Statement by Ms. Gerda Verburg, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Coordinator[1];

WHA 74 - agenda item 13.2 Political declaration of the 3rd high level meeting of the GA on the prevention and control of NCDs

Honourable Chair,

I deliver this statement in my capacity as UN Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement which is a global movement driven by its 63 member countries who have committed to bring people and sectors together to end malnutrition in all its forms.

Progress in fighting undernutrition has stalled while obesity rates have continued to rise. Poor dietary health accounts annually for 11 million premature deaths globally. These trends are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences. Already before the pandemic, 3 billion people could not afford a healthy diet.

Yet, good nutrition, especially during a child's first 1,000 days, is the foundation for health, physical and cognitive development. It is key to build immunity and to protect against illness. It brings high returns on personal, as well as societal development.

2021 is the "Nutrition Year of Action" and brings a unique opportunity to "build forward better", with more resilient systems that can sustainably provide good nutrition for all, even in the face of crises. I call on each and every country and all health actors to leverage this opportunity by making clear and measurable commitments during the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and the Nutrition for Growth Summit, to emphasize the crucial impact of nutrition on the delivery of all 17 SDG's, and for that reason mobilize political and financial commitments to improve nutrition and make healthy diets affordable and accessible for all.

Lastly, as the WHO is updating its global action plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases till 2030, I call on all actors, to stress the importance of transforming food systems towards delivering affordable, healthy food for all, in a sustainable and resilient way to improve people's health and planetary health alike.

Thank you.

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[1] *The SUN Movement Secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services in Geneva. This statement is delivered by Ms. Verburg, in her capacity as UN Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator of the SUN Movement.*