

Comments from the UN Network Secretariat on Draft 1 of Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN)

Introduction

- Suggest giving greater emphasis to framing nutrition as an entry point for delivering on the rest of the SDGs, noting that elements and factors related to food systems are also prominently placed in the SDGs. Recommend stating this earlier in the Introduction.

Governance Section (Section 3.1)

- **General comment:** In an effort to leverage complementary ongoing initiatives, strengthen the capacity of existing coordination mechanisms and consolidate recent gains, there is scope to strengthen linkages with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. At present, the document only mentions once, on the last page.
- **3.1.1.a** Recommend adding something on leveraging/taking advantage of existing multi-sectorial initiatives/ partnerships (such as SUN)
- **3.1.1.b.** In light of the above, the authors might consider adding the following clause at the end of the sentence ‘leveraging the presence of the SUN Business Network (SBN), where possible’.

Furthermore, including a specific bullet on the private sector is commendable, given its pivotal role, but the sentence does not say anything concrete on how to take advantage of the participation of private sector in improving food environments. You may consider revising as highlighted below.

“Considering the pivotal role of the private sector in the production, distribution and sale of food, States should facilitate an inclusive dialogue with the private sector – **through existing business networks or associations - to build national partnership** strategies that **contribute to addressing eventual conflicts of interests, and in the long run,** improve food environments.

- **3.1.1.** While ‘multi-sectoral actions and coordination’ are captured in the heading, there is no reference to coordination mechanisms that provide a platform to coordinate multi-sectoral nutrition actions at the country level (national and sub-national). The UN Network (UNN) is working closely with SUN Government Focal Points and multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) in SUN countries to building coordination capacity at the country level. Suggest adding and a sub-point (d or even better if it can be listed as the second sub-point), touching upon efforts to strengthen the capacity of multi-sectoral/stakeholder coordination mechanisms on nutrition. The authors might consider attributing these efforts to intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations agencies or opt to keep the language broad.
- **3.1.2.a.** Interestingly enough, this point mentions multi-sectoral/stakeholder coordination mechanisms on nutrition but it doesn’t seem like the best fit with the sub-heading ‘Promoting policy coherence by integrating nutrition into national development’. Perhaps, this point could be moved up to 3.1.1 and make reference to ‘bolstering ongoing efforts be

undertaken and consolidating gains made through the SUN Movement, including its constituent networks such as the UN Network.’ Not sure if we want to go a step further and suggest highlighting that representatives on the MSPs should be equipped and empowered to catalyse transformational change within their respective sectors in nutrition in support of achieving shared nutrition goals.

- **3.1.2.b.** Suggest adding education, social protection and gender to the list of national plans referred.
- **3.1.2.c.** Suggest adding gender and labour to the list of sectors referenced. The latter will take into account maternity protection (maternity leave and breastfeeding friendly workplaces).
- **3.1.3.c.** Suggest adding the word ‘nutrition’ in the second to last line so that it reads “robust technical capacity to analyze **nutrition and** food system information in a comprehensive manner”.

Suggested tools

- **Paragraph 36** states that “The VGFSyN provide policy entry points, tools, and mechanisms across the constituent elements of food systems, namely food supply chains²¹, food environments²², and consumer behaviour.” To this end, the following UNN products/tools would seem to be useful and worth suggesting for inclusion the potential supporting toolkit.
 - The UN Network’s (UNN) [Policy and Plan Overview](#) exercise is an action-oriented, multi-sectoral tool used at the country level to foster policy coherence on nutrition at the country level.
 - Countries also find UNN’s [Nutrition Stakeholder & Action Mapping](#) tool to be helpful for improving multi-sectoral governance on nutrition, including coordination. UN Network supports the deployment of the tool, used by government-led MSPs nutrition coordination mechanisms, including to track the implementation status of national nutrition plans.
 - [Compendium of Actions for Nutrition \(CAN\)](#): This compendium includes a potential multi-sectoral nutrition actions (both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions), *classified by the type of evidence available for them*, as well as accompanying narratives and bibliographies. This might be helpful, particularly if a decision is made to prioritize the VG elements by evidence levels. The CAN is a facilitation resource to help foster multi-sectoral dialogue at the country level, particularly on nutrition-related policy formulation and planning.
- **UNN SDG infographic** which illustrates the interlinkages between nutrition, food systems and the various SDGs, portraying nutrition as a driver of broader sustainable development.