

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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DRIVING CONTINENTAL NUTRITION ACCOUNTABILITY: AUC, SADC, AND AFRICAN LEADERS FOR NUTRITION CONVENE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE CONTINENTAL NUTRITION ACCOUNTABILITY SCORECARD

The African Union (AU) Commission Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) through the Health Systems, Diseases and Nutrition (HSDN) Division, AU Member States from Southern Africa Region joined by experts from National Statistics, Health and Nutrition offices build their capacity towards the use of data from the Continental Accountability Scorecard to identify gaps and take evidence-based decisions to drive Africa's nutrition agenda.

This was during a two days workshop jointly organized by the African Union Commission and African Development Bank's African Leaders for Nutrition and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) on the 24th and 25th of July. The main objectives of the workshop were to sensitize focal points from the Member States on the digital version of the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard (CNAS) and the indicators, to share experiences on the use of nutrition data and scorecards in promoting accountability among the AU Member States, and to promote standardization of data analysis approaches in developing nutrition reports.

The Continental Nutrition Accountability scorecard is aimed at supporting the tracking of progress by countries toward the achievement of nutrition targets set through the Malabo Declaration, World Health Assembly (WHA), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Developed and launched in 2019 by African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN), in conjunction with the AU Commission, AU Member States are expected to use data from the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard to assess progress made toward meeting national, continental, and global targets on nutrition and hold leaders accountable for the same. At the regional level, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) can use the CNAS to inform the development of the annual nutrition report.

Speaking during the workshop **Ms. Duduzile Simelane, Director for Social and Human Development at SADC**, underscored the importance of the Scorecard, highlighted the importance of investing in child nutrition in the first 1000 days as it has long-term positive effects on cognitive development, educational attainment, and productivity in adulthood.

The scorecard has proven to be a timely tool to support the identification of gaps and evidence-based decisions to drive Africa's nutrition agenda. In particular, the CNAS provides evidence that helps Africa Leaders for Nutrition and African Union Nutrition Champion to frame the messages while advocating for the enactment of policies and

strategies to address malnutrition and more specifically when calling for additional resources and investments in nutrition. Since its launch, data from National Statistics Offices (NSOs) for scorecards has shaped the reports developed by the AUC on the status of malnutrition in Africa.

George Ouma, African Leaders for Nutrition Coordinator, used the occasion to explain to participants that ALN's vision was to empower African governments to utilize the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard as a robust framework for developing nutrition-smart projects, budget allocation, policies development, and accountability tools across the African Union's regional economic communities.

The CNAS is expected to provide a unified approach to report on progress made in achieving the continental and global targets on nutrition, and a framework to guide the development of interventions to address malnutrition.

The AU Commission also presented the finding of the first African Union Nutrition Report (2022), calling on all AU Member States to make use of the findings of the report, which is one of the key tools of nutrition accountability in the continent.

The meeting participants included AU Member States representatives from, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; and partners organizations including African Leaders Malaria Alliance, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Nutrition International, UNICEF, and World Food Program.

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