3. UNN functionality at country level
3.1. SUMMARY TRENDS IN UNN FUNCTIONALITY

Overall, the vast majority (90 percent) of UNNs at the country level were highly functional in 2019 according to the UNN functionality index+ ratings. This compares to 82 percent of country UNNs which were classified as highly functional in the previous UNN reporting exercise, after adjusting the 2018 data for comparability purposes. These scores not only reflect a high degree of collaboration among United Nations agencies in ensuring the pursuit of national nutrition objectives, but also an increasing trend. A mere 2 percent of country UNNs were within the low functionality range while 8 percent corresponded to the medium functionality range in the 2018-19 reporting cycle. This meant that a number of countries (e.g. Ghana, Mali, Viet Nam), which had moderately functional UNNs in 2018 later became highly functional in 2019.

Further analysis of the 2019 reporting data indicates that the average country UNN functionality score was 9.08, corresponding to a high level of functionality. This compares to an average of 9.30 among country UNNs that had ever benefitted from UNN-REACH support and an average score of 9.63 among countries that received such support during the reporting cycle. While the difference is small, these findings suggest that UNN-REACH is an effective mechanism for enhancing UNN performance at the country level. They also may indicate that the UNN-REACH model has improved over time. With that said, high levels of functionality were also observed in some countries that used existing platforms (e.g. Development Partners Groups, nutrition working groups, combined UN-Donor Networks) to bring UN actors together within the context of promoting collective action on nutrition.

A breakdown of these composite scores is provided below for each of the ten indicators included in the 2019 UNN functionality index+, comparing those to the adjusted 2018 figures. The results show improvement in seven of the ten indicators, no change in one of the indicators (chair(s) nominated) and a slight decline in the remaining two indicators (support to the SUN Government Focal Point and UN joint programming).

Further analysis of the 2019 reporting data indicates that the average country UNN functionality score was 9.08, corresponding to a high level of functionality. This compares to an average of 9.30 among country UNNs that had ever benefitted from UNN-REACH support and an average score of 9.63 among countries that received such support during the reporting cycle. While the difference is small, these findings suggest that UNN-REACH is an effective mechanism for enhancing UNN performance at the country level. They also may indicate that the UNN-REACH model has improved over time. With that said, high levels of functionality were also observed in some countries that used existing platforms (e.g. Development Partners Groups, nutrition working groups, combined UN-Donor Networks) to bring UN actors together within the context of promoting collective action on nutrition.

A breakdown of these composite scores is provided below for each of the ten indicators included in the 2019 UNN functionality index+, comparing those to the adjusted 2018 figures. The results show improvement in seven of the ten indicators, no change in one of the indicators (chair(s) nominated) and a slight decline in the remaining two indicators (support to the SUN Government Focal Point and UN joint programming).

17. See Annex D for the countries that have received UNN-REACH support.
3.2. COMPOSITION OF THE UNN

MEMBERSHIP

During the 2019 reporting cycle, a total of sixteen United Nations agencies were engaged in country UNNs up from twelve agencies recorded in 2018. This shows enhanced ownership of the Network and heightened awareness of nutrition’s multisectorality. Moreover, the increasing membership among United Nations agencies that have not typically engaged in the nutrition arena reflects an improved understanding of the role different sectors can play in the country’s nutrition agenda. Examples of non-traditional agencies now participating in the UNN include: the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN). In addition, the World Bank had become increasingly engaged in the Network at country level, going from being a member in one country in 2018 to six countries in 2019. The highest number of agencies engaged in a single country UNN were recorded by Burundi, Myanmar and Zimbabwe, which all had eight agencies. All three countries had undertaken the UN Nutrition Inventory exercise in years past, which largely catalysed the expanded membership.

In addition, more United Nations agencies had appointed focal points for country UNNs in 2019 than in previous years. Nearly all countries (97 percent) reported that focal points had been appointed by at least three different United Nations agencies in the country. Together, this signals a high commitment among the agencies to leverage UNN as a platform for integrated nutrition actions.
BOX 2. Window for learning
Harnessing global momentum to intensify multi-sectoral/stakeholder nutrition action

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SUN Movement, the endorsement of the Second International Conference on Nutrition’s (ICN2) Framework for Action (FFA) and the ensuing proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) have provided greater windows of opportunity to advance the nutrition agenda at country level. Nutrition is inextricably linked to the SDGs and secures a return of $16 on every $1 invested. More specifically, nutrition is intertwined with the SDGs through: (a) sustainable food production (leading to SDGs 2, 13, 14 and 15); (b) systems infrastructure (SDGs 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12); (c) health systems (SDG 3); (d) equity and inclusion (SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10); and (e) peace and stability (SDG 16). Due to its multisectorality, nutrition is also an entry point for establishing and strengthening partnerships (SDG 17), which in turn, can enhance the enabling environment for realizing the other SDGs. This makes nutrition both a viable area for intervention and an outcome of development. It also underscores the need for wide UNN membership, including non-traditional agencies, in more countries.

Recognizing the potential, the UNN Secretariat has encouraged country UNNs to rally a growing number of United Nations agencies in pursuit of positive nutrition outcomes and subsequent development gains. This work encompasses efforts to ensure that the ‘big’ UN nutrition players (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) are fulfilling their roles as well as those to encourage others to come forward. While newer to the scene, these non-traditional agencies make key contributions to nutrition. The expanded membership is helping the United Nations System embrace the multi-dimensional nature of nutrition and enabling it, through the UNN, to set in motion a holistic approach in line with recent calls for UN reform.

By helping country actors understand how nutrition is interlinked and mutually reinforces the SDGs, the UNN is helping stakeholders break down silos. The following infographic depicts the links between nutrition and the respective SDGs, identifying concrete actions that can be taken under the auspices of a collective UNN.

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY TO IMPROVING NUTRITION
Collective actions building on comparative advantages; Establishment and strengthening of MSPs; and Promoting a systems approach (e.g. food, health).

ENDING MALNUTRITION SUPPORTS STABLE SOCIETIES
Food assistance; Livelihoods support; Nutrition support in emergencies; and Strengthening institutions to address inequalities, injustice and violence.

BIODIVERSITY IS CRUCIAL FOR GOOD NUTRITION
Food composition data for locally available plant foods; Sustainably manage forests; and Combat desertification.

WATER IS HOME TO NUTRITIOUS FOODS – FISH & MORE
Nutrition-sensitive legislation/regulations on fish harvesting/farming; Cold chain support; Aquaculture and capture fisheries for production of animal-source foods; Nutrition education to support dietary diversity.

DIETARY PATTERNS IMPACT CLIMATE CHANGE AND VICE VERSA
Climate change mitigation and adaptation; and Impact reduction and early warning.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION YIELDS HEALTHY FOODS
Food systems management; Promotion of small-scale farmer rights, Organic agriculture; Locally produced foods for consumption; and Support indigenous knowledge of local foods.

URBANIZATION HAS +VE/-VE IMPACTS ON NUTRITION
Urban gardens; Promotion of healthy diets, incl. overweight/obesity prevention; Legislation/regulations on portion size control; Enhanced links btwn. farmers and urban markets; and Urban food safety measures (e.g. for street food).

FROM STUNTING TO OBESITY, INEQUITIES CONTRIBUTE TO MALNUTRITION
Various social protection schemes – universal health care, conditional cash transfers and vouchers; Price subsidies, Legislation on compulsory education for girls and boys; and Land tenure and trade legislation.

GOOD NUTRITION POWERS INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
Operational research on food technologies for healthy diets; Fortification; Food labelling; Food waste reduction schemes; Microcredit for small-scale farmers and businesses/entrepreneurs, especially women; Promotion and protection of breastfeeding in the workplace; and Marketing regulations on food and beverages.
Learn more about how the UN Network supports countries by visiting www.unnetworkforun.org.

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY TO IMPROVING NUTRITION

- Collective actions building on comparative advantages
- Establishment and strengthening of MSPs
- Promoting a systems approach (e.g. food, health)

ENDING MALNUTRITION SUPPORTS STABLE SOCIETIES

- Food assistance
- Livelihoods support
- Nutrition support in emergencies
- Strengthening institutions to address inequalities, injustice and violence

BIODIVERSITY IS CRUCIAL FOR GOOD NUTRITION

- Food composition data for locally available plant foods
- Sustainably manage forests
- Combat desertification

WATER IS HOME TO NUTRITIOUS FOODS

- Nutrition-sensitive legislation/regulations on fish harvesting/farming
- Cold chain support
- Aquaculture and capture fisheries for production of animal-source foods
- Nutrition education to support dietary diversity

DIETARY PATTERNS IMPACT CLIMATE CHANGE AND VICE VERSA

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Impact reduction and early warning

FROM STUNTING TO OBESITY, INEQUITIES CONTRIBUTE TO MALNUTRITION

- Various social protection schemes – universal health care, conditional cash transfers and vouchers
- Price subsidies
- Legislation on compulsory education for girls and boys
- Land tenure and trade legislation

GOOD NUTRITION POWERS INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Operational research on food technologies for healthy diets
- Fortification
- Food labelling
- Food waste reduction schemes
- Microcredit for small-scale farmers and businesses/entrepreneurs, especially women
- Promotion and protection of breastfeeding in the workplace
- Marketing regulations on food and beverages

URBANIZATION HAS +VE/-VE IMPACTS ON NUTRITION

- Urban gardens
- Promotion of healthy diets, incl. overweight/obesity prevention
- Legislation/regulations on portion size control
- Enhanced links between farmers and urban markets
- Urban food safety measures (e.g. for street food)

SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION YIELDS HEALTHY FOODS

- Food systems management
- Promotion of small-scale farmer rights
- Organic agriculture
- Locally produced foods for consumption
- Support indigenous knowledge of local foods

ADDRESSING IRON DEFICIENCY CAN BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

- Minimum wage
- Maternity protection
- ILO occupational safety and health convention no. 155 (1981)
- Microfinance/credit

GOOD SANITATION CAN HELP PREVENT MALNUTRITION

- Water and sanitation infrastructure
- Handwashing education/promotion
- Household water treatment
- Food hygiene promotion
- Provision of water during special circumstances

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT SUPPORTS NUTRITION GAINS

- Prevention of adolescent pregnancy
- Family planning
- Take-home school rations targeting adolescent girls
- Microcredit targeting women
- Land tenure reform

GOOD NUTRITION DRIVES UP IQ LEVELS

- School meals
- Deworming
- Nutrition and health education
- WASH interventions in schools
- Increasing attendance at schools, technical/vocational education

GOOD NUTRITION MAKES FOR GOOD HEALTH

- BFHI; Iron/folic acid supplementation
- Management of SAM
- Counselling on healthy diets to prevent overweight, obesity and NCDS
- Universal health care

GOOD NUTRITION INCREASES EARNING CAPACITY

- Right to Food
- Food vouchers
- Fortification
- Food safety legislation
- Maternity protection
- International code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes

GOOD NUTRITION SUPPORTS PRODUCTIVE LIVES

- Right to Food
- Food vouchers
- Fortification
- Food safety legislation
- Maternity protection
- Universal health care

ADDRESSING IRON DEFICIENCY CAN BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

- Minimum wage
- Maternity protection
- ILO occupational safety and health convention no. 155 (1981)
- Microfinance/credit

GOOD NUTRITION INCREASES EARNING CAPACITY

- Public works programmes
- Price subsidies
- Microcredit
- Unemployment insurance
- Unconditional cash transfers – all undertaken with a nutrition lens

With contributions to the UN Network Secretariat from
Due to the complex web of interconnected dynamics and forces, the UNN Secretariat has also been positioning this holistic perspective in the context of a systems approach. Adopting a systems approach helps to ensure that nutrition efforts go beyond SDG2 on “Zero Hunger”. It also reinforces the need for integrated responses that implicate five systems, namely: the food system (from farm to fork to disposal); the health system (from health services to supplies, equipment, workforce and information systems); the education system (from teachers to education infrastructure, resources and curricula); the social protection system (from safety nets to technology for income transfers and information systems); and the water and sanitation system (from infrastructure to related equipment, supplies and individual behaviours). It recognizes that each system is comprised of a set of actors, services and programmes backed by policies and other governance mechanisms, all of which can be channelled to support good nutrition.20

In basic terms, a systems approach explores what people eat, how that affects the environment, how people manage their health, which education opportunities they pursue, how that affects their nutrition and future earnings, which safety nets are in place and who has access to them, among other considerations. It also acknowledges that these dynamics and actions within and between systems are interrelated. Consequently, the systems orientation entails elaborating coherent public policies and programmes that address supply and demand sides, while understanding which factors and forces influence peoples’ decisions. It also helps elevate accountability for nutrition results beyond sectoral schemas and promote sustainable capacity strengthening in order to target the root causes of nutrition challenges.

The triple-burden of malnutrition — undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity — provides an unprecedented opportunity to promote and pursue a systems approach. As outlined in the Global Nutrition Report (2017), triple duty actions can be taken to achieve nutrition targets and address other development challenges, triggering improved outcomes across the SDGs. In addition to consolidating the efforts of individual United Nations agencies, UNN support to MSPs enables government authorities to mobilize a systems approach by helping them more effectively bring together and coordinate diverse stakeholders to work towards collective action and achieve scalable impact. Under this premise, the broader the UNN’s reach, the greater its potential to drive transformational change, where people and countries come out as the nutrition winners.

LEADERSHIP

The involvement of UN leadership in the UNN helps to positively reinforce multi-sectoral action so that UN support goes beyond the immediate nutrition community (e.g. nutritionists). In 2019, most country UNNs reported employing a rotational or co-chairing system for leading the Network, allowing for equity in leadership among the participating United Nations agencies. Nearly all of the countries (93 percent) reported the presence of a chair/co-chair(s) to spearhead the work of the collective network, with UNICEF and WFP most frequently carrying out that role. While the founding UNN agencies tend to lead the Network, additional United Nations entities, such as UNDCF and UNDP also served as co-chairs in Papua New Guinea. The World Bank is also co-chairing the Network in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. In Congo, the UNRC chaired, while in Costa Rica, the UNRC was engaged as a formal member of the Network. A number of other countries (fourteen) benefitted from strong UNRC engagement in UNN activities, including: Bolivia; Burkina Faso; Burundi; the Comoros; Indonesia; Lesotho; Liberia; Mali; Nepal; Nigeria; the Philippines; Sierra Leone; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. Overall, this shows increased ownership of the UNN as well as a more sophisticated understanding of the nutrition beyond those traditionally involved in the nutrition agenda.


Formal Versus Informal UNN Arrangements

According to the findings of the 2019 UNN reporting exercise, UN colleagues worked together on nutrition issues through pre-existing platforms in lieu of a formally established country UNN in some cases. Countries such as Ghana, Indonesia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, reported the presence of Development Partners Groups or combined UN-Donor Networks, within which United Nations agencies joined forces. Others such as the Central African Republic (CAR) and Eswatini noted the presence of nutrition working groups, where United Nations agencies engaged in joint discussions at the technical level to foster the achievement of national nutrition targets. Irrespective of the arrangements utilized, the ‘country UNNs’ have taken steps to formulate a collective nutrition agenda and engage the UNCT accordingly. In some cases, such as Ethiopia and Nigeria, the use of existing, context-specific platforms was equally effective for facilitating UN collaboration on nutrition. Both country UNNs received the maximum score on the functionality index+. With that said, this arrangement may be more conducive to country contexts, where government nutrition capacity is relatively high, as in the two countries stated above.
FIGURE 11. Composition of the UNN, by country (2019)

With contributions to the UN Network Secretariat from:
3.3. SEIZING UNCT MEETINGS TO PROMOTE THE COLLECTIVE NUTRITION AGENDA

The UNCT represents the foremost inter-agency coordination and decision-making mechanism at the country level. Led by the UNRC, the UNCT comprises the representatives of the resident United Nations agencies in the country. As a result, UNCT meetings offer a strategic avenue for raising the profile of nutrition within the UN family. Presenting the nutrition agenda at UNCT meetings also provides an opportunity to build a stronger UNN by engaging a larger group of UN entities and to increase buy-in for collective responses towards the achievement of national nutrition targets and the SDGs. The involvement of UNRCs also encourages government leadership on nutrition at the highest political level. In 2019, all country UNNs except for Botswana inferred the presence of a collective nutrition workplan or strategy/agenda, independent of the network arrangement pursued.

FIGURE 12. Trends in articulating and positioning a common UN agenda on nutrition

In Senegal, the combined UN-Donor Network developed a common nutrition agenda, covering the 2019–2023 period, which is aligned to the country’s Strategic Multi-sectoral Nutrition Plan (Plan Stratégique Multisectoriel de Nutrition, PSMN). Other countries (e.g. El Salvador, Nepal, Zambia) looked to the UNSDCF, formerly known as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework or UNDAF, as the primary document from which a common nutrition agenda was established. Furthermore, the 2019 reporting data indicates that the nutrition agenda was more frequently tabled at UNCT meetings, with 73 percent of countries adopting this practice compared to 67 percent in 2018. This also shows a trend towards more United Nations agencies becoming involved in the nutrition arena, providing scope for increased joint programming on nutrition and individual agency programmes that are more nutrition-smart.

21 For the purposes of this reporting exercise, the inclusion of nutrition within the UNSDCF (formerly UNDAF) was also considered to attest the presence of a UNN nutrition strategy or workplan.
3.4. WORKING TOWARDS INCREASED COHESIVENESS IN UN NUTRITION PROGRAMMING

JOINT UN FRAMEWORKS

The efforts of the UNCT are underpinned by a renewed UNSDCF, jointly developed by the United Nations agencies in consultation with the host government. The UNSDCF serves as the most important UN tool for planning and implementing development activities at the country level. In 2019, 55 of 60 country UNNs (92 percent) supported efforts to either develop or update the nutrition content of joint UN frameworks, including UNSDCFs and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). This figure represents a notable increase (12 percentage points) from levels recorded in the previous reporting cycle, signalling that UN entities had stepped up efforts to mainstream nutrition in different sectors and within joint UN frameworks.

These frameworks provide a vital opportunity to plot the UN’s path towards scaling up nutrition actions (humanitarian and development) across sectors. In addition, the inclusion of nutrition-specific and sensitive provisions, indicators or outcomes within joint UN frameworks enable nutrition to be leveraged as a cross-cutting catalyst for achieving targets throughout the SDGs. When included as a pillar, nutrition is more apt to benefit from the allocation of human and financial resources. Nutrition mainstreaming in joint UN frameworks also enhances opportunities for United Nations agencies to undertake joint nutrition programming, including UN Joint Programmes.

In humanitarian contexts, the integration of nutrition in the UNSDCF allows UNCTs to pay close attention to nutrition considerations in order to facilitate smooth transitions from emergency response to recovery and development assistance. In Mozambique, UNICEF, WFP and WHO jointly contributed to the nutrition component of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Cyclone Idai (March 2019) and Cyclone Kenneth (April 2019) through active engagement in the country’s nutrition cluster.

Sri Lanka’s UNN undertook efforts to ensure the inclusion of nutrition as a standalone outcome in the UNSDCF. It also worked to develop a nutrition strategy, annual plan and a joint proposal to secure funding for UN joint programming on nutrition. In Cambodia, nutrition was integrated into two outcomes of the new UNDAF (2019–2023), and furthermore, positioned as an accelerator of sustainable development, thanks to the country UNN.

UN JOINT PROGRAMMING

Joint programmes provide an opportunity to pool resources, capacities and experiences from different agencies to address the immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition. Joint programmes are considered to be in place when a set of activities has been formalized through joint workplans and budgets, involving two or more United Nations agencies with the intention of achieving results aligned with the country’s nutrition priorities. On the other hand, joint programming refers to a less formalized approach, whereby complementary activities are undertaken by two or more United Nations agencies within the same geographic area and/or for the same target group.

During the reporting period, 68 percent of country UNNs (41 out of 60) had implemented joint UN nutrition programmes or programming. The main

---

thematic areas of the 100-plus joint projects reported include: food consumption practices for healthy diets; IYCF; and the management of acute malnutrition. About one-third of these (36 percent) were categorized under “other thematic areas”, thus falling outside the main categories cited in the 2019 UNN reporting questionnaire. This illustrates the dynamic nature of UN nutrition programming and emerging areas of activity carried out over the period. It also indicates that the provided list was too long, as various countries selected ‘other’ rather than screening all the options.

Furthermore, the majority of joint programming (62 percent) was exclusively development-oriented or reflected a combination of humanitarian and development components (17 percent). The remaining 21 percent of these efforts included humanitarian-only interventions. With that said, these statistics should be interpreted with caution understanding that not all countries faced emergencies. The breakdown, nevertheless, indicates that country UNNs are actively taking measures to bridge the humanitarian-development divide, and that further efforts are needed to increase UN programming coherence.

Most countries highlighted the lack of adequate human and financial resources as hindering the formulation of joint nutrition programming. Other factors, such as weak coordination capacity, competing priorities and different operational modalities used by the United Nations agencies, were also highlighted as barriers. Despite this, the country responses from the 2019 reporting exercise reflect a rise in efforts to undertake UN joint programming on nutrition, when compared with the UNN baseline assessment (60 percent) in 2016. Additional information is provided in section 5.4, where the capacity for UN joint programming on nutrition is further examined.

FIGURE 13. Joint programming tendencies — development, humanitarian or both (2019)
3.5. UNN WITHIN COUNTRY-LEVEL, NUTRITION COORDINATION ARCHITECTURE

TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE SUN GOVERNMENT FOCAL POINT OR OTHER GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

While the UNN is a UN platform, its activity goes beyond the UN circle. As many as 55 country UNNs (92 percent) reported efforts to provide TA to the SUN Government Focal Point or other government authorities in 2019. This is important in that the SUN Focal Point is a government official responsible for uniting nutrition actors and fostering an environment conducive for multi-sectoral/stakeholder nutrition action, including within higher echelons of government. As such, the SUN Government Focal Point often leads national MSPs, convening regular meetings and serving as the interface between different government offices (e.g. ministries) and other stakeholder networks. For this reason, the ability of a country to mobilize a multi-sectoral/stakeholder approach to nutrition is in part contingent on the skills of the SUN Focal Point and his/her standing with other actors, particularly within Government. Moreover, the Focal Point typically fulfils this role in addition to other duties, meaning that the s/he often does not have the luxury of carrying out SUN duties on a full-time basis. This reality further underscores the relevance of the UNN’s support to SUN Government Focal Points, including that provided through UNN-REACH. The UNN mechanism also allows for greater efficiency in leveraging the joint capacity of the agencies represented in the Network as well as their respective tools and guidance.

FIGURE 14. Technical support provided to the SUN Government Focal Point at national and sub-national levels (2019)

- National & sub-national
- Only national

With contributions to the UN Network Secretariat from:
The majority of these efforts took place at both national and sub-national levels (Figure 14). This field presence distinguishes the UNN from some other stakeholders in the SUN community and represents one of its strengths. In Namibia, the UNN seconded a nutritionist to the Ministry of Health and Social Services to provide technical support to the SUN Government Focal Point. In Mali and Sierra Leone, the UNN Secretariat in collaboration with the country UNN, supported the SUN Government Focal Point by orchestrating the Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping exercise, which clarified the nutrition landscape across sectors. The efforts of the UNN-REACH Facilitator, who works directly with Sierra Leone’s SUN Secretariat in the Vice President’s Office, were pivotal in the mapping as well as supporting the SUN Government Focal Point, more broadly. The mapping exercise is one example whereby UNN support (e.g. on data collection and validation, training on data analysis) was carried out at the national and sub-national levels. In Burundi, the country UNN assisted the SUN Government Focal Point in developing Terms of Reference for the new Multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Plan, 2019–2023 (Plan Stratégique Multisectoriel de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle, PSMSAN).

Cameroon’s UNN provided support to the SUN Government Focal Point for the validation of the national nutrition policy and its operational plan. In CAR, the UNN contributed to the development of the national nutrition policy and the country’s 2019 Nutrition Road Map, coaching the SUN Government Focal Point through both processes.

“The support provided by the UN Network has been very helpful for capturing partner’s interventions, including the geographic and population coverage of nutrition actions, which greatly inform the district councils’ annual work plans”
Abu Daffae, SUN Government Focal Point, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Sierra Leone.

**BOX 3. Window for learning**

UNN support proves pivotal in formulating Myanmar’s new national nutrition plan, giving rise to a new nutrition era in the country

Exemplary work was undertaken in Myanmar, where the UNN (particularly the UNN-REACH facilitators), helped the SUN Government Focal Point and the National Nutrition Committee (NNC) shepherd the consultative process to develop the new multi-sectoral national nutrition plan (MS-NPAN, 2018-2022), including its common results framework and capacity strengthening provisions. Thanks to context-specific analyses and visuals generated through UNN’s multi-sectoral toolkit along with other UNN knowledge management resources, such as the Compendium of Actions for Nutrition (CAN), the facilitators were able to help the SUN Government Focal Point position nutrition as a multi-sectoral issue and stimulate inter-ministerial dialogue and collaboration. These materials informed planning discussions and helped keep them solutions-oriented so that the provisions of the plan, launched in July 2018, responded to Myanmar’s needs. As a result, seven states/regions were prioritized in the plan, taking into account malnutrition levels and intervention coverage.

Another critical success factor was the UNN’s wide membership, which includes eight agencies. This enabled the Network to actively engage multiple sectors, where nutrition took root. Additionally, strong collaboration with other SUN networks, such as the SUN Civil Society Network and the SUN Donor Network, further helped to nurture relations between the SUN Government Focal Point and nutrition-related ministries (e.g. Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation; Education; Health and Sports; and Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement), contributing to this milestone. With the MS-NPAN in place, the government, United Nations, civil society and donor activities are now better aligned and the enabling environment is more conducive to scaling up nutrition interventions. Mothers, children, adolescent girls and other vulnerable groups are sure to benefit from these efforts.

---

23. These include: FAO; UNFPA; UNICEF; UNOPS; UN WOMEN; WFP; WHO and the World Bank.
ENGAGEMENT IN MSPs

MSPs are important for facilitating the coordinated engagement of various actors and sectors in order to employ a systems approach, which fosters person-centred interventions for increased nutrition impact. Furthermore, “MSPs are seen as vital forums for developing policies, plans and CRFs and for mutual accountability.”24 In 2019, 93 percent of country UNNs had reportedly engaged in MSPs, similar to the level observed in the previous reporting period (91 percent). For instance, Pakistan’s UNN engaged in the MSPs (national and provincial) to contribute to the development of the country’s new Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy and encourage the adoption of the National Action Plan for Nutrition. In Lao PDR, where the UNN functions as a part of a larger Development Partners Group, the Network participated in the meetings of the National Nutrition Committee as well as the National Nutrition Forum. The Network also supported eighteen provincial nutrition committees as well as those operating at the district level.

In Kyrgyzstan, the UNN worked to enhance the MSP’s ability to coordinate a multi-sectoral approach to food security and nutrition. These efforts involved initial advocacy, targeting the Prime Minister’s Office and Members of Parliament. They also attracted a study visit by the Inter-sectoral Coordination Council of the Republic of Tajikistan. Costa Rica’s country UNN contributed to the development of a Theory of Change for the MSP. In addition, the UNN lobbied for the inclusion of the Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping exercise as a means for attaining a well-functioning Nutrition Directorate. Country actors are also looking to the mapping to help establish an empowered Civil Society Network to further animate a vibrant MSP. In Bangladesh, the UNN is an integral part of the MSP and engages with multiple sectors represented in government, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and academia. The country UNN has also contributed to multi-sectoral capacity strengthening for nutrition by delivering trainings to government officials from different ministries, including those that engage in the MSP. Further information about how the UNN supported nutrition coordination architecture at the country level is provided in section 5 on Joint UN efforts for nutrition capacity strengthening.25

25. See subsection on Promoting multi-sectoral/stakeholder engagement in nutrition.