

Rome, 16th July 2020

Subject: Merger of the UN Network for Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) and the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)

Dear partners and colleagues,

I am writing to you as the ad interim Chair of the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) to provide you with an update on the merger of the UN Network for Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN)¹ and the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)².

As you probably know, the UNSCN was established by ECOSOC in 1977, while the UN Network for the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was established by the Principals of FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO in 2013, in support of the SUN Movement. While these two entities share obvious complementarities, UNSCN was spearheading efforts on global policy coherence for nutrition and UN coordination, while the UN Network for SUN took the lead in driving country-level efforts on nutrition. Nevertheless, the current global nutrition landscape demands increased efficiencies and more integrated and streamlined efforts. This is especially relevant as we are in the middle of the Decade of Action on Nutrition, in the final decade of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda for 2030 and in the context of UN Reform.

To harmonize the collective efforts of the UN Network and of UNSCN at global and country levels, we embarked on an ambitious reform process of these two bodies in early 2018. Extensive consultations with the Heads of Nutrition and the Deputy Principals of the five UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) members of the Steering Committee³ of UN Network/UNSCN have led us to unanimously recommend the merger of these two bodies into a single entity entitled UN Nutrition. In the spirit of the UN Reform agenda, we strongly believe that UN Nutrition, supported by an agile Secretariat, would result in strengthened collaboration, a more unified voice for nutrition in the UN System, and greater impact on the ground.

New Terms of Reference (ToRs) have been developed and have been endorsed by the respective Heads of Agencies. UN Nutrition will be an interagency coordination mechanism for nutrition at global level, and a collaboration platform at country level, bringing together UN agencies to accelerate progress for nutrition objectives and targets at all levels. Through UN Nutrition, UN Agencies are committed to increasing their support to Governments and stakeholders in promoting nutrition actions. UN Nutrition is universal in its coverage and relevant to all countries.

In addition to its core functions, UN Nutrition will serve as the UN Network for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. In this capacity, it will contribute to advance the aims of the SUN Movement and support SUN processes at global, regional and country levels. It is also foreseen that, at the request of governments and upon the availability of funding, UN Nutrition could mobilize nutrition facilitation services to support nutrition governance processes at the country level. These services build off the considerable expertise gathered through REACH⁴ in 23 countries over the last 12 years and draw upon its diagnostic and analytical tools and resource materials.

¹ <https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/>

² <https://www.unscn.org/>

³ FAO, IFAD, WFP, WHO, UNICEF

⁴ Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition

The current reporting obligation of the UNSCN to ECOSOC will be maintained by UN Nutrition. The attached ToRs for UN nutrition are fully in line with the current ECOSOC mandate but enhance the scope of the new UN Nutrition to strengthen nutrition governance and coordination not only at the global but also at the country level.

Further information on the operational modalities and official launch of the new body will be provided in due course. Until the official launch of UN Nutrition, the current UN Network and UNSCN Secretariats will continue to implement their agreed work plans for 2020 and work under their current names. The new UN Nutrition's Secretariat will be hosted by the FAO at its headquarters in Rome.

Warm regards,



Amir Abdulla

Ad interim Chair UNSCN/UN Nutrition, Deputy Executive Director of WFP