

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 6 April 2021 14:00 GMT +07:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	The Enabling Environment for Food Fortification
CONVENED BY	Convenor H.E Sok Silo, Secretary General, CARD / Co-Convenor Ms. Claire Conan, WFP Representative and Country Director
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/9908/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Cambodia

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

60

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

6

19-30

34

31-50

18

51-65

2

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

44 Male

16 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

2 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

1 Livestock

2 Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

2 Trade and commerce

3 Education

1 Communication

4 Food processing

Food retail, markets

5 Food industry

Financial Services

8 Health care

6 Nutrition

17 National or local government

Utilities

3 Industrial

6 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

7 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

1 Large national business

1 Multi-national corporation

0 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

0 Large-scale farmer

1 Local Non-Governmental Organization

6 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

26 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

9 United Nations

1 International financial institution

1 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

7 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The dialogue was organized to be representative of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral engagement on food fortification. Stakeholders included government both at national and sub-national (spanning the different ministries that have a mandate related to food fortification, such as MOP, MOH, MISTI, among others), private sector (using SUN Business Network as entry points), business association and chambers of commerce, donors, and development partners. The participants from the sub-national included representatives from T'boung Khmum, Siem Reap and Kampong Cham Provinces. The participants were informed of the principles of engagement at the start of the dialogue. Furthermore, the panelists were comprised of different stakeholders (government, UN, private sector) so that the role of each related to food fortification and the enabling environment would complement one another and lead to a rich and interesting discussion.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Introduction by senior representatives of government encouraged trust and respect for all parties and emphasized the importance of listening to the whole diversity of views, participants were reminded that it is possible for us to disagree in the dialogues without be disagreeable. Facilitators were careful to ensure that different viewpoints did not dissolve into arguments back and forth and that the participants respected one another's rights to express their views without need for contradiction by other participants. The participation of provincial participants is an important element of inclusiveness and the use of a single laptop and camera enabled this group to participate. The whole process reflected adherence to these principles.

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

It is important to start with the end in mind and clearly define the high-level objective and main output that is sought through the FSS in-depth dialogue. The dialogues present an opportunity to engage diverse stakeholders across sectors, at national and sub-national levels, and garner support for collective action on thematic areas related to food systems.

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

We had adapted the method of the dialogues from face to face to virtual due to the COVID-19 restriction policy in Cambodia. For this dialogue, there were keynote speakers to set the scene, followed by a panel discussion involving experts from Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, UNICEF and the private sector. After the panel discussion, the floor was open to questions and comments from participants.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Enabling Environment for Food Fortification in-depth dialogue is the first of a two-part series of in-depth dialogues on food fortification. The second dialogue will take place on 25 May and focus on the operational environment.

The Enabling Environment for Food Fortification in-depth dialogue aims to bring together key stakeholders, including technical ministries, the United Nations, civil society, private sector and business associations, financial institutions, and donors, at national and sub-national levels who are involved in setting or supporting food fortification standards, regulation, law, policy and strategies in Cambodia to share challenges & opportunities and identify strategic action to improve food fortification.

The focus of the dialogue was on assessing the enabling environment for food fortification in Cambodia and identifying the key challenges and steps required for improvement. The dialogue was multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder, attracting representatives of 8 ministries plus the Medical Board of Cambodia, 11 development partner agencies and private sector representatives including SMEs who will play an important role to fortified suitable micronutrient into their products such as rice, snack, or drink; promote nutrition messaging and integrate workforce nutrition in their company etc.

It was widely agreed that food fortification is a very important strategy to combat micro-nutrient deficiencies. Food fortification through staple foods is economically efficient and efficacious in terms of delivering adequate micro-nutrients to target groups. Food Fortification is an identified joint priority for the 2nd National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023.

The existing enabling environment is characterized by the existence of regulatory structures and guidelines for food fortification, limited resources and capabilities, including for enforcement of standards for processing and marketing. There has been limited progress with fortification in Cambodia, and a deterioration in salt iodization. Demand for fortified products is limited, as consumer awareness of the benefits of fortification is generally low. The use of fortified products in school feeding is a standard and successful practice. The key challenges for fortification included cost and difficulties of importing ingredients and equipment and limited technical capacities.

It was widely agreed that more research (e.g. effectiveness of micronutrient strategy implementation, micronutrient survey etc.) is required and that resources and capacity building are critically lacking in both the public and private sector. Consumer awareness and trust needed to be cultivated through SBCC and supported by enforcement of standards and regulations.

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

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

MAIN FINDINGS

Inadequate diet is a pertinent problem for Cambodia, with low quality and low diversity leading to micro-nutrient deficiencies. The situation is made worse by the COVID-19 situation. Food fortification of staple foods is a proven, cost-effective, timely mechanism for addressing malnutrition at the national level. The dialogue was a call for all stakeholders to provide inputs for incorporating food fortification in the Roadmap for Sustainable Food System for Cambodia for 2030. Whilst the use of food fortification to improve nutrition is a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder issue, and supported at the highest policy including the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, the 2nd NSFSN 2019-2023 and in the Cambodia SDGs for ending hunger.

The dialogue highlighted that food fortification has huge potential to address micronutrient deficiency within Cambodian population, contribute to healthy diets, and engage with private sector to support to nutrition priorities. The efforts for food fortification thus far have been conducted in piecemeal fashion and that as major output of the FSS we want to support the RGC to develop a unified roadmap for food fortification.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Future Directions

The steps recommended for developing a better enabling environment for food fortification included the further development of strategy for food fortification; research into key topics such as the micro-nutrient needs of vulnerable population (e.g. PLW, children under five, school age children and adolescent), experience from other countries, and the suitability of staple foods for fortification; the strengthening and enforcement of existing regulations; improved process/mechanism for importing necessary ingredients and equipment; the provision of necessary training and sharing experience of techniques or procedure of fortifying foods between the public and private sector; the development of SBCC strategy; improved labelling and accountability private sector and government. Technical assistance and financial support are needed from the development partners to help at the national level and to extend capacities to the sub-national level.

At this stage, voluntary standards are important for industry, backed by testing, labelling and enforcement in the marketplace because the government has limited capabilities to impose mandatory standards.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Challenges

One of the main challenges for the advancement of food fortification lies in the insufficient engagement of stakeholders to support fortification at both national and subnational level. In addition, enforcement is limited, and this leads to lack of faith on the part of the private sector. There are financial constraints for development of fortification, with limited investment and support. Despite the success of iodization efforts in the past, the dissolution of the Kep-Kampot Salt Producers' Association and resulting pursuit of individual interests has led to a collapse of iodization efforts. The raw materials and equipment required for fortification are expensive and must be imported from other countries. Testing of product in the market reveals that 60% of refined salt does not meet the iodine levels required under the national guidelines. The general level of awareness about food fortification is low. People tend to buy what is cheapest and do not appreciate the benefits of fortified products.

Because the capabilities of government to test and enforce standards for fortification are limited, it is not possible for government to send notification of infringements to the WTO to prevent inferior imported products from being sold in Cambodia. MISTI can help to develop standards but they have no power to police those standards in the marketplace. The Ministry of Commerce is responsible for the goods on sale. Consumers should be educated to use their influence in the marketplace. Inter-Ministerial cooperation is lacking and the incentives for industry are also lacking. Firms cannot capture a return on fortified products if cheaper non-fortified products are also allowed into the market and consumer awareness of fortification benefits is low. Industry cooperation is low because of these challenges.

There is a need for more research and evidence related to effectiveness of micronutrient strategy implementation, micronutrients survey to be generated to identify bottlenecks, suitable micronutrient to be fortified and for re-strategizing.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Suggestion and Recommendation

Food fortification falls under the mandate of several ministries and improved inter-ministerial coordination is needed.

Stricter enforcement of the laws and regulations is required. Incentives for the private sector (subsidies, letter of recognition, business and technical assistance, tax breaks, free of charge business registration).

Improved cooperation between the private sector and the public sector Nutrition labelling is used in other countries and consumers use these facts to make purchasing decisions.

Cambodia needs to make progress with consumer education and awareness and improvements in labelling.

Advocacy is critical to gather more political support for food fortification. If food fortification is profitable it will be driven by the private sector. Where there is no profit, it will fail. Producers respond to market demand.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Local producers always want the government to block the import of foreign products. At the same time, farmers are always urging the government to pave the way for the export of agricultural products. However, in the free-market economy and globalization, the government cannot ban the imports. Consumers wonder why imported goods are cheaper than local products.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Speech by Claire Conan, Representative and Country Director, World Food Programme**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Claire-food-fortification-dialogue-6-April-002-1.pdf>

CORRECTIONS, ADJUSTMENTS, OR CHANGES

Title The Enabling Environment for Food Fortification

Date 24/05/2021

Array

ATTACHMENTS

- **Speech by H.E. Mr. Pan Bunthoeun Secretary of State of the Ministry of Planning and Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee of the National Council for Nutrition in the Symposium on the Policy Environment and Guidelines of Food Fortification in Cambodia**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/3Speech-Open-Zoom-6421-MoP_ET.pdf
- **Speech by H.E. Mr. Sok Silo, General Secretary of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, and Convener of the National Dialogue for the Summit on the Food System held by the United Nations in September 2021**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Speech_on-Food-Fortification-6-April-2021_ET.pdf