Cognizant of the inextricable links between gender and nutrition, the UN Network is committed to placing gender equality and women’s empowerment at the centre of its work at all levels. To this end, the UN Network is promoting gender-sensitive nutrition action across its outcomes as part of greater efforts to operationalize a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral approach to nutrition. The UN Network has sought to mainstream gender consciousness throughout its activities as it relates to all five UN Network outcomes.

**OUTCOME 1 | Increased awareness of the causes of malnutrition and potential solutions**

The UN Network calls attention to gender inequities through its tools such as Multi-sectoral Nutrition Overviews (MNO), by including gender indicators and making our nutrition dashboards more gender-sensitive, developed in various countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique and Rwanda. These efforts have been helpful in identifying data gaps, stimulating demand for increased gender-sensitive data.

**A participatory film in the Satkhira district of Bangladesh:** Community activists and nutrition workers were equipped with basic video skills and equipment to tell their stories about how different aspects of their lives impact their nutrition status. The UN Network’s catalytic arm, REACH, set this into motion, intent to make noise about the stark gender disparities and how certain gender dynamics can be detrimental to nutrition. The film is a call to action for the government and other stakeholders in-country, urging them to intensify action. Community members, including adolescent girls, speak out about the role of: women's status and rights; dietary diversity, including during pregnancy and local food taboos; infant and young child feeding practices, acknowledging the social norms that influence them; food availability; income and livelihoods; water, sanitation and hygiene.

**OUTCOME 2 | Strengthened and increasingly resourced national policies and programmes**

Using the Policy and Plan Overview tool in Mozambique: The UN Network’s Policy and Plan Overview (PPO) helps to visualize the landscape of sectoral and multi-sectoral policies, strategies, plans and legal frameworks that exist in a country. In Mozambique, the PPO exercise revealed that there is scope to better reflect nutrition in the majority of governance frameworks on gender and youth.

The overview encompassed national policies, strategies and plans, such as: Gender Strategy of the Agricultural Sector; the Ministry of Women and Social Action’s Strategic Plan; the Family Planning and Contraception Strategy; and the Youth Integral Development Strategy. This was crucial for portraying women’s empowerment and adolescent nutrition as levers for addressing stunting as well as for the country’s broader development. The findings have fed into advocacy work undertaken with nutrition champions such as Graça Machel. The UN Network has supported similar work in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, through REACH, which has helped to position nutrition as an entry point for addressing gender inequities.

**OUTCOME 3 | Increased human and institutional capacity to support the scaling up of nutrition actions**

Nutrition capacity for scaling-up action in countries: Through its Nutrition Capacity Assessment Guidance package, the UN Network supports countries to...
comprehensively assess multi-sectoral and sectoral capacity needs for effective scale-up of nutrition actions as well as the subsequent design of a capacity development response that is integrated into a broader national capacity development agenda for nutrition.

In 2018, Burkina Faso carried out a nutrition capacity assessment, adapting a guidance package developed by the UN Network Secretariat in collaboration with the founding UN Network agencies. The assessment identified capacity gaps – both institutional and individual. While the assessment primarily focused on national nutrition coordination mechanisms, it also assessed the structures or technical directorates of sectors, including social protection and gender. It found that nutrition focal points within the different sectors: (1) do not always participate in the multi-stakeholder platform; (2) do not always share information within their sectors; and (3) often do not hold a strategic position in the ministry and thus exert little influence. The assessment also led to the formulation of a capacity development plan to address these findings. Similar assessments have been conducted in Chad, Ghana, Lesotho, Nepal and Senegal with UN Network support.

OUTCOME 4 | Increased efficiency and accountability of national efforts

The UN Network-supported Nutrition Stakeholder & Action Mapping collects data from both government and development partners to provide a comprehensive view of which stakeholders are supporting the country-defined Core Nutrition Actions. In response to country demand, the UN Network recently conducted a second round of multi-sectoral mapping in Senegal. The exercise engaged thirteen ministries (e.g. Women, Family and Gender; Health and Social Action; Good Governance and Child Protection; and National Education), and served as a baseline for the country’s new multi-sectoral action plan on nutrition. The mapping covered a range of actions, including gender-sensitive actions such as iron and folic acid supplementation for adolescent girls, literacy training for women and the provision of credit accounts for women. The inclusion of these actions affirmed the central role of women in nutrition, starting from conception. The exercise used the UN Network mapping tool, developed by REACH, and integrated mapping data into the national M&E nutrition platform to support periodic implementation tracking of the country’s nutrition action plan.

Ministry-specific coverage dashboards are helping to ensure that those most in need are receiving the support they need for good nutrition.

OUTCOME 5 | Harmonized and coordinated UN nutrition efforts

Engagement with UN agencies committed to gender equality: The UN Network is engaging with UN agencies beyond the five founding agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) in an effort to harness the full potential of the UN System. In particular, the engagement of non-traditional nutrition actors, such as UNFPA and UN WOMEN, in the UN Network is helping to bring gender parity to the forefront of country-level nutrition action.

UN Network’s Joint Programming: The collective UN Network approach and support to a country’s nutrition needs are embedded in its joint programming. Through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework it promotes coordination and harmonization of United Nations efforts on nutrition and serves as a resource or input for joint nutrition outcomes. The UN Network recently implemented adolescent-focused joint programming, focusing on nutrition-specific and sensitive programmes that target adolescents in Costa Rica, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. In Myanmar, the joint programme focused on nutrition-sensitive emergency preparedness and response, targeting at-risk populations such as mothers, children and adolescents, within the larger humanitarian-development context.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Gender equality is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda as part of the pathway to sustainable development.
2. The UN Network embraces gender equality as being central to achieving positive nutrition outcomes at the country level, appreciating that it can drive as much as 25% of child nutrition gains.
3. Improving the nutritional status of girls, adolescents and women presents a win-win situation. It enables them to perform better in school and boost their lifetime earnings, which further supports gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To learn more about how the UN Network is supporting country-level action visit https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/ or write to unnetworkforsun@wfp.org