddens the spirit. It restricts people’s potential to grow and empower. For those affected, hunger in childhood becomes a serious lifelong disadvantage.”

David Nabarro, Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition

A. Commit additional resources

Although many high-level global and national leaders are speaking out passionately about undernutrition, efforts to end it still lack adequate resources. Many participants reiterated the importance of mobilizing a clear commitment from global and national leaders; leaders at the global and national levels were urged to make specific, quantifiable financial commitments to the implementation of SUN. The need for accountability was raised at several points during the meeting as well; leaders need to identify and implement financial tracking mechanisms.

A call to mobilize specific financial support from governments, donor agencies, and others could be a useful part of civil society’s agenda for the High Level Meeting on Nutrition in September 2011 (at the time of the U.N. General Assembly session). Clear and deep commitments must be made at both the national and international levels to capitalize on momentum and

support the efforts that are underway. Participants discussed the need to diversify funding for nutrition by bringing in nontraditional and private sector partners.

Malawi was mentioned several times during the meeting as an example of a country whose government has shown immense political will to scale up nutrition, but resource constraints have limited the implementation of its strategies.

B. Cultivate nutrition champions

Nutrition champions are an important and powerful tool to raise awareness and create the political pressure necessary to convert the current momentum and rhetoric into action. These are people, some with name recognition, who are willing and able to speak informatively and broadly about nutrition and advocate strongly for scaling up nutrition. Nutrition champions need to be identified at both national and international levels. They should be representative of a variety of stakeholders and sectors, including government ministries.

C. Measure success

Participants raised the idea of rallying around a specific SUN goal. A clear, measurable goal would help the SUN movement stay on track and measure its progress. How will SUN know if it has met its objectives in 2013 if it hasn’t first defined them? Thus, SUN should now set a bold global target and define in specific terms what success in 2013 would look like for this 1,000 Day movement.

The SUN movement aims to produce transparent results with demonstrable impact. Clear results are critical for the momentum of SUN itself, which, after all, depends on the collective effort of many stakeholders and on being able to secure additional resources. Results based on evidence feed into and lead to programs that are better

designed and more effective; they also help mobilize deeper investment and engagement. Programs should be designed from the outset to collect evidence of their results. As one participant explained, it is “what has objectives and indicators [that] gets measured” and drives programmatic priorities. In addition, stakeholders must embrace and practice mutual accountability based on measurable indicators in order to scale up nutrition in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Civil society has an important role in documenting successes on the ground. Noting the importance of documentation, SUN consultant Paul Isenman also said, “The objective is to contribute to scaling up and achieving results on the ground (not to create heavy or bureaucratic processes).”

While SUN indicators must be specific, they must not oversimplify nutrition by looking at nutrients in isolation.

Paul Weisenfeld reiterated the need to move away from “nutritionism” (focusing on specific nutrients) and toward the goal of a minimum acceptable diet. Lucy Martinez Sullivan and others also emphasized the importance of a shift in the dialogue from a focus on the quantity of food aid to its quality.

D. Focus on what works and build the evidence base

To make the best use of limited funding, it should be targeted at specific proven interventions in early child nutrition, and it should be used to leverage broader partnerships and deeper impact. To this end, SUN helped stakeholders in India better define the country’s target age group for specific nutrition interventions.

Documenting best practices and how to scale them up, as well as how to implement and apply the lessons learned, is critical to achieving optimal results. It is important to demonstrate that working across sectors will achieve strong nutrition outcomes. The working groups identified

“It’s intriguing to me to see how the development community could have lost sight of [food security and child nutrition], because food is so fundamental for life, growth, education . . .”

**Robert B. Zoellick,
President, The World Bank**

as a challenge the lack of a large-scale evidence base for multisectoral approaches. We need to build this evidence base by gathering multisectoral data, despite the prevailing trend in academia to prioritize narrow, targeted (single-sector) research.

Although multisectoral work tends to be slower and produce fewer immediately visible results than work within a single sector, donors must still be able to track their investments. Projects need to have defined indicators that are feasible, meaningful to stakeholders in each sector, and acceptable to donors. It may be necessary to measure process indicators, as opposed to result indicators, particularly since many indicators in the nutrition field are not measurable within the short implementation period of many projects.

A clear message from the meeting plenary was that although prevention and treatment of undernutrition are both important, the balance should be shifting toward prevention, which is both better for individual children and more cost-effective. Making an impact depends on better alignment of all initiatives.

E. Continue dialogue and share learning

The time constraints of this meeting limited the discussion of some issues. The following day, however, SUN’s Task Force C organized a meeting of about 60 civil society representatives, primarily from Early Riser countries, to continue the conversation. Participants agreed that civil society representatives need to ensure ongoing conversations with each other and with governments — through meetings similar to this one, regional or country-level gatherings, and/or electronic communication.

To scale up nutrition as rapidly and efficiently as possible, lessons learned must be communicated so that everyone can benefit from them. Valuable insights can be gleaned both from successful projects (what factors contributed to their success?) and those that may not have been so successful (what should be avoided? where are improvements needed?). Too often, however, lessons learned from programs in one country are not shared with others—and sometimes, lessons from a given community or region don’t reach other parts of the same country. The lessons from countries where SUN has had significant early successes need to be shared in a strategic way

so that good practices can be multiplied. While some solutions transcend all cultures, participants recognized that localities have unique needs. Forums for ongoing dialogue, both within countries and among countries, also create space for specific, contextualized debates.

In order to build momentum, the global community and national governments must learn from and multiply initiatives that have already been successful within one country. Civil society representatives need to share their experiences and conclusions since they are often firsthand observers of a program's impact.

F. Invest in capacity-building

Participants spoke of the distinct capacity-building needs of various levels of government and civil society. In many countries, the Ministry of Agriculture is interested in supporting the effort to scale up nutrition but may lack sufficient understanding of nutrition issues. This is a clear need/gap that must be addressed. Regional and local governments are one step further removed from conceptualizing and planning efforts to scale up nutrition, yet they must have the information and skills needed to implement national nutrition strategies. Thus, there must be mechanisms to ensure that increased capacity does not remain exclusively in national offices, but also permeates to leadership at more local levels.

Several participants expressed their belief that capacity-building is most needed at the community level, because this is where most nutrition decisions are ultimately made. Local organizations often have specific capacity-building needs that are distinct from those at the national level. A participant from Uganda noted that although people on government committees in the cities may be well-educated and trained, leaders in rural communities often lack adequate training. Similarly, a Malawian participant noted that while there is a lot of knowledge at the national level, people at the district level don't have a nutrition background. Bringing people from rural areas to the capital city for a workshop does not automatically give them the skills they need to implement nutritional interventions.

Local civil society organizations have a role in disseminating nutrition information and ensuring the accuracy of information being shared in the community. A participant from Niger gave examples of how people with limited formal education have been given training to

diagnose malnutrition effectively, share basic information with mothers and children, and identify cases that require referral to a better-equipped health facility. In some cases, traditional feeding practices and locally available foods are very nutritious for children, but this local knowledge is threatened by advertisements that imply that processed products like formula and potato chips are better. Local CSOs can help provide more objective information.

There are many successes to draw from and best practices that have been documented. Now, the tools for action must be more widely shared. One suggestion was to establish a database of organizations and people with specific training or skills who would be willing to train others—to build up a pool of trainers. This would ultimately help ensure that correct, useful information reaches the community level.

Nutrition education—perhaps replacing or augmenting home economics—should begin in primary school, in order to strengthen health literacy in the population at large. Intersectoral training should also begin early, when professionals and paraprofessionals are still in formal training programs.

G. Engage indigenous organizations

Participants expressed the need to give more emphasis to local (community level) civil society. Too often, international NGOs are the ones involved in decision making, training, or meetings like this one. Sometimes even the national government solicits the advice of international NGOs more than that of local, community-level civil society organizations. In some contexts, community-level NGOs do the majority of the work but lack political support. This is a problem in terms of sustainability and scale-up—especially since international NGOs tend to plan and implement shorter-term programs. Through the SUN initiative, we need to consider support for very local civil society—groups started by local people. Another problem with not involving local NGOs closely is that programs are then designed without an on-the-ground understanding of the true needs of the local community. Local organizations are also far better equipped to communicate in local languages—which is critical to the success of community programs.

In some situations, an incorrect balance of power emerges because community-based NGOs are seen

as beneficiaries of international NGOs rather than considered equal partners in implementation. Some countries have started to include the participation of local NGOs in the requirements of their calls for proposals. In these cases, local NGOs appreciate the opportunity to gain experience and access to resources through international NGOs, while international NGOs appreciate the contextual understanding and on-the-ground local experience of local NGOs. One working group suggested that the best results will come from partnering with community organizations in Africa in ways that truly enable local people to do the work. Scaling up nutrition should elevate the status of indigenous NGOs.

H. Expand and explain the SUN Movement

While many nutrition interventions are familiar to people working at the country level, the SUN movement has helped focus attention on where to concentrate efforts and on the need to scale up effective programs. What is also new as a result of SUN is the momentum created at the global and national levels among key nutrition stakeholders. A good example of this momentum is the launch of SUN and the 1,000 Special Days Movement in Malawi at the national and district levels. In India, SUN is also fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

However, SUN must become better known among people working internationally and nationally on agriculture and health issues—as well as workers in related sectors such as water and sanitation, social protection, and HIV and AIDS. One participant observed that the only groups that seemed to know about SUN are those with connections to the U.N., such as international NGOs. SUN is perceived by some as a donor-driven initiative.

Participants identified the need for multilingual SUN resources. Representatives from French-speaking African countries expressed significant frustration about the limited resources available in French. They felt that they were unable to participate fully in the meeting because they did not have French-language resources to prepare adequately. Representatives from Spanish-speaking countries echoed this concern. Though some people from non-anglophone countries may be able to act on materials produced in English, broad-based support from national nutrition communities is hindered. A truly global movement requires that important documents be

accessible to civil society around the world, in languages that local civil society representatives understand.

It is also important to clarify the role of SUN with respect to existing nutrition platforms or coordination mechanisms at the country level—in particular, to communicate that SUN's purpose is to support and strengthen ongoing efforts. In Ghana, there has been a lot of activity to scale up nutrition, but very few people are aware of the SUN movement. A representative from Bangladesh told of confusion between SUN and other initiatives, such as REACH.

I. Develop accessible nutrition messages

Both governments and households need to know that maternal and child nutrition is important.

“Mothers everywhere have the same goal: the best for the children.”

**Melinda French Gates, co-chair,
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Clear, simple, and compelling messages, spread around the world, could enhance the visibility of SUN and mobilize deeper investment and engagement among both policymakers and households. Messages should include some basic facts: nutrition interventions work, they are cost effective, and we cannot afford not to scale up nutrition. While noting that messages would be framed differently depending on when and how they are to be used, participants provided examples of messages that could be used nationally and globally: “Scaling up nutrition is low-cost and cost-effective,” “Interventions ultimately pay for themselves,” “Good child nutrition has lifelong results,” and “Good child nutrition helps build a country's future.”

Many organizations and individuals are interested in being involved, but need a clearer way to start taking action—processes, systems, and structures for expanded participation are needed. In Early Riser countries, traditional and social media play a significant role in furthering and disseminating the message.

“I'm really optimistic for SUN, that SUN could do lots of things for our country.”

**Shamim Hayder Talukder,
CEO, Eminence, Bangladesh**

1. <http://www.thousanddays.org/about/>
2. http://www.unscn.org/en/scaling_up_nutrition_sun/
3. Early Riser countries: Any country that is developing policies and action plans to scale up nutrition can participate in the SUN movement. Countries that are already participating in the movement have identified themselves as “Early Risers;” their governments have formally signaled interest in scaling up nutrition. At the meeting on June 13, civil society in Early Riser countries was represented by participants from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and regional organizations in Africa and Asia.
4. Examples include the GAIN Business Alliance, Project Laser Beam, and the Amsterdam Initiative against Malnutrition.
5. *Every Woman Every Child*: A global effort to help achieve MDGs 4 and 5 by mobilizing diverse bodies around the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health, developed through The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Complete video coverage, slide presentations, and the meeting program are available at the meeting websites:
www.bread.org/meeting and
www.concernusa.org/Public/1000Days/

Suggested citation: Bread for the World Institute and Concern Worldwide. 2011. 1,000 Days to Scale Up Nutrition for Mothers and Children: Building Political Commitment. International Meeting Highlights. Washington, D.C.

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