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UN Secretary-General Hails Progress in Scaling Up Nutrition

At meeting with world leaders, Ban Ki-moon highlights achievements in push for maternal and child nutrition while renewing call to achieve zero hunger

United Nations, New York, 27 September 2012 —The global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement gained momentum today at a meeting led by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with Heads of State, civil society and private sector representatives, and other government and UN officials. Participants at the high-level event announced progress in the fight against hunger and under-nutrition and ushered in new commitments.

“I commend the achievements of the SUN Movement. Thirty countries have now put nutrition at the heart of their approach to development and more than 56 million stunted children have a better chance to grow more strong and healthy,” said the Secretary-General. “SUN is rallying governments, civil society, the private sector and international donors. Many of the countries who have joined the Movement have demonstrated that progress is possible, even in the face of economic, climatic and political challenges,” he added.

SUN is a global push for action to improve the nutrition of all—especially women and children. With the recent additions of Burundi and Kenya, SUN now includes 30 countries that are dedicating their efforts to strengthening nutrition. These countries are home to 56 million children suffering from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition, representing more than one-quarter of the world’s stunted children.

Supporters of the SUN Movement focus on implementing solutions that directly improve nutrition—such as support for breastfeeding or ensuring access to essential vitamins and minerals—as well as efforts that have a broader influence on nutrition, such as empowering women or improving farming practices to increase accessibility of nutrient-rich crops. To secure better nutrition for all who are at risk, the movement seeks to intensify action within countries so that all people benefit from well-run programmes. It encourages increased, integrated and responsible support from a broad range of partners.

While 30 national governments have established the foundation for long-term commitments, local and international groups are also aligning their support. More than 100 organizations representing development agencies, the UN, civil society, the private sector and research institutions have endorsed the SUN road map, with additional countries and organizations expected to join in the near future.

Recent actions to scale up nutrition in countries include Nepal's launch of a five-year multi-sector nutrition plan to reduce malnutrition among mothers and children, Kenya's Parliamentary Bill to control and regulate breast milk substitutes to protect breastfeeding, Sierra Leone's scaling up of an integrated programme linking small-holder commercialization and free health care through nutrition and Peru's pledge of around US \$1 billion for a new fund to fight child malnutrition.

One-third of the world's children are undernourished. The first 1000 days between the start of pregnancy and a child's second birthday is a critical window of opportunity to prevent the irreversible and life-long damage caused by malnutrition, including stunting and impaired cognitive development. Multiplied across an entire nation, malnutrition can cost up to three percent of a country's GDP. It is estimated that every dollar invested in nutrition in the first 1,000 days can yield 30 dollars in return.

In April 2012, Secretary-General Ban appointed 27 global leaders to the SUN Lead Group to help the diverse efforts of SUN countries. The SUN Lead Group includes Heads of State, as well as representatives of development agencies, civil society, business and UN organizations that are providing strategic support to scale up nutrition.

"Stunting is not just a challenge, but a huge opportunity. And preventing stunting is one of the single most cost-effective interventions in breaking the cycle of poverty," said Anthony Lake, Chairman of the SUN Movement Lead Group and Executive Director of UNICEF. "Recent data from countries like Ethiopia, Rwanda, Peru and others show that we can reduce stunting with the right policies and programmes, the right investments and of course a commitment to action. The momentum of the SUN Movement must now be matched by tangible results to put the world's youngest and most vulnerable on the path to a better future."

"As the global community now looks to what will follow the Millennium Development Goals, nutrition must not be an afterthought," said the Honorable Julian Fantino, Minister of International Cooperation, Canada, and a SUN Lead Group member. "Meeting our commitments to scale up nutrition will result in healthier populations, and in turn will improve children's ability to learn in school. Nutrition should remain a central component of all our investments to ensure maximum impact."

The Scaling Up Nutrition Movement is closely aligned with the ['Zero Hunger Challenge'](#) launched by the Secretary-General in June of this year. The Challenge invites everyone to be boldly ambitious as we work for a future where everyone enjoys their right to food and all food systems are resilient. The Challenge has five elements: to end malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood; to achieve 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round; to make all food systems sustainable; to double the productivity and income of smallholders, particularly women; and to achieve a zero waste or loss of food. As countries demonstrate success with Scaling up Nutrition, they are also contributing to the goals of the UN Secretary-General's initiative to improve women's and children's health as part of the ['Every Woman Every Child'](#) effort.

[More on the SUN Movement](#)

The Scaling Up Nutrition movement is for all countries whose populations experience under-nutrition and for all stakeholders committed to providing support. SUN brings together over 100 organizations and governments committed to work together to fight hunger and under-nutrition. Proven solutions are available and are ready to be scaled up. More information on SUN, including the full list of member countries, can be found at: www.scalingupnutrition.org

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The High-level Meeting on Scaling Up Nutrition will be webcast live at <http://webtv.un.org/>

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