



Participants at the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition workshop 25 April 2017, Islamabad – A joint WHO/Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Mission visited Pakistan on 10–12 April 2017. The Mission was led by Ms Gerda Verburg SUN Movement Coordinator and Assistant United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, together with Dr Francesco Branca, WHO Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development and Dr Ayoub Al Jawaldeh, WHO Regional Advisor on Nutrition.

During their stay in Pakistan, the Mission held meetings with key decision-makers in the area of nutrition, including Mrs Saira Afzal Tarar, Federal Minister of Health, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister of Planning, Development and Reform, Mrs Tehmina Janjua, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Sartaj Aziz, Advisor on Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Ms Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and convenor of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan. The Mission also held meetings with Mrs Marvi Memon of the Benazir Income Support Programme and with SUN Movement networks in Pakistan.

The Mission reported having very productive meetings and were pleased to note the high level of political commitment from all state actors involved in action on nutrition. The Mission emphasised their great appreciation for the government's leadership in implementing nutrition interventions and their continued support for its efforts in tackling the malnutrition burden in the country and in scaling up interventions.

During the visit, Dr Francesco Branca, Ms Gerda Verburg and Mrs Saira Afzal Tarar participated in a talk show called Health is Wealth on 11 April organized by Pakistan Television

at the UN Information Centre in Islamabad . The speakers highlighted the need for urgent action to address the high malnutrition burden in Pakistan, noting the challenges faced in the country. Dr Branca described the importance of having a well-balanced and nutritious diet and its role in the overall health and well-being of children, the future of Pakistan. Ms Gerda Verburg highlighted the need for gender equality in nutrition, and called on parents to provide equal nutrition to their sons and daughters. The Minister of Health explained the country's nutrition status and the Ministry's strategy to decrease the number of malnourished children in Pakistan, whether underweight or obese.

To foster engagement of the health system in action on nutrition, WHO Pakistan, in collaboration with the National Nutrition Programme, organized a one day consultative workshop on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) on 12 April 2017 at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The workshop was attended by participants from government, UN agencies, donors, academia and international nongovernmental organizations. During the workshop, the Mission introduced the Decade of Action, with Ms Gerda Verburg noting that nutrition was the foundation for implementation of the SDGs and therefore needed to be an integral part of every health programme. Dr Assai Ardakani, Acting WHO Representative in Pakistan, pointed out that nutrition needed to be addressed as a priority in Pakistan, and that to do this the health system needed to be strengthened, while paying particular attention to the social determinants of health.

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