



## **Summary of the Coalition Convener's meeting held on April 20, 2010**

### **Operationalisation of the Leadership Agenda for Action: Operation 2015**

Prof M S Swaminathan, Chair, Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security convened a meeting of the five Coalition Action phase conveners (*refer annex for the SOW of this Action Group*) at his residence in New Delhi on April 20, 2010. The names of the five conveners are: Dr B Sesikiran; Director of NIN; Mr AR Nanda, Director of Population Foundation of India; Mr. Sashi Kumar, Founder Chairman of Asian College of Journalism; Mr DK Sikri, Secretary; MWCD and Prof. NK Sethi, Senior Advisor for Health, Planning Commission (Prof. Sethi had however indicated to Dr. Rajiv Tandon, Coalition Coordinator, that he would need approval from the Planning Commission to be the convener of the action group “Operationalising Programmes”). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the way forward for the Action phase of the Coalition and also to discuss the Scope of Work of the conveners. Besides the five conveners (*Mr DK Sikri, Secretary, MWCD was represented Dr. Shreerajan. Jt. Secretary, MWCD*), the meeting was attended by Ms. Karin Hulshof (Country representative, UNICEF), Dr. Victor M. Aguayo (Chief, Child Nutrition and Development, UNICEF), Dr. A K Shiva Kumar (Consultant-Nutrition Advisor, UNICEF), Mr. Biraj Patnaik (Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioners on Nutrition).

The Chair briefed the group on the coordinated and sustained effort of the Coalition members in conceptualising the Leadership Agenda for Action. He emphasised the need for continuing the mobilisation of partnership for achieving nutrition security. He cited the example of the work done in KBK region in Orissa which was a convergence of efforts by different agencies like MSSRF, CFTRI, NIN, OUAT, ICMR and Government of Orissa. It is hoped UNICEF and WFP will also join the consortium. He proposed that the group consider the operationalisation of the Leadership Agenda recommendations in the state of Chhattisgarh, in Bundelkhand and in the KBK region of Orissa.

The Chair requested Dr. Tandon to present a brief overview of the Coalition and its activities so far, before he opened the floor for further discussion. Dr. Tandon updated the group on Coalition progress and shared relevant documents like *National Nutrition Conclave Book of Proceedings, Nutrition Video, Coalition Steering Committee Meeting minutes, Leadership Agenda for Action, IGNOU course, Leadership Agenda block operational guidelines among others.*)

The Chair then invited the group to share their ideas on the operationalisation of the LAA recommendations, in order to move from analysis to action. The Action Phase may be termed “Operation 2015” in order to emphasise the need for achieving the goals of UN MDG 1 by that year.

### Highlights of the discussion and action points:

- The group felt that for higher impact the Coalition should focus on state level operationalisation rather than operationalisation at the block level. It was proposed that the Coalition could consider states like Delhi, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa (the KBK region) as possible regions for operationalisation and provision of technical assistance.
- The Coalition could prepare operational strategy recommendations for the state, district and block levels and adapt them to an urban context (e.g. the state of Delhi).
- A sub-group (with Dr AK Shiva Kumar as the convener and Mr. Biraj Patnaik, Mr. AR Nanda and Dr. Rajiv Tandon as members) was requested to prepare an operational blueprint for the State of Delhi. Prof. Swaminathan said that he would like to share this with the Chief Minister of Delhi, Ms. Sheila Dixit in the first week of May, 2010. The Chair also requested the group to provide nutrition related data for Delhi.
- There was a discussion on how the media could be leveraged for a sustained national level campaign on nutrition security. A workshop on media sensitisation was proposed in Chennai at which around 15-20 leading media heads would be invited for an interaction. The purpose of the workshop would be to seek the help of the heads of the media groups to commit to in-depth sustained coverage on malnutrition. This would be convened by Mr. Sashi Kumar.
- The group also recommended that the Coalition should continue its evidence-based nutrition programming advocacy efforts for policy dialogue which has been its core strength. The Coalition should also assist the National Food Security Act to ensure the mainstreaming of nutrition security in the action phase.

## Annex

### **Action Groups Scope of Work** **Leadership Agenda for Action**

The work of the Action Groups is expected to include 1) identifying the optimal opportunities to promote adoption of the recommendations of the *Leadership Agenda for Action* and 2) leading the selected appropriate activities, including advocacy, capacity building, and the provision of strategic and technical inputs, mainly to Government programmes

#### **Action Group 1: Science and Strategy: Convener, Dr B Sesikiran, Director of NIN**

- a) Address micronutrient malnutrition in a holistic manner through catalytic interventions
- b) Promote an evidence-based approach to the design and revision of key nutrition programmes, considering replication of proven low-cost, high-impact interventions from within and outside of India.
- c) Update the National Nutrition Policy (approved in 1993) to increase the focus on girls' and women's nutrition and the Leadership Agenda for Action essential interventions.
- d) Develop and expand the national policy framework to include 1) deworming for children 1-5 years of age, and provision of immunisation and vitamin A supplementation, 2) provision of weekly iron and folic acid supplementation, twice yearly deworming prophylaxis and nutrition and life-skills counselling for adolescent girls, and 3) standard, state-of-the art feeding and care for children with severe acute malnutrition, including the indigenous production and provision of therapeutic foods.

#### **Action Group 2: Governance and Coordination: Convener, Mr AR Nanda, Director of Population Foundation of India**

- a) Create synergy, convergence and accountability mechanisms at all levels to ensure that existing Government missions and programmes focus on nutrition, collaborate with each other, and achieve specific nutritional outcomes, such as reduced anaemia in girls and women.
- b) Increase local involvement in nutrition, particularly in planning, monitoring and supporting key services and behaviour change efforts, such as through Village Health and Nutrition Days or *panchayati raj* institutions.
- c) Expand and strengthen national programmes to address gender equity, especially keeping girls in school, increasing their economic opportunities, and advocating for marriage after 18 years.

#### **Action Group 3: Operationalising Programmes (“Operation 2015”): Convener, Prof NK Sethi, Senior Advisor for Health, Planning Commission**

- a) Achieve the goal of reducing hunger and poverty by half by 2015

- b) Promote the improvement of children, girls' and women's nutrition as a top political and programmatic priority at all levels (national, state and district), with commensurate budgetary allocations for these essential interventions.
- c) Expand the focus on girl's and women's nutrition within existing national programmes such as the National Rural Health Mission, the Public Distribution System, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*, and Bharat Nirman programmes.
- d) Promote coordination and convergence meetings between Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MHFW), Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), development partners, and other nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) as appropriate, especially at district and block level.
- e) Support and expand Village Health and Nutrition Days to deliver these essential nutrition interventions.
- f) Strengthen the knowledge and skills, as well as support systems, for community level workers (especially AWW, ASHA, ANM and teachers) to improve their performance and contributions in the nutrition area.

**Action Group 4: Monitoring and Evaluation: Convener, Mr DK Sikri, Secretary, MWCD**

- a) Expand and strengthen the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau to establish a robust national nutrition monitoring system in order to 1) provide nutrition outcome data for measuring progress and holding programmes accountable nationally and at state level; 2) shift the focus to nutrition *outcomes* rather than process measures; 3) improve the estimates of the persons to be reached by nutrition programmes, therefore ensuring correct coverage targets and improving the quality of data used for monitoring and evaluation (i.e., improved "denominators"); and 4) set time-bound targets and hold Missions, Ministries, and programmes accountable for their performance.
- b) Hold regular reviews of progress on nutrition indicators at all levels (using the nutrition surveillance system); conduct problem solving and revise programmes as needed, use data and regularly measure progress toward targets
- c) Establish concurrent evaluation systems.

**Action Group 5: Media and Nutrition Education : Convener, Mr. Sashi Kumar, Founder President of *Asianet* / Founder Chairman of Media Development Foundation & Asian College of Journalism**

- a) Involve the media and public to increase awareness of the nutrition situation, the national effort and to review their progress; make progress reports public.
- b) Harmonise nutrition communication guidelines and critical messages across ministries and programmes.
- c) Initiate a comprehensive and coordinated national nutrition education programme, which is sensitive to equity and gender issues, to increase "nutrition literacy" and promote key nutrition behaviours.
- d) Support and improve the performance of primary level providers and counsellors through improved results-focused training, communications materials, job aids, motivation schemes, and supportive supervision.
- e) Promote a sustained media campaign involving the integrated use of traditional and new media