

Brief on the Multi-Sectoral Involvement to combat malnutrition

Rationale:

Health, nutrition and population policies play a pivotal role in economic and human development and in poverty alleviation. Nutrition remains a key element in ensuring food security. Recent evidences suggest that Pakistan has some of the worst development indicators in the world. Results from the latest National Nutrition Survey (NNS, 2011) show an alarming nutrition situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Under-nutrition is one of the main causes of death among infants and young children. Those who survive have less learning capacity that reduces their productivity at adulthood, which impact negatively on economy. Reversing adverse trends in nutrition needs appropriate policy direction, political commitment and a concerted effort from all sectors. Pakistan in general and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular faces many challenges in the formulation and implementation of nutrition policies/strategies and action plans that are holistic in approach to addressing nutrition issues.

It is indeed very disturbing that 48 per cent of the child population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is stunted. This clearly indicates Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have faced chronic malnutrition over a number of years. Similarly, the wasting rate of 17 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also alarming. The province has shown remarkable improvement in the rate of underweight children which has been reduced to 24 per cent in the 2011 survey from 35 per cent in the 2001 survey, however reducing it further is still a challenge for all and needs commitment of all involved sectors. The survey results also highlight micro-nutrient deficiencies including vitamin A, iron, zinc, iodine and vitamin D needs attention & commitment. It is clear now that malnutrition is not just a food problem or the result of displacements, floods or any other emergencies. Malnutrition is a national calamity. It is indicative of the underlying issues the country is facing including poor infant feeding practices, poor sanitation and hygiene habits, increasing food insecurity and lack of awareness about child and maternal nutrition. Major findings of the NNS 2011 has clearly indicated the urgent need to address malnutrition through an integrated approach, which addresses immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition.

There is now real evidence that most of our children are under-nourished in many ways ... ways which affect the development of their brains in the first two years of life, with negative impact on their performance in or out of school and subsequently in their work productivity. Such undernourishment creates inabilities that affect performance at all stages of life. At least 2% of GDP is lost every year on account of current levels of malnutrition in Pakistan. Addressing the problem would only cost a small fraction of that amount. Traditionally nutrition is viewed as a problem to be looked after only by the health sector. The understanding that nutrition to be looked after by the health sector alone skew the focus to those groups who are most affected by lack of food and poor health and who turn to health services for help, particularly mothers and children. Focusing on them too narrowly deflects attention away from the action which is needed to remedy the economic and social contexts which predispose a community to poor nutrition.

The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) after the devolution has developed the health sector strategy based on the strategic directions and priorities of the comprehensive development strategy of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for nutrition interventions is one of the most important areas envisaged in the health sector strategy document. Promotion of synergies under the leadership of planning and development in various areas affecting health has been recommended in the strategy document.

At the global level there is a movement called “Scaling Up Nutrition” (or SUN for short). The SUN movement calls for a two pronged approach: Scaling up well proven nutrition-specific interventions through the health sector. To this end the Department of Health, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the leadership of the Health Sector Reform Unit (HSRU) is currently working on an integrated PC1 [Integration of vertical national programs i.e. LHWs, MNCH, EPI and Nutrition programs). To this regards it is believed that good results will be achieved on nutrition-

specific interventions over the next five years. This is an important step, but it would not be enough. Hence we need to scale-up nutrition-sensitive approaches in key sectors such as agriculture, food, social protection, education, water and sanitation and private sector etc.

The D-10 meeting held in EAD in September 2011 followed by a national review meeting at the planning commission in February 2012 revealed that the engagement on the nutrition issues is still weak in departments other than health. Given the high levels of malnutrition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa require engagement of several allied partners to comprehensively address malnutrition in the province.

A concurrent technical support is available through a group of development partners designated by the D-10 forum as “Pakistan Nutrition Development Partners” coordinated by the World Bank for province specific plan. The group has agreed to work with each province to develop policy guidance brief and framework on multi-sectoral aspect of food and nutrition security following a consultative process through engagement of all stakeholders, partners from relevant sectors. The policy guidance notes will outline the scope of the malnutrition problem in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and present policy recommendations along with strategic and operational plan that will identify practical actions to be taken to address the problem.

The planning and development department being a lead department for overall policy formulation and intersectoral coordination in the province has a critical role in coordinating the process. To take forward the process a two days consultative workshop under the coordination role of planning and development and active involvement of health sector has been proposed by the development partners to be held in Peshawar for KP and FATA on August 29-30, 2012. The proposed workshop is part of a process that was started last year when the National Nutrition Survey was released in the province on November 29, 2011, along with a discussion on how to take forward the Pakistan Integrated Nutrition Strategy (PINS) in this province. This workshop will build on those deliberations and will thus provide valuable inputs for two next steps: i.e. [Policy guidance notes that will outline the scope of the malnutrition problem in this province and present some policy recommendations to address the problem and a strategic and operational plan that will identify practical actions to be taken to address the problem]

Objectives of the Provincial Workshop

- a) Develop a common understanding on the province specific multisectoral causes and potential priority activities within each sector to address malnutrition.
- b) Understand the process of development of provincial multi-sectoral policy notes,
- c) Support the development of the multi-sectoral nutrition strategy and its operationalization.
- d) Define roles, agree on clear objectives, nominate focal persons, and agree on next steps and timelines.

Outcome

The main expected outcome is to develop deeper engagement and better understanding of stakeholders to reach an agreement on specific roles to link policy and strategy development for implementation of a provincial integrated nutrition strategy.

Next Steps

- Prepare provincial policy guidance notes on the multisectoral aspects of nutrition to be shared again with the provinces as drafts.
- Use completed provincial multisectoral nutrition guidance notes to guide the development of provincial sector specific policies
- Finalize provincial multi-sectoral nutrition strategy and operational plans and start implementation.
- Clarify the on-going work needed, activities to be undertaken, and milestones to be met in order to operationalize policy, strategy, and integrated plans over the next months.

Agenda for 2 days provincial multi-sectoral nutrition workshop

Day 1: Information Sharing and Planning (August 29, 2012)

Time	Activities	Moderator/Presenter
09:00 - 09:30	Registration of participants	
09:30 - 10:15	<i>Opening Ceremonies (45 min)</i> Recitation from the Holy Quran, Welcome note, objectives of the workshop	Opening Remarks by Additional Chief Secretary P&D
10:15 - 10:45	<i>Presentation (30 mins)</i> Setting the scene: Why Malnutrition matters?	Simon Azariah (World Bank)
10:45 - 11:00	Tea Break	
11:00 - 11:45	<i>Presentation (15 min) & Discussion (30 min)</i> Provincial Nutrition Analysis	Dr. Silvia Kaufman (UNICEF)
11:45 - 12:30	<i>Presentation (15 min) & Discussion (30 min)</i> Pakistan Integrated Nutrition Strategy (PINS) and Provincial Update	Dr. Sharif Ahmad (DGHS KP)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch and Prayers Break	
13:30 - 14:00	<i>Presentation (30 min)</i> Success stories and ideas from other countries	Dr. Khizar Ashraf (WHO, Islamabad)
14:00 - 16:00	Sector Specific Working Groups* (2 hours) Questions: 1) What are major challenges addressing malnutrition in your area 2) How could your sector contribute to better nutrition (incl. policy, planning and implementation level)? *Groups to prepare 10 minute presentations for next day --WORKING TEA--	All Sectors 5 Groups to be constituted (WASH, Agriculture/Food, Education, Health, Protection, and others as appropriate)
16:00 - 16:15	Impressions/thoughts from Day 1 – participants	Participants, Dr. Ayub (Planning Commission) to Moderate
16:15	Conclusion – Day 1	Planning and Development

Day 2: Sector specific discussion and way forward (August 30, 2012)

Time	Activities	Moderator/Presenter
09:00 - 09:15	Recap of day 1	
09:15 - 09:45	<i>Presentation (15 min) & Discussion (15 min)</i> Role of Private Sector	Khawaja Masood, (Micronutrient Initiative)
09:45 - 10:15	<i>Presentation (20 min) & Discussion (15 min)</i> Impact of Gender Differences on Nutrition	Dr. Silvia Kaufman (UNICEF)
10:15 – 12:30	<i>Presentation & Discussion (2:15 hours)</i> Political Economy Analysis of Under-Nutrition: Exploring strategic opportunities and barriers for inter-sectoral action on nutrition --WORKING TEA--	Dr. Shehla Zaidi (Aga Khan University Karachi and Institute for Development Studies Sussex, UK)
12:30 - 13:15	<i>Sector Specific Working Groups* (1 hour)</i> Questions: 1. Based on previous planning and yesterday's discussion: what are the next steps to bring planning into action (incl. addressing barriers and challenges). *Groups to complete their presentations	Presentation to be finalized as started on day 1 to be facilitated by the same as responsible for day 1 group work
13:15 - 14:00	Lunch and Prayers Break	
14:00 - 15:00	<i>Presentations based on Group Work (1hour)</i>	
15:00 - 16:00	<i>Plenary (1 hour)</i> Sector specific future actions (group presentation) --WORKING TEA--	Sector Focal Person
16:00 - 16:30	Conclusion and Way Forward (30 minutes)	Additional Chief Secretary P&D