



Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) Rome, 19-21 November 2014

CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE 3

Roundtable 3: Governance and Accountability for Nutrition 20 November, 2014

PANEL 1 NUTRITION GOVERNANCE 14.30 - 16.00

Co-Chairs:

Mr **Louis LAHOUD**, Director-General
Ministry of Agriculture, **Lebanon**

His Excellency, **Hans BRATTSKAR**, Deputy Minister for
Foreign Affairs, **Norway**

Moderator:

Her Excellency **Gerda VERBURG**, Permanent
Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to FAO
and Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security

Main Speaker:

Shawn K. BAKER, Director of Nutrition
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – *Nutrition Governance:
What are the elements for effective nutrition governance at
global and country levels?*

Panellists:

Germán GONZÁLEZ, Secretary for Food and Nutritional
Security, **Guatemala** – *What are the national experiences
with nutrition governance? How does the existence of good
governance or its absence impact on nutrition outcomes?*

His Excellency **Haladou SALHA**, AU-NEPAD Senior
Technical Advisor to the Rome-based African Ambassadors,
AU-NEPAD Senior Liaison Officer to the Rome-based UN
Agencies – *What are the current mechanisms around
nutrition governance and accountability?*

Zahra ABHOLLAHI, Director, Community Nutrition
Department Ministry of Health and Medical Education,
Islamic Republic of Iran – *What are the national
experiences with nutrition governance? How does the
existence of good governance or its absence impact on
nutrition outcomes?*

PANEL 2 NUTRITION ACCOUNTABILITY 16.00 - 17.30

Co-Chairs:

Mr **Louis LAHOUD**, Director-General
Ministry of Agriculture, **Lebanon**

His Excellency, **Hans BRATTSKAR**,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Norway**

Moderator:

Tom ARNOLD, SUN Movement Coordinator ad interim
Dublin, Ireland

Main Speaker:

Lawrence HADDAD, Senior Research Fellow
International Food Policy Research Institute – *Current
accountability mechanisms: Do they work?*

Panellists:

Her Excellency **Cristina Isabel LOPES DA SILVA
MONTEIRO DUARTE**, Minister of Finance and
Planning, **Cabo Verde** – *Country accountability
mechanism for nutrition*

Her Excellency **Mary MUBI**, Former Permanent
Representative of Zimbabwe to FAO – *How can we hold
governments accountable for nutrition?*

Richard GREENE, Senior Deputy Assistant
Administrator, Bureau for Food Security, United States
Agency for International Development – *Accountability
for the ICN2 Rome Declaration: Who should be held
accountable and how?*

Marcela LIBOMBO, Director of Food Security Center
Ministry of Agriculture, **Mozambique** – *Country
accountability mechanism for nutrition*

Asma LATEEF, Director Bread for World Institute, USA
– *What does the current monitoring and accountability
framework look like? What accountability mechanisms
should be in place?*



CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE ROUNDTABLE #1

Roundtable 3: Governance and Accountability for Nutrition

The Roundtable 3 on Governance and Accountability for Nutrition consisted of two panels: one focusing on governance and the other on accountability.

Panel 1: Nutrition Governance

The panel 1 on **governance for nutrition** explored key components for effective nutrition governance at national and international levels and shared experiences across countries.

The Roundtable underlined effective nutrition governance as key for follow-up to the commitments embedded in the Rome Declaration on Nutrition. Embedding nutrition in a human rights agenda makes issues of governance and accountability central to effective implementation.

The Roundtable highlighted hurdles to be overcome for strong nutrition governance:

- 1) the signs of malnutrition are often invisible, and thus remain a hidden problem;
- 2) in every country in the world, there are people who suffer from malnutrition;
- 3) those most affected by malnutrition are typically those with the least voice in society, so they are not heard;
- 4) malnutrition is often poorly measured and reported;
- 5) nutrition has become everyone's business and no one's responsibility, thus it is unclear who is accountable for nutrition in existing governance structures; and
- 6) the range of country perspectives shared in the presentations.

The discussions all highlighted the importance of making nutrition issues visible and establishing appropriate governance mechanisms across key Ministries and Departments, and that governance mechanisms were not only important at global and national levels but also at local levels.



Discussions also considered whether there is a need to establish a new international organization on nutrition. In addition to the substantial resources required to establish and maintain a new organization, it was recognized that the necessary elements already exist at global, regional, national and local levels. Resources could be better used reinforcing and building up these existing governance mechanisms.

The issue of if, how and when the private sector should be involved in both policy-setting and governance in general was also raised. Different views, opinions and experiences were shared.

There are several key conclusions emerging from the Panel 1. I will mention a few of them here:

1. **Make malnutrition visible:** many of the effects of nutrition and those worst affected are invariably invisible and lacking in voice. Raising the visibility of nutrition is thus vital. In this regard, improving the quality and frequency of data and information on malnutrition and the impact of programmes, as well as changing the narrative about nutrition issues will be important steps. For example, if we use the terms “chronic malnutrition”, we underplay the urgency of addressing nutrition problems.
2. **Be inclusive and empowering:** those who need to act must be empowered to do so, including with evidence-based facts.
3. **Focus on meeting the needs and human rights of people.**
4. **Work in a multi-stakeholder setting that makes the sectors and stakeholders accountable on delivering on nutrition targets.**
5. **Recognize that work on improving nutrition needs to be political but not partisan, so that transitions in governments will not impede efforts to improve nutrition.**
6. **Request FAO and WHO to develop a definition of nutrition security.**
7. **Be results-oriented.** Governance should not be an end in itself, but a means to end malnutrition.
8. **Ownership and leadership are critical elements to nutrition governance:** ownership and good leadership at all levels is needed for good governance.
9. **Anchoring nutrition targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is key and inputs are urgently needed.**



Panel 2: Nutrition Accountability

The panel 2 on **accountability for nutrition** explored the effectiveness of current accountability mechanisms. Experiences and selected country examples were discussed. It was recognized that accountability often is difficult to define – and even more challenging to measure. Why? Many manifestations of poor nutrition are invisible, or become visible only over time. Likewise, nutrition improvements reflect the combined and coordinated efforts of many sectors and many actors, reflecting some of the hindrances to nutrition governance identified in Panel 1.

The panel discussed the importance of accountability mechanisms bringing together different sectors. Moreover, the country examples emphasized the importance of linking accountability to government planning, budgeting, expenditures and results. The critical importance of embedding governance mechanisms – at the global, regional, national and local levels – was underscored.

A model for accountability was presented. This outlines five distinct steps:

- 1) To identify commitments, including quantifying what governments are spending on nutrition, so that expenditures are in line with nutrition strategies.
- 2) To monitor and track progress, including filling data gaps and budget commitments.
- 3) To assess response to commitments.
- 4) To leverage commitments, applying global targets at national level, if necessary.
- 5) To respond to assessments, using results for raising awareness and commitments and research for indications of what works and what does not work.

The country perspectives shared in the presentations emphasized that accountability is an essential pillar of good governance. The discussions also stressed this. Accountability must be applied to nutrition and nutrition outcomes, and in order to ensure this transparent public accounting is imperative.



The discussion also highlighted the need to establish indicators to track national commitment and coordinating mechanisms within countries to plan for, advocate for and promote better nutrition.

There were several key conclusions from Panel 2; I will mention some of them.

The first one is that accountability is a critical factor in turning commitments to improve nutrition into results. Progress in nutrition strongly depends upon accountability systems being put in place. The second is that some outcome and action accountability mechanisms do exist, but they need to be strengthened. It is important to invest more in them, in order to find more and better mechanisms. Thirdly, global level agreements provide a useful benchmark for nutrition outcomes at national level. Fourthly, we need to reach agreement on indicators and data gathering. Information systems need to be strengthened with regular and more detailed reporting and publications of results. Fifthly, nutrition is a cross-cutting issue. It requires an integrated, multi-sectorial engagement, and civil society needs to be included. Sixthly, resource allocation should be in line with priorities for nutrition improvement, bringing budgeting, planning and implementing exercises together. The last conclusion is that efforts are needed to embed nutrition more broadly in the SDGs.

The Roundtable gave us important insights regarding good practice and lessons learned, and also provided some concrete recommendations for the way forward for the work on nutrition governance and accountability.

Thank you.