

**Statement by the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone for
the International Conference on Nutrition 2 Meeting in Rome 19th – 21st
November 2014**

**SPEAKER: Foday Sawi Lahai, Deputy Minister, Health & Sanitation, Sierra
Leone**

Your Royal Majesties, Your Royal Highness, His Excellency Vice President of Tanzania, Excellences' Heads of Delegations and Ministers of Government, Executive Directors of the UN and UN Agencies, UN Partners, Civil Society Organizations, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure and a privilege to be associated with such a laudable global conference that seeks to promote nutrition as a crucial priority for social development and economic growth.

The Government of Sierra Leone recognises the negative impacts attendant high maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates associated with scourge malnutrition and food insecurity.

As a demonstration of the Government's commitment, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched in 2012 and has since established the Secretariat to undertake the facilitation and coordination of the national efforts. Furthermore government judiciously follows on the ICN initiative, a factor that further offers the Government a great opportunity to champion and collectively dedicate itself to eradicating malnutrition and its associated manifestation.

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Sierra Leone is determined to incorporate the goals and aspirations of this conference as established and by way of greater teamwork, unflinching commitment and systematic resilience to all that is in our power to achieve this. Let me therefore assure that the Sierra Leone Government is therefore committed to these global and national strategies to

address malnutrition in all its forms and to conquer the negative consequences among our population. As you are all aware our country is grappling with the Ebola scourge. Nonetheless we remain determined to move the nutrition agenda forward post-Ebola.

In view of this our Government will continue to focus on evidence based nutrition interventions such as:

1. Promoting optimal feeding and caring practices, with specific reference to breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding;
2. Promotion of diversified food production of local nutritious foods and promotion of diversified and adequate food consumption.
3. Supporting adequate intake of vitamins and minerals through both supplements and fortification;
4. Prevention and treatment of moderate and severe malnutrition;
5. Advocating the improvement of maternal nutrition and
6. Ensuring strengthened nutrition surveillance to save the lives of vulnerable women and children

Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen I am delighted to say that Sierra Leone has already developed a five year costed nutrition and food security multi-sectoral implementation plan (2012-2017). This is a key policy document expected to facilitate the effective implementation of the Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative through extensive collaboration and systematic coordination among the relevant government line Ministries, UN agencies, Civil Society Groups, NGOs, the Private Sector and donors.

To enable us track our set out targets, we have established various benchmarks along the way to guide and enhance the realization of our set objectives by 2017, and I am happy to say that they are in line with the World Health Assembly (WHA) global targets for 2025.

With these arrangements partnership -Sierra Leone is now set to make major strides based on our solid foundation for scaling up high impact nutrition and food security interventions. Already by 2014: amongst others we have reduced underfives stunting from 34.1% in 2010 to 28.8% in 2014 , wasting reduced from 6.9% in 2010 to 4.7 % in 2014, underweight from 18.7% in 2010 to 12.8 % in 2014 and exclusive breastfeeding rate has increased from 32 % in 2010 to 58.8% in 2014 amongst children under 6 months.

As we meet to

1. review progress made since the 1992 ICN including country level achievements in scaling up nutrition through direct food and nutrition interventions as well as food and nutrition-enhancing policies and programmes;
2. review relevant policies and institutions on agriculture, fisheries, health, trade, consumption and social protection to improve nutrition;
3. strengthen institutional policy coherence and coordination to improve food security and nutrition, as well as mobilize resources needed to improve nutrition and food security;
4. strengthen international, including inter-governmental cooperation, to enhance food security and nutrition everywhere, especially in developing countries.

Mr Chariman, Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, inspite of the disruption of the Ebola scourge, Sierra Leone remains committed to all these aspirations and will continue to maintain a steady effort in our efforts to improve and sustain food security, health and improved nutritional status of our population in general, and the women and children in particular in line with prescribed international standards.

I thank you all for your attention.