



A SUN Movement Call to Action for Nutrition ahead of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit:

## **A multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to nutrition must be front and centre in food systems transformation**

The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in September was called for by the UN Secretary-General in recognition that current food systems are failing people and the planet alike. An unacceptable 3 billion people did not have access to healthy nutritious diets in 2019 – a number that is already compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and comes with tremendous hidden costs for people’s health and society. Food systems also contribute to unprecedented biodiversity loss, water depletion and climate change – all significant threats to our nutrition lifeline.

The UNFSS Pre-summit that took place in Rome this July called for “transformative actions before it is too late”. As the SUN Movement, we could not agree more. **With this Call to Action, we collectively ask to place nutrition front and centre in any food systems transformation efforts.** Traditional food security programmes have tended to adopt a production-focused approach, which seeks to directly influence food security through increasing the supply of food, but hunger and malnutrition are not driven by our inability to produce food. On the contrary, food production has increased by nearly 300 percent in the last 50 years while the world’s population has “only” doubled<sup>1</sup>. Yet, about one-third of all food produced for human consumption goes to waste<sup>2</sup> and malnutrition in all its forms is on the rise, almost everywhere in the world. This triggers an important question: “how can we gear up our food systems towards improved nutrition outcomes, leaving no one behind?”.

**The UNFSS represents a key milestone in the Year of Action for Nutrition**, which kicked off in December 2020 and will culminate at the Nutrition for Growth Summit this December. An inclusive and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will not be achieved unless people’s nutrition is improved globally, as good nutrition is an indispensable foundation to lift individuals, families, and nations out of poverty and safeguard good health. **We must make use of this historic opportunity for governments, donors, the private sector, UN agencies, and civil society to step up and announce bold commitments at the UNFSS to drive progress against the global nutrition targets.**

It is our experience as the SUN Movement that improving nutrition security has been central in many (if not all) SUN countries’ dialogues. SUN stakeholders were highly involved in Food Systems Dialogues and eight SUN Focal Points were nominated as national conveners. Over 100 national dialogues and over 400 independent dialogues have taken place across our 63 SUN countries.

1 [www.oecd.org/agriculture/understanding-the-global-food-system/how-we-feed-the-world-today/](http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/understanding-the-global-food-system/how-we-feed-the-world-today/)

2 [www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/flw-data](http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/flw-data)



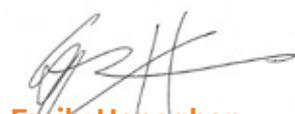
Our request is therefore to **elevate the role of nutrition as a key lever in the food systems transformation equation across the UNFSS agenda** in September. Good nutrition requires a healthy and diverse diet that derives from healthy soils and biodiverse terrestrial and ocean ecosystems. Orienting our food systems towards delivering good nutrition is thus healthier and more sustainable for both people and the planet: a clear win-win across all agendas and a must-do to put all countries back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030!

**In this regard, the SUN Movement asks the UNFSS Secretariat and all stakeholders involved in the upcoming Summit to join forces and ensure that:**

- ◆ **Nutrition is elevated as a key driver for food systems transformation throughout the UNFSS agenda and panel discussions, and that all National Pathways for food systems transformation are geared towards ending malnutrition in all its forms by 2030.**
- ◆ **The Summit is inclusive and ensures a balanced representation of stakeholders, providing meaningful space to nutrition grassroots movements, particularly those involving young people, women, and indigenous peoples.** These organisations and networks are uniquely positioned to create awareness, involvement, and commitment to improve food systems in a way that is owned by communities and rooted in human rights. They are instrumental in achieving a country-led, bottom-up transformation by using locally generated evidence and solutions.
- ◆ **Private sector representatives - from multinational companies to small enterprises – commit to everyone’s right to healthy, affordable, and sustainable diets to end all forms of malnutrition.** This includes, but is not limited to, supporting every mother’s right to breastfeed without undue influence from manufacturers of breastmilk substitutes and respecting and abiding by national regulations related to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and supporting and complying with regulatory measures around the labelling, promotion, and marketing of unhealthy foods.
- ◆ **The Summit weaves all sectors together to enable a true systemic transformation to improve nutrition.** It is particularly key that the One Health approach is strongly referenced in the Summit’s narrative, along with **concrete recommendations for how food systems can address global nutrition targets** (such as reaching wasting or anaemia targets). Biodiversity’s pivotal role in food systems also needs to be elevated: it contributes to mitigating climate change, but it also ensures diet diversity, crop resilience and eventually, improved nutrition.
- ◆ **The Summit upholds the systemic approach with an accountability mechanism that transparently engages all sectors and stakeholders and ensures links with other global summits and processes** such as the World Health Assembly, the COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ocean Conferences, and, last but not least, **Nutrition for Growth Summits.**

**The SUN Movement remains determined to support the success of the UNFSS** and to drive progress in food systems transformation through a truly multistakeholder and multisectoral approach to nutrition, in the lead up to and beyond the Nutrition for Growth Summit.

  
**Gerda Verburg**  
UN Assistant Secretary-General and SUN Movement Coordinator

  
**Emily Heneghan**  
on behalf of the SUN Business Network co-convener

  
**Melanie Bruns**  
on behalf of the SUN Donor Network

  
**Rory Moylan**  
on behalf of the SUN Civil Society Network

  
**Stineke Oenema**  
on behalf of the UN Nutrition