



Sensitization workshop reinvigorates the SUN Movement in South Sudan



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The Ministry of Health in collaboration with WFP and Save the Children, on behalf of South Sudan’s UN and Civil Society Alliance Networks, organized a half-day SUN Movement advocacy workshop in February 2019, targeting key stakeholders such as parliamentarians. Chaired by the *Acting* SUN Government Focal Point and Under Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Samson Paul Baba, the workshop was attended by nearly fifty participants from various arms of the government, United Nations agencies, NGOs and universities. The event was an opportunity to brief participants on the status of the Movement in the country, agree on priority issues and enlist their support going forward.

While the attendance of five key ministries (Health; Education and General Instruction; Gender and Child Social Welfare; Agriculture; and Water and Irrigation) was applauded, Dr. Baba emphasized the need to go beyond membership and dialogue, to demonstrate results. “Nutrition is a multi-sectoral

issue,” said Dr. Baba, “only by working together can we achieve our progress and end malnutrition in this country.” Others explained that malnutrition results not just from a lack of adequate and safe food, but from a host of intertwined factors linking health, maternal and child care, education, WASH, access to financial resources and women’s empowerment, among others. Panel discussions highlighted the importance of multi–sectoral platforms, integrated action against malnutrition, leadership as well as commitment and prioritization of nutrition at all levels from lawmakers to the local communities. Participating parliamentarians also came to appreciate that malnutrition can represent an impediment (often invisible) to the successful achievement of the SDGs.



*SUN Movement Sensitization Workshop
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Save the Children/Tito Justine*

Dr. Baba emanated a sense of urgency. He noted that South Sudan features well in images of children who are malnourished and that it is time to change this story. Leading by example, he took the first step and pledged his commitment to include a nutrition assistant in the Boma Health Initiative strategy in support of positive change. There is also a need to find out what are the staple foods in the country, look at the different communities, understand their culture, food and what they cultivate. This will address the root causes of malnutrition.

“Good nutrition fuels entire nations,” said Simon Cammelbeeck, WFP Acting Country Director in South Sudan. Speaking on behalf of UNN, he went on to explain that “As children grow strong, so do communities and countries, helping end the cycle of poverty. Well-nourished adults tend to be more productive than

those who are malnourished. Malnutrition is a huge drain on our economies and our combined efforts can help end malnutrition in its various forms.” This active engagement of UN leadership in the national nutrition agenda is exemplary. Not only is it incentivizing collaboration across UN agencies, which are working towards shared nutrition goals, it is also helping the SUN Movement gain traction.

CARE Assistant Country Director, Mercy Laker, speaking as Chair of the SUN Civil Society Alliance, acknowledged that “Today is [a] huge milestone for us... The time is now with peace to diversify our efforts to bring nutrition-sensitive approaches, as the work goes beyond treating malnutrition and talk to people who don’t understand malnutrition.” The effort to sensitize parliamentarians is an important step forward and was well-received. To help engage high-level decision-makers in nutrition, Hon. Catherine Peter Lual, Head of the Parliamentarian Health Committee, encouraged specialists to develop scenarios that illustrate the links between nutrition and the respective sectors, and articulate what sectors stand to gain from making their efforts nutrition-sensitive.

It is an exciting moment for the nutrition agenda in South Sudan. Parliamentarians are starting to link up with line ministries and other stakeholders to mainstream nutrition into the country’s policy framework, prioritize nutrition interventions and translate this renewed multi-sectoral dialogue into action. Dr. Biram Ndiaye, UNICEF Chief of Nutrition, who is chairing the country UNN, affirmed UNN’s commitment to galvanize the SUN Movement in line with the government policies and strategies. Identifying the gaps and outlining roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders will be an important next step. A task force, led by the government, was since established to develop a roadmap that will guide the formulation of a national multi-sectoral nutrition action plan. The plan intends to cover all forms of malnutrition and holds promise for a better future.