

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 8 June 2021 14:00 GMT +00:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	COVID-19 Recovery: Why investments in nutrition cannot wait
CONVENED BY	Saskia Osendarp, Micronutrient Forum
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23765/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

261

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

COVID-19 continues to have a devastating impact. Around the world, the pandemic has exacerbated underlying structural inequity – creating more hunger and nutrition insecurity for vulnerable groups such as women and children. Essentially, the pandemic is three crises in one: the economic crisis and unprecedented job losses, the food and nutrition crisis, and the health crisis. The highlighted the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and that inaction to mitigate this damage is unacceptable. With several competing priorities, it was important that the dialogue respect that different countries will have different challenges and grasp the complexities which the pandemic has surfaced. However, we challenged speakers and participants to commit to the Summit as a platform to raise awareness of the devastating consequences of inaction on COVID-19 and malnutrition and the need to act, urgently.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Act with Urgency: With the COVID-19 pandemic raging on, it is vital that we all act with urgency. This dialogue highlighted the urgent need for immediate financing to mitigate the damage on nutrition outcomes of this generation and the next. **Commit to the Summit:** By hosting this independent dialogue, ST4N demonstrates its commitment to the Summit and wishes to raise awareness of the potential impact of covid-19 on malnutrition without urgent action in the form of policy change and investment to mitigate the damage. The speakers challenged decision-makers to work together and commit to make nutrition a priority, using platforms such as the Summit. **Be Respectful:** The dialogue was structured to include as many voices as possible, with speakers from the ST4N Consortium, donor community, youth, financial sector, and national governments. **Recognize Complexity:** ST4N is a multi-disciplinary consortium which aimed to model the complexity of the pandemic on different systems and their impact on malnutrition. For example, the consortium modelled the impacts of the food system (using food pricing), health systems (through reduced health coverage rates) and the economy (changes to GNI). This complexity was reflected in the way the dialogue was put together so that the implications for each system and potential solutions discussed. **Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity:** The dialogue brought to the table a diversity of stakeholders from governments, research community, business, youth, finance, civil society and more. We aimed to have at least one representative from each stakeholder group as panel members to speak on how COVID-19 had impacted their sector and the urgent need for action and investment. **Complement the work of others:** ST4N- a group of multi-disciplinary researchers with the aim of building on one another's expertise to model the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on nutrition outcomes. The dialogue reflected the nature of this consortium, having invited individuals from across the globe to build trust and stand together for nutrition and call for action.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

NA

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Our dialogue focused on the opportunities of how COVID-19 recovery policy can prioritize nutrition policy, financial investment in nutrition, and strengthened nutrition services, emphasizing COVID-19's inequitable impact.

Given global turbulence, ST4N, a collective group of nutrition, economic, food, and health system experts, modelled the potential impacts of COVID-19 on nutrition outcomes, compelling decision-makers to act. The potential dramatic effects of this crisis on human life and well-being, alongside the long-term negative consequences on human capital and economic growth, make a renewed investment in delivering effective nutrition interventions an imperative. Investment in nutrition not only improves nutrition outcomes but is a vital contribution to the resilience building of people, communities, and countries.

AT1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all -

THE PROBLEM

New research published in Nature Food paper highlights the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global levels of malnutrition by 2022, with leading global experts projecting as many as 13.6 million additional children wasted, 3.6 million additional children stunted and 283,000 child deaths – equivalent to 258 children dying per day.

World hunger increased in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is projected around 118 million more people were facing hunger in 2020 than in 2019, heightening the challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030. The pandemic is three crises rolled into one: an economic crisis with jobs lost, a food crisis with reduced access to healthy food, and a health crisis with decreased access to health services. Together, these combine to create a nutritional crisis amongst millions of vulnerable mothers and children that, based on the third wave of COVID-19 in South Asia, is tragically worse than initial estimates.

An economic downturn translates directly into increased unaffordability of food and greater food insecurity and malnutrition – as people have less income to buy food, let alone more expensive nutritious foods required for healthy diets

The high cost of healthy diets coupled with persistent high levels of income inequality put healthy diets out of reach for around 3 billion people in 2019 in every region of the world, especially the poor. New research estimates that due to the onset of COVID-19 an extra 141 million individuals could not afford a healthy diet in 2020. In 2021 the estimate is an additional 94.6 million compared to the no-COVID-19 2020 counterfactual.

Malnutrition exacerbates gender inequality, impacting the most vulnerable including women and children. Most children with malnutrition live in Africa and Asia. These regions account for more than nine out of ten of all children with stunting, more than nine out of ten children with wasting and more than seven out of ten children who are overweight worldwide.

THE CONSEQUENCES

Malnutrition reduces the immune response. Together, COVID-19 and malnutrition create a mutually reinforcing vicious cycle. Diet-related illnesses increase the risk of dying from COVID-19, while the pandemic makes it harder for people to access healthy diets, in turn, contributing to a higher risk of malnutrition. The world has the know-how and the resources to reverse this cycle. Invest in nutrition - we need to Stand Together and Act Now.

Dire financial landscape for low- and middle-income countries malnutrition reduces human capital and economic productivity. The generation of children affected by stunting will suffer a lifetime of reduced schooling performance and adult productivity losses, which in turn, can be passed on to their children. The estimated pandemic-related increases in child stunting and child mortality may result in future productivity losses of \$44.3 billion, enough to impact national economies. Additional cases of anemia during pregnancy would result in \$177 million in lost productivity between 2020-2022. Costs associated with the immediate impact of COVID-19 on children as outlined by the above projections are only one part of a much larger, complex picture.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- Human rights
- Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
- Data & Evidence
- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

Taking into account all the other forms of malnutrition in adults and children that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, costs to lost productivity will be far higher.

Nations are struggling to fund mitigation measures at the same time as needs continue to grow. Domestic financing for health in LMICs, including nutrition-specific financing, is projected to fall by 4.2% in 2021 and 2.2% in 2022, not recovering to pre-crisis levels until the end of the decade, absent a V-shaped economic recoveries in LMICs. Unfortunately, ST4N estimates a 19% reduction in ODA to nutrition-relevant sectors through 2030 (compared to pre-COVID levels) accompanied by a similar decrease in domestic health budgets.

For a resilient future: invest today for a stronger tomorrow

The 2017 Global Nutrition Investment Framework estimated that approximately \$7 billion per annum is needed to reach the World Health Assembly targets for stunting, wasting, maternal anemia, and breastfeeding by 2025. ST4N projects additional needs of \$1.7 billion per annum to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

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WHY WE MUST ACT NOW: We have evidence-based, cost-effective nutrition interventions that are ready to scale. Country-level innovations can offset COVID-19's gendered impact on nutrition, such as scaling up micronutrient supplements and coverage of breastfeeding interventions. SMART investments to drive COVID-19 recovery can be delivered across health, food and social protection systems.

COVID-19 is a risk and an opportunity: together we can make it an opportunity to build nutrition back better. We stand to lose a decade or more's worth of progress on nutrition. New projections confirm that hunger will not be eradicated by 2030 unless bold actions are taken to accelerate progress – especially actions to address inequality in access to food. It is projected that around 660 million people may still face hunger in 2030, 30 million more people than in a scenario in which the COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred, due to the lasting effects of COVID-19 on global food security.

The ST4N Consortium estimates that an additional 1.7 billion will be required on top of the \$7 billion per annum is needed to reach the global targets for stunting, wasting, breastfeeding and anemia articulated by the Nutrition Investment Framework. Given the likely reductions to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and challenging domestic health finance landscaped, we must Stand Together and invest in nutrition, more than ever before.

The UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and N4G present an opportunity to bring forward a series of concrete actions that people from all over the world can take to support a transformation of the world's food systems. While 2020 was an immense challenge for the world, it may also be a warning call of unwelcome events to come if the world does not take commitments into bolder actions to change course.

Support for the recommendations:

- ST4N calls for Member States to improve allocative efficiencies gains in favour of proven nutrition interventions, such as Maternal MMS, Breastfeeding Promotion, Vitamin A Supplementation, Balanced Energy Supplementation, Treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition and the proportion and provision of Infant and young child feeding practices.
- ST4N supports the global nutrition community in advocating that the G7 Leaders Statement includes resolve to take action to advance progress on malnutrition.
- ST4N supports the global community in advocating for renewed focus on women's and maternal nutrition by governments, donors, philanthropy, civil society and multilaterals:
 - Ensure that food and health systems interventions promote and enable sustainable and equitable access to healthy diverse diets and essential health and nutrition services.
 - ST4N supports global action to prevent and respond to anemia in women of reproductive age, as part of the U.N. Food Systems Summit Action Track One (Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Foods for All).
- ST4N calls for nutrition to be integrated into the World Bank's IDA20 Replenishment Funds and in particular, that wasting is considered a Tier One indicator. Nutrition must receive the appropriate allocation of IDA resources in the Crisis Response Window to safeguard other development priorities.

• ST4N recognises the critical importance of integrating nutrition information and data systems into early warning systems and shock responsive safety nets with a focus on women and children. New and targeted investment is required for shock responsive social safety nets to include nutrition specific and sensitive interventions.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data & Evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade-offs |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and Climate |

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

- The role of youth

One of the representative speakers argued that youth need not only to be at the table but play a central role, and a driving force for change. Youth are often referred to as future leaders, however it was clear that youth need to be given opportunities to share their views and actions in helping to address malnutrition.

- COVID-19; a risk or an opportunity?

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc across the world, over 4 million people have lost their lives, significant economic downturns leading to disruptions to livelihoods and of course significant impacts on healthcare. Whilst the scale of the challenge to build back better is daunting, it was argued that projections are not destiny and mitigation is possible if immediate action and investment is taken. Whilst COVID-19 presents huge risks to women and children in particular

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **ST4N Policy Brief**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ST4NInvestorBrief_AUG2021.pdf

RELEVANT LINKS

- **ST4N Website**
<https://www.standingtogetherfornutrition.org/>
- **ST4N Research**
<https://www.standingtogetherfornutrition.org/research>