

N4G Principles of Engagement

Introduction

The N4G Summit to be held in Tokyo in late 2021 is a reset opportunity: it marks the end date for commitments made at the original N4G Summit in 2013 and leaves us nine years to deliver the SDGs in 2030. The Summit in late 2021 therefore intends to mobilize ambitious and wide-reaching multistakeholder commitments to transform food systems and health systems to deliver substantial nutrition gains. Concerted and coordinated action from policymakers, civil society, and business is needed to address the complex challenge of ending malnutrition in all its forms.

Malnutrition in all its forms is a global emergency affecting more than one in three people, and the Principles of Engagement are designed to open up dialogue and facilitate bold, new and imaginative commitments or pledges, backed by well worked out implementation plans, with targets and with SMART measurements.

These Principles of Engagement were developed over several months of consultations with input from governments, international organizations, civil society, and business. The success of N4G depends on robust participation from all those stakeholders who shape food systems. The principles are designed to mobilize all these stakeholders and identify solutions and commitments to meeting the Summit goals based on a shared vision, ambition, and identification of common ground.

While some recommendations by their nature are specific to different types of stakeholders, the underpinning values and core principles apply equally to all. Thus to ensure that the Summit delivers credible, sustainable, and well-supported outcomes for nutrition via public and private sector action, stakeholder consultations, and participation at the Summit is based on this set of agreed principles. The accountability section in this guide describes the Summit's monitoring and accountability processes.

Preamble

These principles are designed both to reflect the SUN Principles of Engagement while elaborating how they will be applied at the Summit.

- Be transparent about intentions and impact
- Be cost-effective
- Be inclusive
- Be continuously communicative
- Be rights based
- Act with integrity and in an ethical manner
- Be willing to negotiate
- Be mutually respectful
- Be predictable and mutually accountable
- Do no harm

1. The process of developing commitments must engage a wide range of actors in open and transparent consultation

- Commitments should be developed from the outset using a consultative process based on open dialogue and a collaborative spirit with all relevant stakeholders involved including the private sector, governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society. This also includes commitments from business membership organizations (e.g. business associations) as a means of resetting norms and achieving scale.
- The consultation process should also enable stakeholders to voice their concerns about public policy proposals and business contributions, and discuss how public policies or business contributions encourage rather than undermine public health objectives.
- The consultation process is intended to serve as a safe space in which the integrity of different positions is respected, and to motivate stakeholders to take action.
- The consultation process will prioritize the inclusion of a diverse set of stakeholders throughout the process in order to create the best opportunity for a strong set of recommendations from the consultation process. This includes trying to prioritize perspectives of people with different experiences, which can include but is not limited to things such as gender identity, race, and class.
- Outcomes of consultations should be shared with other Summit stakeholders.

2. All stakeholders' commitments need to be SMART and significant

- Stakeholders should only be allowed to contribute commitments that are SMART, designed to meaningfully contribute to achieving internationally agreed goals, targets, strategies, and standards on nutrition.
- As for all other stakeholders, commitments from businesses or business associations should be appropriate to their size/membership, and primarily strive to mainstream good practices within their core business in addition to any 'corporate social responsibility' programs. At the Summit, all commitments should clearly be more ambitious than 'business-as-usual' and illustrate how that is so.
- All stakeholders must commit at the outset to reporting on their progress towards these SMART commitments fully and publicly, on an annual basis, through existing mechanisms or by actively participating in existing accountability mechanisms wherever possible. If such mechanisms don't exist, the partners should commit to creating them as part of this process.
- The criteria listed in this principle are further outlined in the Commitment Guide.

3. Public policy must be evidence-based, established by governments through inclusive participatory processes

- Organizers of consultations on public policy recommendations/commitments should provide a safe space to consider policy options and voice concerns. These consultations must be conducted in a way that protects policy recommendations from undue influence of or interference from financial interests, and focus on evidence-based approaches.
- All stakeholders participating in public policy commitment consultations should be transparent about their interests and positions. They should only be invited by governments to participate if they are prepared to share their contribution publicly via their organizational websites and/or other transparency mechanisms.

- The outcomes of the consultations on public policy recommendations should be shared with other Summit stakeholders by the organizers of the consultations. The finalization of the public policy commitments is the responsibility of governments.

4. Breast milk substitute (BMS) manufacturers need to commit to an action plan to achieve full compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (the Code) by 2030, both in policy and practice.

- Consideration will be given to inviting BMS companies to the Summit if they:
 - Show evidence of having taken a first step that goes above and beyond the company's current policy commitments and practice before the start of the Summit; and
 - State publicly a commitment to work towards full compliance with the Code and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions by 2030 in terms of both policy and practice; and
 - Set out publicly a clear published action plan, with milestones, and agree to its progress being independently monitored and the results published.
- The Meridian Working Group is the platform for discussion between civil society, BMS companies, and UN organisations on the action plans. Assessment of whether proposed action by a BMS company is a meaningful step forward will be undertaken by the Japanese government with advice from the Access to Nutrition Foundation.

5. Excluded companies or industries cannot represent their business associations at the Summit

- Business associations that have members from excluded industries or companies (based on UNICEF criteria, such as arms and tobacco; see Annex) can participate in the Summit to deliver commitments that meet SMART criteria, but cannot be represented by these excluded members or by companies that do not meet the criteria outlined in principle four.