

**Ms Marie Konate, Chief Executive Officer, Protein-Kissée-La
on behalf of the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network**

Excellencies, Ministers, Directors General

It is an honour for me to address you today and thank you for the opportunity.

When you think of the private sector – maybe you do not think it looks like me. But it does.

The private sector across Africa looks like me. Women buying and selling in the market, mothers buying food for their children, businesswomen selling their trade, smallholder women farmers producing the food we eat.

Women are critical to nutrition – and women are critical to the private sector's contribution to nutrition.

My name is Marie Konaté, CEO of Protein Kisse-la, in Cote D'Ivoire, a member of the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network and private sector delegate to the 2nd International Conference on Nutrition.

PKL is the first Ivorian company to successfully introduce cereals for children aged 6 to 24 months within the critical 1,000 day period, to the local market. We aim to improve access for poor Ivorian households to a high quality fortified complementary food .

I market in a way that protects breastfeeding. I support breastfeeding as the most important way of nourishing our children.

Food markets and businesses of all kinds have long played a critical role in driving nutrition outcomes. Yet – in the face of unacceptably high levels of chronic undernutrition – the challenge is to improve the capacity of business- and market-driven approaches to provide key foods to the groups most affected by undernutrition.

Women face significant financial and technical barriers, and so do many small and medium businesses too.

More platforms for engagement with governments, civil society and development agencies, particularly with respect to national laws and regulations, can ensure we align with national priorities..

We need donors to identify sources of financing and co-investment to support our development and minimize risk for nutritious products targeted to the poor.

And we need civil society organizations to expand our reach through their ties within the community.

Small and medium enterprises also need the support of bigger, multinational companies, we need technology transfer, access to data and support within their value chains.

Beyond, the food sector, there is role for more businesses. We need mobile phone companies to promote breastfeeding messages and help us retrieve the data we need from communities. We need water, sanitation and hygiene companies to recognize the impact they have on nutrition.

We need every company in the world to realize that as an employer they need to provide the best nutrition possible to their employees and to the communities in which they work.

But we need the support of everyone in the room to talk to business about the role they can play. Reach out and talk to us, tell us what we are doing well, tell us where we can do more. If you do not talk to us, how can we help?

The SUN Movement offers us a way to look at bringing this partnership approach into reality. The SUN Business Network supports businesses, including those like mine, to work in partnerships with all actors in SUN countries.

Together, we can do more, we can go further, and faster.

In partnership, we can deliver on the Rome Declaration and this Framework for Action, and let us recognize this here at ICN2.

Thank you.