



Speaker Summary Note

Session: **Prioritizing and Scaling Up Interventions for the Most Optimal Agricultural, Nutrition, and Health Outcomes**

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The SUN not a project, it is not a program. It is a movement. Three key points:

1. **The SUN is rising at last, despite many odds, and it is rising especially quickly in the “early riser countries” who have volunteered themselves under the SUN.**
 - a. The Bank is proud to have been an early initiator of the SUN.¹ We started with “Repositioning Nutrition”² some years ago, we estimated what it will cost to scale-up the most efficacious interventions,³ and together with other partners we continue our support for the SUN, with a very strong focus on ownership at the country level.
 - b. The initial focus is in the early-riser countries, but other high-burden countries (especially India) also need to be a part of it.
 - c. The SUN prioritises those interventions that have been shown to be efficacious, and those that have delivery mechanisms for scale-up and hence can deliver on “outcomes.” Many of these “nutrition specific interventions” are in the health sector. However, the SUN also places great emphasis on making our investments in other sectors more “nutrition sensitive.”
2. **Multi-sectorality—A key SUN-rise issue: and as many have said, this is a golden-moment for working across sectors.**
 - a. Even as the SUN rose, many valid criticisms emerged—One of these was that it was too “health-focused,” that it did not address multi-sectoral issues. Not true.
 - b. The challenge for the SUN was whether to focus on the evidence (what has been shown to produce results/impacts on underweight and stunting), or to accept the multi-sectoral rhetoric at face value. Everyone agrees that multi-sectoral issues are important in addressing nutrition,

¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTHEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/EXTNUTRITION/o,,menuPK:282580~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:282575,00.html>

² Repositioning Nutrition as Central to Development: A Strategy for Large Scale Investment, World Bank, 2006. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NUTRITION/Resources/281846-1131636806329/NutritionStrategy.pdf>

³ Scaling-up Nutrition: What will it cost? Horton, Shekar et al, World Bank, 2009. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/HEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/Resources/Peer-Reviewed-Publications/ScalingUpNutrition.pdf>

but few can show concrete examples of studies/projects in non-health sectors that have delivered results for nutrition. I sometimes refer to this as “faith-based” advocacy (vs. evidence-based prioritisation and scale-up). As we all know, faith is important, and any movement must be bolstered by faith—but in order to deliver results, this faith must be grounded in the reality of evidence and results—what actions will make a difference? And what delivery mechanisms can we use to scale these up?

- c. There is to-date, very little systematic knowledge about WHAT to prioritise in sectors outside health to have an impact on nutrition; even less is known about HOW to prioritise and scale these up. The recent DFID-supported systematic review of the agriculture-nutrition links is a first step in that direction, but even that stops at saying “there is little evidence of impact” and does not go far enough to answer the question of “WHAT interventions in the agriculture sector are likely to produce an impact on nutrition outcomes” or “HOW can these actions/interventions be integrated in to other sectors?”
- d. In FY10, the Bank’s agriculture investments were about \$4 billion; and its investments in social protection (a large part of being social safety nets) were over \$9 billion. And, there is strong commitment in the Bank to make these more “nutrition sensitive.” The opportunity to make a difference is huge—but the challenge to make it happen is not small. To address this challenge, the Bank is pulling together “guidance notes for practitioners.” (These are not systematic reviews, but they build on the systematic reviews to address the “what and how questions”), in partnership with thought-leaders like Per Pinstrup-Anderson.

3. Among the several multi-sectoral guidance notes, the first one under development is on “agriculture and nutrition” (others to follow: social protection, poverty reduction ...). Three key messages are emerging from the guidance notes:

- a. First, the evidence base on the impact of CURRENT agricultural investments on nutrition is sparse—and Lawrence spoke about this. One can go away from this with a pessimistic message. But, the work we are doing with Per Pinstrup-Anderson shows that when nutrition goals are explicitly incorporated into agricultural projects and policies, positive impacts on nutrition outcomes can be achieved. This is a key message emerging in the guidance notes.
- b. Second, the process (HOW) of introducing nutritional considerations in agricultural investments is not straight-forward
 - i. There are often trade-offs between maximizing agricultural production and improving nutrition impacts. (For example, cash crops may improve production and incomes, but not necessarily nutrition. Women’s participation in agriculture is to be encouraged for many reasons including women’s access to incomes, but it takes away valuable time for child-care, increases women’s workloads and may therefore negatively impact nutrition outcomes. Similarly, for nutritional purposes we wish to target the most vulnerable small-holder farmers; but productivity gains may be larger from focusing on larger farmholders.)
 - ii. Some of these trade-offs can be managed carefully in designing programs to maximize both, others cannot. And we will need to accept those.
 - iii. The solutions (and the binding constraints) are often context specific—so each country/project/programme needs to answer the trade-off questions in their own contexts and come up with the best options within their contexts. There is no one-size fits all answer. But the way forward is to encourage the right questions in each country/context—right at the beginning when these investments/projects are being designed, so that decisions are made explicitly rather than by default, as is the case now.
- c. Third, the “do no harm” principle needs to be front and center in all future agriculture investments. There are abundant examples of unintended negative consequences of well-intentioned agriculture and food security interventions—these need to be systematically avoided in the design of programs.

This will require extensive capacity-building and a paradigm shift at country level.

On the same note, working with the Ministry of Finance from Canada, the Bank is starting to explore some innovative Advance market commitment (AMC)-type of “pull mechanisms” for agriculture and nutrition. It is too early to say more, but if some of these ideas are launched successfully, these may be yet another mechanism to bring the agriculture and nutrition agendas closer together.

As we take this work forward, we aspire to live up to President Zoellick’s New Year’s message to staff—*“In 2011, I hope we can gain more momentum in the fusion of our work on nutrition with food security.”*