



## The UN Network for nutrition in action

THE **UN NETWORK** FOR NUTRITION IS ACTIVE IN 60 COUNTRIES, WHERE IT IS PROMPTING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TO ADDRESS ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION

In many ways, the **UN [Nutrition] Network (UNN)** is a platform for operationalizing integrated action and partnerships for nutrition, both principles which lie at the core of the 2030 Agenda. It works with diverse stakeholders from government, the United Nations, civil society, businesses, the donor community and researchers to achieve five overarching outcomes (Figure 1). In particular, the **UN Network** works closely with governments to conduct catalytic exercises

such as mapping, which identify gaps, overlaps and opportunities for increased synergies and efficiencies. These analytics\* help governments galvanize and coordinate the efforts of multiple stakeholders across sectors for increased impact. They also underscore the value of employing a systems approach for achieving good nutrition.

The **UN Network** fosters increased convergence of UN actions, helping to

bridge the humanitarian and development agenda and empower the UN to 'deliver as one'. It recognizes that the **UN Network** has a bigger voice as a collective network to advocate for nutrition issues, solutions and the development of context-specific and multi-sectoral national nutrition policies. Similarly, it is able to draw upon a large pool of multi-sectoral expertise and resources, including those of its member agencies (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 1. The five UN Network outcomes (2017-2018)**



### UN NETWORK IN NUMBERS (2017/2018)

- ➔ **60** countries with direct UNN engagement.
- ➔ **12** UN agencies are engaged in UNN at the country level.
- ➔ UNN directly involves around **800** UN staff worldwide, who are dedicated to nutrition, primarily in countries.
- ➔ UNN collective agenda tabled at UN Country Team (UNCT) meetings in over **2/3** of countries.
- ➔ In **95%** of countries, UNN is engaged in nutrition multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs).
- ➔ UN Joint Programmes or programming on nutrition being pursued in **84%** of countries.
- ➔ Approximately **20** countries have conducted the multi-stakeholder mapping exercise, linking humanitarian and development issues.

\* The **UN Network** tools are a means to facilitate inclusive dialogue and collective action for maximizing impact. They stand out from others thanks to their comprehensive scope, compelling visuals as well as their ability to make strategic comparisons and depict inequities (gender, geographic and urban-rural) to ensure that no one is left behind. This helps foster integrated and holistic approaches.

Good nutrition is essential to improving lives and livelihoods, breaking the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition, promoting women's empowerment, fostering peace, and ultimately, driving sustainable development. This understanding underpins the work of the **UN Network**, officially established in 2013. Today, the UN Network is functional in 60 countries, where it is bringing increased coherence to national nutrition efforts.

The **UN Network** is an integral part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, and is increasingly extending its support to other countries. While the **UN Network** was founded by five UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO), it is increasingly engaging other UN agencies at the country level, such as UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNDP, UNOCHA, UNHCR and ILO. This expanded membership is helping the **UN Network** achieve its goal and fully embrace the multi-dimensional nature of nutrition. It is also helping to

position nutrition as a maker and marker of sustainable development. In addition, the **UN Network** is encouraging countries to accelerate implementation of commitments to the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) in pursuit of established nutrition targets. Where requested and resource permitting, the **UN Network** mobilizes its intensive support service, REACH, to catalyze and reinforce these efforts at the country level (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. UNN core business areas and services**

- UNN Advisory Services**  
 Support enhanced UNN functionality at country level, covering issues such as wider membership, leadership in-country and strengthening national nutrition agenda (including MSPs).
- Policy to Action**  
 Bringing country perspectives to global discourse at CFS, SUN Nutrition Hub and other major events.
- Multi-sectoral Technical Assistance (TA) Facility**  
 Nutrition capacity gap assessments, mapping, REACH\* support, etc.
- Knowledge Management**  
 UNN webinar series, newsletters, study visits and other South-South learning to foster effective knowledge-sharing and brokering.

\* REACH is one aspect of the UN Network's multi-sectoral TA facility. With 10 years of experience in over 20 countries in Africa and Asia, it is uniquely positioned to offer neutral facilitation and capacity strengthening support to countries to enhance their MSPs for nutrition coordination. Where deployed, REACH facilitators are an integral part of the UN Network, helping to give impetus to this greater effort.

## KEY RESULTS <sup>1</sup>

- UN Nutrition Inventory** exercise spurred expanded UNN membership in several countries  
*e.g. Burundi, Haiti, Myanmar and Philippines*
- Non-traditional nutrition actors** joined UNN  
*e.g. UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHRC, UNOPS, UN WOMEN, and World Bank*
- Increasing alignment between UNN and World Bank** efforts to leverage comparative advantages for shared nutrition results  
*e.g. Liberia, Madagascar and Myanmar*
- UN leadership** – UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and Heads of Agencies – increasingly engaged in the country UN Networks  
*e.g. UNRC chairing UNN in Congo and UNRC Office jointly chairing UNN in the Comoros*
- Findings of UNN analytic exercises** guided the development of national nutrition strategies and/or plans, including Policy and Plan Overview  
*e.g. Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Lesotho, Myanmar, Niger, Tanzania, Senegal and Sierra Leone*
- Heightened attention to equity, nutrition in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and adolescent nutrition** through:  
*Multi-sectoral Nutrition Overviews conducted in 19 countries and UNN's active engagement in strategic nutrition events*
- UNN advocating to close the gap between humanitarian and development assistance**  
*UNN working with Global Nutrition Cluster and UNOCHA to link Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) to national development plans*
- UN Nutrition Capacity Gap Assessment** conducted in 6 countries to target capacity development activities to accelerate progress since 2016  
*e.g. Burkina Faso, Chad, Lesotho, Ghana and Senegal*
- UNN identified as technical lead for mapping** to support mapping scale-up between 2018-2020  
*Mapping exercise mobilized additional stakeholders and sectors to support nutrition outcomes in multiple countries*
- Effective nutrition advocacy** bolsters political commitment to nutrition  
*e.g. UNN in Sierra Leone, with hands on support of REACH Facilitator, lobbied Parliamentarians and political parties in lead up to elections to address all forms of malnutrition, leveraging UNN analytics*
- Mapping data used in the SUN MEAL<sup>2</sup> and to track implementation status of national nutrition plans**  
*e.g. Mali and Senegal*
- UNN spurred increased UN Joint Programmes or programming** on nutrition, leading to nutrition gains  
*A UN joint programme (FAO, UNICEF and WFP) prompts increased convergence in Zimbabwe, with notable stunting reductions and increased dietary diversity observed*
- UNN triggered systematic integration of nutrition in the UNDAF**, positioning nutrition as an outcome  
*e.g. Burkina Faso, Chad, Haiti, Lesotho, Mozambique, Myanmar and Senegal*
- UNN's REACH facilitators** increasingly acknowledged as effective **knowledge brokers** at country level  
*Leveraging existing nutrition resources and promoting complementarity*

1. Results reported as of July 2018.  
 2. MEAL refers to the SUN Movement's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning system.

With contributions to the UN Network Secretariat from:



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**UN Network**

To learn more about how the **UN Network** is supporting country-level action visit <https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/> or write to [unnetworkforsun@wfp.org](mailto:unnetworkforsun@wfp.org)

**UN Network Secretariat:** Via Cesare Giulio Viola, 68/70 - 00148 Rome, Italy