

## Synopsis of Compact2025 Roundtable Discussion in Rwanda

[Compact2025](#), launched in November 2015, is a bold initiative for accelerating progress to end hunger and undernutrition by 2025. It brings stakeholders together to set priorities, innovate and learn, fine-tune actions, build on successes, and synthesize sharable lessons to accelerate progress.

Compact2025 and partners organized the Compact2025 Rwanda Forum in Kigali on October 23, 2017 as a follow-up to the [Rwanda Roundtable Discussion](#) (RTD) held in Kigali the previous year. The purpose of the Forum was to assess progress on recommendations from the last RTD and develop updated recommendations in line with Rwanda's strategic plans to accelerate progress toward ending hunger and undernutrition. The Forum brought together more than 75 multisectoral stakeholders from government, academia, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the development partner community. This brief summarizes the meetings presentations, recommendations, and next steps.

### Rwanda's progress on Compact2025 Roundtable Discussion recommendations

Dr. Gerardine Mukeshimana, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, opened the Compact2025 Forum and discussed progress on RTD recommendations from the previous year:

- **Fill data and knowledge gaps:** Provincial governors have worked on better exchange of local level data upward to the national level, while also ensuring an effective feedback system. The feedback system is important for communication between the local level and national level on what was done with the data and information provided, and on what areas may require some improvement. To fill knowledge gaps, more research on food access and the impact of interventions are needed.
- **Improve coordination:** Coordination is key for accountability, especially across sectors. A coordination secretariat was created to champion the issue of hunger and malnutrition, and bring greater energy to the issue. In our commitment to deliver Compact2025 goals as soon as possible, the government has upgraded the secretariat to be part of the national Early Childhood Development (ECD) program, to be integrated with outreach to mothers on breastfeeding, early nutrition and cooking.
- **Enhance successful policies and programs:** As many programs have been developed since last year, it has been a priority to enhance successful policies and programs. The Crop Intensification Program (CIP) and Girinka, which provides a dairy cow to a household in need, as well as programs to introduce more protein in food and small livestock programs are some examples. The Ministries of Health and Gender have been important partners in the efforts to scale up.
- **Strengthen capacity:** Lastly, there have been efforts to strengthen capacity in the government to plan and implement strategies. In particular, nutrition knowledge needs to be enhanced at the local district health centers and beyond.

Toward the recommendation to **communicate and advocate for better nutritional outcomes**, Eelco Baan of SNV spoke of the Voices for Change Partnership and the key role of evidence and advocacy to strengthen food security and nutrition. SNV in partnership with IFPRI supports CSOs to use evidence to advocate for changes in the enabling environment for nutrition. For example, it convened a RTD on food fortification in Rwanda and is working toward officially establishing a National Food Fortification Alliance with involvement from the private sector.

### Progress on agricultural transformation strategy and nutrition in Rwanda

Jean Claude Kayisinga, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, presented an overview of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture in Rwanda (PSTA), highlighting the priorities of PSTA4 to be finalized later this year. As a draft document at the time of the meeting, the PSTA4 took a bottom-up consultative approach to develop priorities areas including (1) research innovation and empowerment, (2)

productive, inclusive markets, (3) and increased productivity and resilience. Through these priority areas, the Government of Rwanda will create an enabling environment and responsible institutions for better sector coordination; development of decentralized capacity for delivery in agriculture; evidence-based policy planning and monitoring; public-private-partnership dialogue; external communication capacity; and sector digitization with a focus on reliable data. The PSTA4 includes expected nutrition outcomes whereby national production of food and nutrition will exceed national intake by 2021/22.

Following the introduction by Lisa Godwin, Health Office Director of USAID, Silver Karumba, Co-chair of the Technical Working Group on Food and Nutrition Security, emphasized elements that need to be prioritized in policies and programs to accelerate progress. The Government of Malawi has laid the foundation to achieve progress in nutrition. However, to accelerate progress, there is a need to address research and action gaps such as: why rates of child stunting are higher for boys than girls and why changes in stunting prevalence vary drastically by region; how to improve complimentary feeding practices, diet diversity, and hygiene and sanitation; and how to address population pressure. Priorities that can accelerate progress include continuing to advance a multisectoral approach; improving coordination by ensuring the National Food and Nutrition Coordination Secretariat's mandate is met and includes social cluster ministries; and revising expired food and nutrition policies. Experiences from other countries successful in reducing child stunting, such as the case of Peru and Brazil, can help to inform Rwanda's policies and programs toward accelerating progress.

## Roundtable discussion recommendations

Stakeholders participated in a roundtable discussion to address critical questions around (1) key opportunities for multisectoral collaboration; (2) evidence gaps Compact2025 can fill to increase impact of programs; (3) knowledge systems that are needed in Rwanda that Compact2025 can support or create; and (4) accountability mechanisms that are needed to ensure all partners are accountable for ending hunger and malnutrition. The recommendations from these discussions are to:

### 1. Empower existing structures for multisectoral collaboration

Participants identified existing opportunities for multisectoral collaboration that can help accelerate progress, beginning with Rwanda's strong political will to work together to address hunger and malnutrition. Certain structures for multisectoral collaboration are already in place, such as the Coordination Secretariat, social cluster ministries, and District Plans to Eliminate Malnutrition (DPM). Performance contracts, Joint Performance Contracts, and joint planning and reporting are instruments and approaches that can help to ensure multisectoral collaboration. There were concerns over the level of influence the Coordination Secretariat will have to coordinate across sectors under the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program and suggested the Secretariat be placed in a high office such as the Prime Minister's Office. The Secretariat should focus on and be empowered to provide advocacy, coordination, and advice.

Additionally, participants suggested that nutrition focal points in each ministry could be further empowered to help mainstream nutrition into strategies and policies. They suggested that joint planning and reporting be complemented with more frequent and regular intermediate meetings across sectors. Participants also suggested engaging further with the private sector and media and bringing in historical lessons of success in multisectoral collaboration synthesized and shared by Compact2025.

### 2. Identify the extent of undernutrition, its causes, and effectiveness of programs

A clear research gap identified by participants was understanding the extent of micronutrient deficiencies at the provincial level is a priority. Additionally, exploring what determines success and failure in child stunting and other forms of undernutrition at the district levels is a key research opportunity. Participants identified a need to link production of crops to consumption—for example, do mothers have access to biofortified iron-rich beans and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes for complementary feeding, and are they receiving behavior change communication

interventions to encourage consumption of those foods? Do messages to mothers cover topics such as food preservation, diversity, feeding habits, and food safety, and are these messages tested? Studies of household-level gender issues in child feeding practices were recommended.

### 3. Develop knowledge- and information-sharing systems that include the private sector

Participants suggested that the creation of a knowledge library for food security and nutrition data in Rwanda would be critical to avoid duplication and discrepancies in data. Mapping exercises of which stakeholders need key information on food security and nutrition can help to inform research agendas. The private sector should be linked to knowledge systems. Further, it is important to improve education channels on food security and nutrition—for example, a system using ICTs and mobile phones can be used to provide farmers with information and education on farming practices and can provide households with nutrition knowledge.

### 4. Ensure joint planning across sectors with clear responsibilities, targets, and indicators

Participants agreed that joint planning across sectors to set clear responsibilities and targets for all partners involved is critical to establish a basis for accountability. While joint performance contracts currently provide a framework for accountability among partners, accountability on nutrition goals could be improved by adding specific nutrition indicators to the joint performance contracts. Participants also highlighted the importance of measurable actions and achievable indicators, supported by collection and analysis of relevant data in the accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, multisectoral monitoring and evaluation systems and funding mechanisms are also important complements to the accountability mechanisms.

## Next steps

Dr. Shenggen Fan, Director General of IFPRI, presented on Compact2025's plan of action in Rwanda. He discussed how Compact2025 can best provide support, particularly in the areas of coordination, filling data and knowledge gaps, and capacity strengthening. Compact2025 proposes to:

1. Build and strengthen the capacity of the newly established Coordination Secretariat with information, research, and an M&E framework to evaluate food and nutrition programs;
2. Set up a Compact2025 Knowledge and Innovation Hub to be hosted by the Coordination Secretariat;
3. Fill data and knowledge gaps by assessing coordination, prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, predictors of child stunting, effectiveness of interventions for child nutrition, and beyond;
4. Strengthen capacity by training nutrition staff in both central and local government and other sectors, working with universities to mainstream nutrition coursework in relevant curriculums, and creating CGIAR fellowships for locally-trained nutritionists;
5. Continue working with SNV to expand the Voices for Change Partnership to strengthen CSOs capacity to use evidence to advocate for better food security and nutrition outcomes; and
6. Enhance successful policies and programs by creating a competitive grants program to enhance effectiveness of programs to achieve nutrition outcomes.

A follow-up roundtable will be held next year to reconvene stakeholders, evaluate progress, identify action gaps, and fine-tune next steps toward ending hunger and undernutrition by 2025 in Rwanda.