



Bread for the World Louisiana

The Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice
Loyola University New Orleans

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 5
SEPTEMBER 2011

One Thousand Days September 2010 – June 2013

In September 2010, on the occasion of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and then Irish Foreign Minister Micheál Martin launched the “**1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future Call to Action**” to draw attention to the irreversible impact of maternal and child undernutrition during the 1,000 day critical window of opportunity, from pregnancy to the age of 2, and the priority actions and interventions needed to scale up nutrition. Also launched that day was the *Roadmap to Scale Up Nutrition* (SUN).

1,000 Days to Scale Up Nutrition for Mothers & Children focuses on the theme Building Political Commitment for the 1,000 Days Call to Action. The International Meeting seeks to:

- Build political commitment and energy to help solve the problem of maternal and child malnutrition.

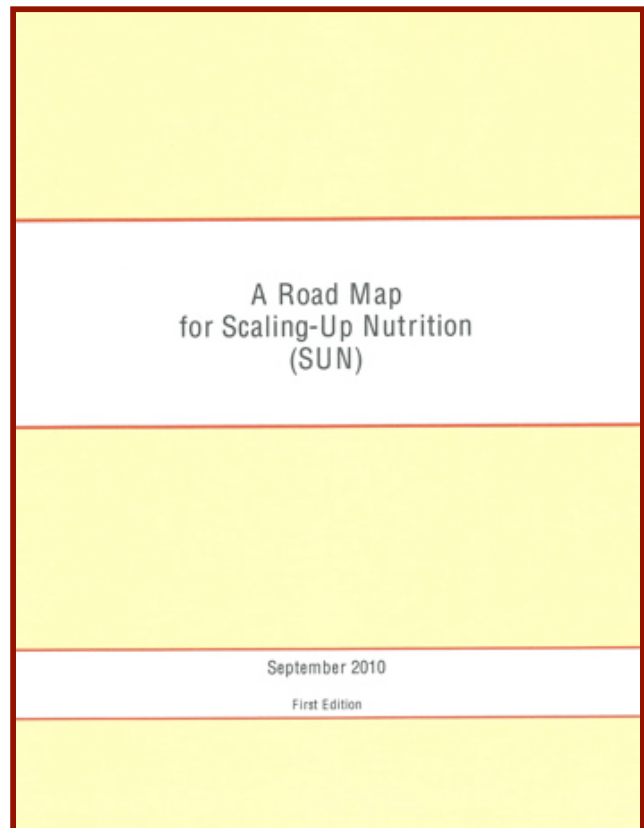
- Assess the progress in scaling up nutrition programs at the country level.

This assessment will identify the challenges and gaps that need to be addressed as well as the extent of civil society engagement.

- Agree to a shared advocacy agenda and strategy for the September 2011 U.N. General Assembly follow-up and the G-20 Summit.

This will focus on the additional resources needed to scale up nutrition programs.

- Strengthen the voice of civil society in this global effort.



The 1,000 day period from pregnancy through age two is critical in shaping a child’s lifelong health and development. The 1,000 Days partnership brings together governments, the private sector and civil society organizations to

promote targeted action and investment to improve nutrition for mothers and children during this crucial time. The partnership serves as a platform to encourage investment and strengthen policies to improve early nutrition in the developing world in alignment with the *Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Framework*, an approach that seeks to coordinate and accelerate international efforts to combat undernutrition.

There is a 1,000 day critical window of opportunity from pregnancy through age two in which a set of proven nutrition interventions can dramatically improve a child's chances of surviving and living a healthy and prosperous life. These interventions include increasing the intake of vitamins and minerals for mothers and babies, good infant feeding and caring practices and the use of therapeutic foods for very malnourished children.

Improving nutrition, especially in developing countries and particularly during the 1,000 day window of opportunity, has long-lasting positive effects and can help break the cycle of poverty. Strong evidence demonstrates that providing better nutrition through a series of cost-effective interventions within the 1,000 day window could save millions of lives and increase a country's GDP by at least 2-3 percent annually. Ensuring better nutrition for today's mothers and children can help lay the foundation for a future in which the next generation grows up to lead significant

and sustainable progress in their communities and countries.

The health and economic consequences of undernutrition are devastating: it contributes to the deaths of 3.5 million children under the age of five each year and to the physical and economic suffering of millions more. Yet by focusing on providing nutrition solutions during the 1,000 day window of opportunity, undernutrition and its consequences are largely preventable.

In order to more effectively expand access to better nutrition in the developing world, there is a need to build greater awareness of the impact and cost-effectiveness of improved nutrition in the 1,000 day window. Recognizing this, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, then-Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin and a community of global leaders launched the 1,000 Days partnership as a way to help achieve measurable benchmarks in improving maternal and child nutrition in the 1,000 days between September 2010 and June 2013.

**THE 1,000 DAY WINDOW OF
OPPORTUNITY, HAS LONG-
LASTING POSITIVE EFFECTS AND
CAN HELP BREAK THE CYCLE OF
POVERTY.**

The 1,000 Days Hub was created to support the 1,000 Days partnership and manage ThousandDays.org, an advocacy platform providing online tools to help mobilize partners to take action toward improving maternal and child nutrition in alignment with the objectives and principles of 1,000 Days and SUN. The Hub—organized by InterAction and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), in close collaboration with the U.S. Department of State—facilitates dialogue among global partners in nutrition, agriculture, health, social protection and other sectors, and works to mobilize U.S.-based partners and stakeholders.

Maternal and child undernutrition: an urgent opportunity

Nutrition is a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn, and child health. The reasons for this neglect are understandable but not justifiable. When one considers specific actions to improve maternal and child survival, one is drawn to particular interventions— vaccination, oral rehydration therapy, and the treatment of infection and hemorrhage. In recent years, this portfolio of responses has broadened to embrace the health system—human resources, financing, and stewardship. Somehow, nutrition has slipped through the gap. And yet we know that nutrition is a major risk factor for disease. What public-health experts and policymakers have not done is to gather the evidence about the importance of maternal and child nutrition,

catalogue the long-term effects of under-nutrition on development and health, identify proven interventions to reduce undernutrition, and call for national and international action to improve nutrition for mothers and children. Undernutrition is the largely preventable cause of over a third—3.5 million—of all child deaths. Stunting, severe wasting, and intrauterine growth restriction are among the most important problems. There is a golden interval for intervention: from pregnancy to 2 years of age. After age 2 years, under-nutrition will have caused irreversible damage for future development towards adulthood. Incredibly, four-fifths of undernourished children live in just 20 countries across four regions—Africa, Asia, western Pacific, and the Middle East. These are the priority nations for action. In terms of under-5 mortality rates, the most immediate needs are for Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Madagascar, Kenya, Yemen, and Burma. In order of population size, and excluding the countries with highest mortality rates, the ranking is different: India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines, Egypt, South Africa, Sudan, and Nepal.

There are proven effective interventions to reduce stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. According to strict criteria around admissible evidence, breastfeeding counseling, vitamin A supplementation, and zinc fortification have

the greatest benefits. Attention to maternal nutrition through adequate dietary intake in pregnancy and supplementation with iron, folic acid, and possibly other micronutrients and calcium are likely to provide value. But these interventions need additional programmatic experience about how to achieve full coverage. There is no magic technological bullet to solve the problem of undernutrition. Long-term investments in the role of women as full and equal citizens—through education, economic, social, and political empowerment—will be the only way to deliver sustainable improvements in maternal and child nutrition, and in the health of women and children more generally. The compelling logic of this scientific evidence is that governments need national plans to scale-up nutrition interventions, systems to monitor and evaluate those plans, and laws and policies to enhance the rights and status of women and children. Although complex and fraught with political disagreement, none of these solutions are separable from global treaties and negotiations over trade, agriculture, and poverty reduction. Not surprisingly perhaps, that the international nutrition system is broken. Leadership is absent, resources are too few, capacity is fragile, and emergency response systems are fragmentary. New governance arrangements are urgently needed. An agency, donor, or political leader needs to step up to this challenge. There is a fabulous opportunity right now for someone to do so.

The Lancet, London NW1 7BY, UK

A C T I O N

Dear Senators / Representative,
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? *We all know hunger and poverty exist in our country and world. We know there are realistic solutions to end hunger and reduce poverty. We also know the cost in human suffering and financial costs far outweigh the cost of putting an end to hunger and poverty. So what are we waiting for? I URGE you to support legislation that will bring U.S. foreign assistance into the 21st century so that hunger and poverty becomes a scourge of the past.*

Sincerely,

Your name and address



Published eleven times a year by

*Bread for the World Louisiana
 Founded in 1982*

Bread for the World New Orleans



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Publisher ~ Jane F. Remson, O.Carm.

Editor ~ Mary Blaise Fernando, O.Carm.



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