

32nd NATIONAL NUTRITION CLUSTER MEETING VIA ZOOM LINK

KATHMANDU, NEPAL

Friday, 31st Baisakh, 2077 (14th May 2021)

After COVID-19 onset, this the 32nd meeting of National Nutrition Cluster jointly with Provincial Nutrition Clusters of 7 provinces. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section of FWD/DoHS/MoHP as well as Nutrition Cluster lead of Federal Level Nutrition Cluster and co-chaired by the Mr. Anirudra Sharma, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF as well as Cluster co-lead. Altogether 100 Plus participants from different organizations were invited out of which 75 plus attended via zoom link.

AGENDA FOR NUTRITION CLUSTER MEETING

Time	Agenda Items
11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chair of the meeting, welcome to the participants: Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section, National Nutrition Cluster-lead2. Sharing of meeting agenda: Anirudra Sharma, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF and National Nutrition cluster co-lead3. Speech from the Director General of Department of Health Services of MoHP4. Major updates of nutrition cluster: Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section, National Nutrition Cluster lead5. Updates from the provincial nutrition cluster lead (PHD Directors): – major briefs/key achievements, key issues, and way forwards/action points6. Updates from Nutrition Cluster Technical Working Groups7. Remarks from MoEST8. Remarks from the Director of Family Welfare Division of DOHS/MoHP9. Remarks from National Planning Commission10. Remarks with the closing of the meeting: Chair of the meeting - Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section, Nutrition Cluster lead

Major Decisions:

Decision 1: It is decided to request to all Provincial Health Directors for regular participation of Provincial Directors or Nutrition Focal Points to attend in the nutrition cluster meeting and present provincial Nutrition briefing.

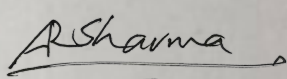
Decision 2: Joint statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) has been endorsed by nutrition cluster and referred to the Family Welfare Division and concerned signatories for signature such as: UNICEF, WHO, WFP, USAID and Suahaara.

Decision 3: Revised interim guidance note of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) has been endorsed from the nutrition cluster meeting and recommended to Department Health Services (DoHS) for approval.

All members federal and provincial nutrition clusters wish for speedy recovery of Mr. Bijaya Jha, Director of Provincial Health Directorate of Province number 2, Mr. Shalik Ram Bhusal, Under Secretary of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and all health and nutrition workers who are infected from COVID-19.

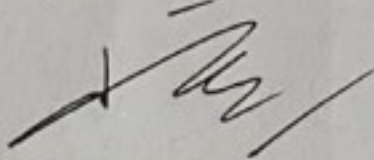
The next National Nutrition Cluster Meeting (33rd Meeting) will be held on 21st Jestha, 2078 (i.e. 4th June 2021) from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM via zoom link.

Signed by the Co-Chair of the Nutrition Cluster Meeting:



Mr. Anirudra Sharma
Co-lead, National Nutrition Cluster
31st Baisakh, 2078 (14th May 2021)
From: United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Signed by the Chair of the Nutrition Cluster Meeting:



Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli
Lead, national Nutrition Cluster
31st Baisakh, 2078 (14th May 2021)
From: Government of Nepal (GoN)

Major Discussion/Action points

Agenda 1: Chair of the meeting, welcome and sharing of meeting agenda

Chair of the meeting: Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section of FWD/DoHS/MoHP as well as Nutrition Cluster lead of Federal Level Nutrition Cluster chaired the session with co-chairing by Mr. Anirudra Sharma, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF and co-lead of National Nutrition cluster

Welcome and sharing of meeting agenda: Chair of meeting Mr. Kedar Parajuli welcomed all the participants and Mr. Anirudra Sharma co-chair shared the meeting agenda.

This is the 32nd virtual meeting of national nutrition cluster jointly with provincial nutrition cluster after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. Altogether more than 75 Participants participated in the meeting (see annex 1 for details of the participants list)

Agenda 2: Updates from National Nutrition cluster

MR. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section of FWD/DoHS/MoHP as well as Nutrition Cluster lead provided the brief update on situation of COVID-19 and nutrition status of country. The updates have been included in Annex II:

Agenda 3: Updates from the provincial nutrition cluster lead (PHD Directors): – major briefs/key achievements, key issues, and way forwards/action points

The Directors/representatives from all 7 provinces presented the overall situation of COVID-19 and progress made by the nutrition cluster of their respective provinces since last meeting, which was held on Monday, 13th Chaitra, 2077 (26th April 2021). Following Directors/representatives presented the major highlights, achievements, issues, challenges, and way forward of their respective provinces as follows:

1. Mr. Gyan Bahadur Basnet, Provincial Health Directorate, Province 1
2. Mr. Binod Yadav, Director, Provincial Health Directorate, Province 2
3. Mr. Ramesh Adhikari, Provincial Health Directorate, Bagmati Province
4. Ms. Meena Thapa from UNICEF on behalf of Provincial Health Directorate, Gandaki Province
5. Ms. Meena Thapa from UNICEF on behalf of Provincial Health Directorate, Lumbini Province
6. Mr. Amrit Gurung from WFP on behalf of Provincial Health Service Directorate, Karnali Province
7. Dr. Guna Raj Awasthi, Provincial Health Directorate, Sudurpaschim Province

Action points:

- Focus for the protection, promotion, and support for breastfeeding and facilitate to stop “untargeted distribution of infant formula and breastmilk substitute”.
- Focus to identify the children under the age of five years with SAM and admit them in the OTCs and NRH for treatment and care services. Simplified approach to be used to identify the children and their treatment at facility levels.
- Expand OTCs to the health facilities and start the treatment of SAM children.
- Strengthen community/family-based approach for the identification of acutely malnourished children so that more children can be identified and referred to the OTCs/NRH for therapeutic treatment and care services on time.
- Continue nutrition messaging through different media considering COVID-19 and nutrition.
- Facilitate coordinate with concerned authorities/communities to apply interim nutrition guideline prepared for COVID-19 context.
- Submit the complete report of national Vitamin A campaign conducted on last 6 and 7 Baisakh 2078.
- Finalize nutrition in emergency preparedness and response plan of provinces and endorse from the MoSD.
- Publish nutrition bulleting in each quarter mentioning of progress, issues, difficulties way forward.
- Update nutrition commodities of all provinces and identify gaps and If any nutrition commodities have been lacking, requested to coordinate with Nutrition Section of FWD for the fulfillment of commodities.
- Utilize the EU budget send by MoFAGA for nutrition specific intervention at Province and local level.
- Organize integrated monitoring visit of FWD, PHD and development partners to monitor nutrition programme to atleast three districts of each province.

- Send a letter to MoEST from FWD/DoHS/MoHP regarding the school deworming program which held on 1st week of Jestha and Mangsir.

Agenda 4: Updates from Nutrition Cluster Technical Working Groups (IMAM, IYCF, BCC, Micro-nutrient, Information Management and Assessment TWG.

Ms. Bhim Pun, chair of IYCF TWG
 Mr. Naveen Poudyal, Chair of MN TWG
 Ms. Sabina Hora, member of BCC TWG

- Revised interim guidance note prepared to use simplified approach for the treatment of MAM and SAM has been endorsed by the nutrition cluster meeting.
- Joint Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding in the Context of the COVID-19 pandemic prepared to implement in the COVID-19 situation has been endorsed by Nutrition cluster meeting.
- Requested to make sure that all the interim guidance notes to be circulated up to local level once again through different platform so that more and more targeted groups will receive the services.

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Shalik Ram Bhusal, Mr. Shaligram Bhushal, Under Secretary of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST):

Mr. Bhusal has been suffering from COVID-19 and now is in recovery stage. He has shared that the meeting of nutrition cluster has been giving him insight of nutrition programme. Because of the virtual meeting, he has been regularly attending the nutrition cluster meeting and providing his inputs in the meeting. He has suggested to link such meeting with local level health workers and stakeholders so that the outcome would be very effective. He further added that the joint statement and IMAM interim guidance note are very useful, and he will read these documents thoroughly and give his feedbacks also.

Dr. Tara Nath Pokhrel, Director of FWD provided major highlights as follows:

- Nutrition cluster has been working actively with provincial nutrition clusters of all 7 provinces and the cluster coordination mechanism has been mobilizing all stakeholders to initiate nutrition programme throughout the country. He requested to cluster team to discuss on the issue, challenges and come up with the specific recommendations and way forward which supports to work in this situation.
- He told that 2nd wave of COVID-19 is very dangerous. However, we should focus on the regular program also. As country is in red signal but we health team should be always with green signal so that we can move forward and provide the essential services following precautionary measures.
- He also requested to all participants to assure that our implementation guidelines should reach to the targeted levels (community levels) and regular follow-up and monitoring should be done.
- Further, he also told that such meetings should be organized at provincial levels, discuss on issues faced by provinces and come with recommendations and way forward.
- Finally, Dr Pokharel suggested that COVID-19 will be remained for many months/years. Therefore, our strategy should be to work closely with the virus following the precautionary measures so that we can provide essential services to the vulnerable people. Similarly, Human Resource management, commodities, Coordination, collaboration and support are most needed during this difficult time to improve the health and nutrition status.

Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director General of Department of Health Services (DoHS)

- He thanked to all meeting participants and requested to work together to break the chain of transmission by following the strong precautionary measures as well as making communities more aware.
- He told that the situation is very critical and therefore, we all need to look at and focus for essential services standing in the middle of the hospital and communities. Our network should be utilized for Health Facilities and isolation centers as well.
- He also told that HMIS should be utilized more and connected to update the COVID-19 cases.

- Finally, he also requested all to make successful on the winning of COVID-19 through different approaches.

Ms. Usha Jha from National Planning Commission (NPC) provided major highlights of nutrition activities:

- She thanked to the cluster lead and co-lead including all cluster member agencies for continuing nutrition cluster coordination mechanism effectively and action oriented.
- She congratulated to all the team to bring 32nd National Nutrition Cluster Meeting in such situation continuously .
- She also congratulates Mr. Shalik Ram Bhusal from MoEST for recovery from COVID-19 and wished him for full recovery.
- She also thanked to the TWG team of IYCF and IMAM to bring both important documents and requested MoHP to go for approval and bring it to implementation level as soon as possible.
- She told that nutrition plays a vital role during COVID-19 and requested to flow the information to the provinces and local level to utilize the budget rather than freezing in terms of COVID-19 context.
- She also told that 50 percent of the total budget has been allocated to all the 753-local levels. Therefore, it is an opportunity to allocate the funds for nutrition from locally available funds. For this, we need to be active to facilitate local levels for budget allocation for nutrition.
- She also asked to see the impact of messaging done by SUSAHARA in COVID-19 context.
- She further explained that a group of people are always left behind we should be able to reach those people and provide the services.
- She also assured to all team participants that NPC is always forefront to support FWD for bring Acts, policies, guideline till implementation level to improve the nutrition status.
- She is hoping that MOHP will fulfill the Vacant HR positions as soon as possible so that health and nutrition interventions will be implemented more effectively.
- She thanked to nutrition cluster lead and co-lead for regular coordination to run nutrition cluster meeting jointly with provincial nutrition cluster and she is also trying to manage her time for nutrition cluster meeting if there is no any urgent busy matters.
- Finally, she requested everyone to take care of own health, and provide support to the people in need, and we all need to be united and fight together against the current situation.

Agenda 6: Closing of the meeting

- Mr. Anirudra Sharma, nutrition cluster co-lead and the meeting facilitator thanked to all participants of the meeting and expressed his gratefulness towards Dr. Usha Jha from NPC, Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh from DoHS, Dr Tara Nath Pokharel, Director of FWD and Mr. Kedar raj Parajuli for the great leadership of FWD for nutrition response through cluster coordination mechanism in the COVID-19 context. Similarly, he thanked to all Directors of PHDs and representatives, and all participants for their active participation in the meeting. Finally, he requested to Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli to close the meeting with the announcement of new meeting date.
- Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, the lead of national nutrition cluster and Chief of Nutrition Section of FWD/DoHS/MoHP thanked to Dr. Usha Jha, Honourable member of NPC, Director General from DOHS, Director of FWD, Provincial Health Directors, all support agencies and provincial and federal level nutrition cluster team members, National Planning Commission and all the health personnel. Similarly, Mr. Parajuli requested to all the provincial participants to participate in the upcoming nutrition cluster meetings regularly and he further he requested to make provincial presentation by the PHD representatives in the next meeting.
- **Finally, Mr. Parajuli announced the next nutrition cluster meeting to be organized on 21st Jestha, 2078 (i.e. 4th June 2021) from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM via zoom link.**

Annex 1: List of Participants in the meeting:

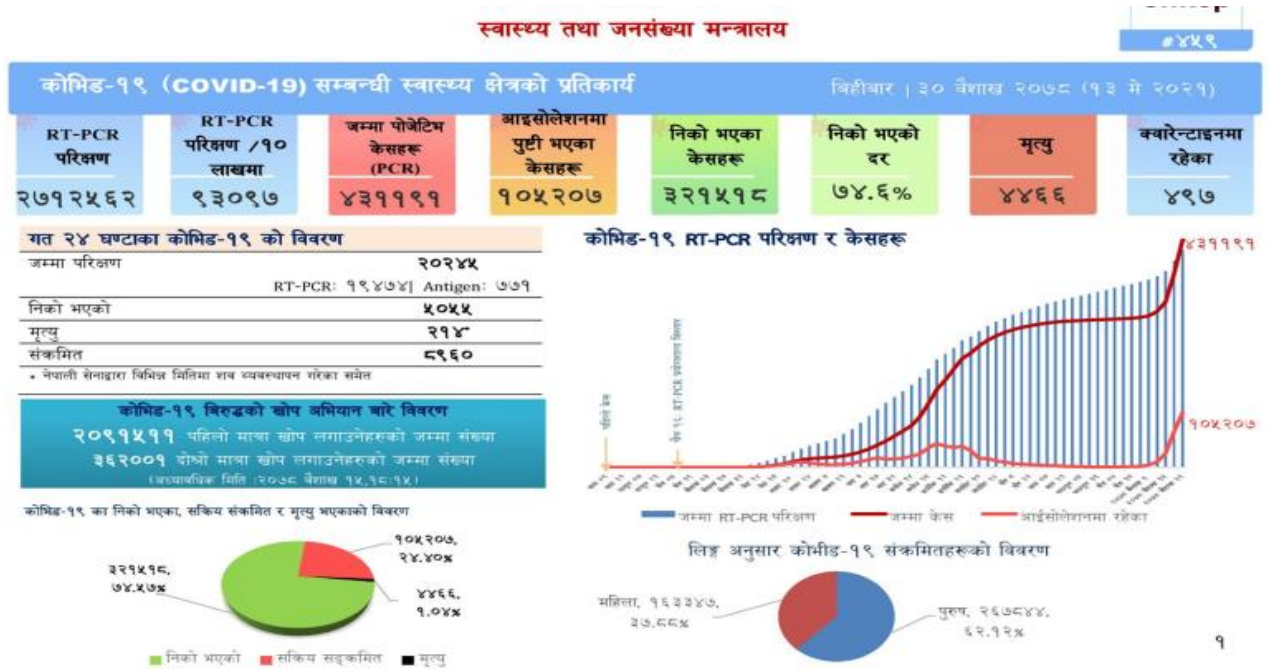
1. Dr. Usha Jha from Nepal Planning Commission
2. Dr. Dipendra Raman Singh, Director General from DoHS
3. Dr. Tara Nath Pokharel, Director, FWD/DoHS/MoHP
4. Mr. Kedar Raj Parajuli, Chief of Nutrition Section of FWD/DOHS/MoHP –Nutrition cluster lead
5. Ms. Karan Courtney Haag, chief of Nutrition, UNICEF Nepal
6. Mr. Anirudra Sharma, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF – Nutrition cluster co-lead
7. Mr. Shalik Ram Bhusal, Mr. Shaligram Bhusal, Under Secretary of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)
8. Dr. Guna Raj Awasthi, Director, PHD, Sudurpaschim Province
9. Mr. Gyan Bahadur Basnet, Provincial Health Directorate, Province 1
10. Dr. Binod Yadav, Provincial Health Directorate, Province 2
11. Mr. Ramesh Adhikari, Provincial Health Directorate, Bagmati Province
12. Mr. Gyan Bahadur Basnet, Director, PHD, Province 1
13. Mr. Shrawan Adhikari, FAO
14. Ms. Pooja Pandey, Deputy Director
15. Mr. Phulgendra Prasad Singh, Nutrition Specialist UNICEF
16. Mr. Naveen Poudyal, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF
17. Mr. Gyan Bahadur Bhujel, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF
18. Ms. Meena Thapa, Nutrition officer, UNICEF
19. Mr. Binod Nepal, UNICEF
20. Mr. Uttam Acharya, Nutrition Specialist, FAO/FANSEP
21. Ms. Bhim Pun, SAAHARA II /USAID
22. Ms. Sabina Hora, HKI
23. Ms. Puja Chand, NRH Dadeldhura
24. Mr. Indra Bahadur Bhujel, SAAHARA II /USAID
25. Mr. Jeevan Ghimire, Health Policy Officer, DFID
26. Ms. Sumi Maskey, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF
27. Ms. Bindu Panthi, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF
28. Mr. Deepak Thapa, NTAG
29. Mr. Harihar Sharma, Nutrition Section, FWD/DoHS/MoHP
30. Ms. Meena Gautam, Nutrition Section, FWD/DoHS/MoHP
31. Ms. Kalpana Pandey, Nutrition Section, FWD/DoHS/MoHP
32. Dr. Salil Rana, FWD/HKI
33. Ms. Anju Acharya, National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS), National Planning Commission
34. Ms. Anju Adhikari, Nutrition section, FWD/UNICEF
35. Mr. Sher Singh Dahit, UNICEF/MOFAGA
36. Ms. Elina Sharma (NRH Okhaldhunga)
37. Ms. Rashmi Jha, NRH, Province 2
38. Ms. Naomi Saville consultant to FCDO and researcher at University College London
39. Mr. Amrit Gurung, WFP, Karnali Province
40. Mr. Sunil Khatiwada, SAAHARA II /USAID
41. Mr. Suraj Kumar Sharma-USAID/Suaahara II
42. Mr. Debendra Adhikari, Nutrition Specialist, USAID
43. Mr. Sudip Chiluwal, Program Coordinator, NEPHEG
44. Mr. Raj Nandan Mandal, Nutrition Advisor, SAAHARA II /USAID
45. Mr. Chiranjibi Dahal, SAAHARA II /USAID
46. Mr. KP Lamsal, Nutrition section, FWD/WFP
47. Mr. Rajendra Adhikari, Suaahara II/USAID, Surkhet
48. Mr. Bharat Sarma - Program Coordinator/Provincial Focal person Province-1, Suaahara II/USAID

49. Ms. Chitrakala Nepal, intern, FWD, Nutrition section
50. Mr. Suraj Kumar Sharma-USAID/Suaahara II
51. Ms. Gita Bista, NRH, Kailali
52. Subhash Gautam - Suaahara II, Province 1 coordinator
53. Mr. Chiranjibi Dahal-program coordinator/provincial focal person, province-3, Suaahara II/USAID
54. Mr. Bhumiswar Sharma, Program Coordinator, Suaahara II/USAID
55. Mr. Deependra Chaudhari, Project Coordinator- Nutrition, Welthungerhilfe (WHH)
56. Ms. Chhamkala Kafle program manager (Bharatpur NRH)
57. Ms. Nisha Sharma, HKI
58. Mr. Gyanendra Dawadi, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Sudur Paschim Province
59. Mr. Man Bahadur Kunwar, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Karnali, Paschim Province
60. Mr. Bhumi Sharma, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Lumbini Province
61. Ms. Pabitra Sapkota, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Gandaki Province
62. Mr. Purushottam Aryal, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Bagamati Province
63. Mr. Hemanta Jha, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Province number 2
64. Mr. Sanjiv Ghishing, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Province number 1
65. Mr. Purushottam Aryal, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Bagamati Province
66. Ms. Geeta Bista, NRH Kailali
67. Ms Ganga Limbu, NRH, Bhadrapur
68. Ms. Nirmaya Gurung, NRH Pokhara
69. Mr. Uttam Acharya, FAO
70. Ms. Prativa AC, NPC
71. Mr. Hemanta Jha, MSNP coordinator, Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Province number 2
72. Ms. Sushma Chhetri, MDI, District Nutrition Coordinator, Kalikot
73. Mr. Lokendra Thapa, Province Coordinator, UASAIID/SUAAHARA Program, SUDUR PASHCHIM Province
74. Ms. Isha Rijal
75. Ms. Rekha Bhatta, NRCS

Annex 2: Briefing from nutrition cluster lead (as of 13 May 2021):

1. Situation of COVID-19:

1.1 National situation:



1.2 Comparison of National and Global situation:

Indicators	Global Situation of COVID-19 Pandemic		National Situation of COVID-19 Pandemic	
	25 April 2021	13 May 2021	25 April 2021	13 May 2021
Number COVID-19 positive cases	146,276,262	161,091,539	300,119	431,191
Number of deaths among the positive cases	3,115,018 (2.1%)	3,345,293 (2.1%)	3,164 (1.05%)	4,466 (1.04%)
Number of Recovered	124,075,915 (84.8%)	138,900,158 (86.2%)	277,573 (92.49%)	321,518 (74.6%)
Number of PCR tested			2,405,017	2,712,562
Number people in quarantine camps			69	497
Active COVID-19 cases	19,232,268 (13.1%)	18,846,088 (11.7%)	19,382 (6.46%)	105,207 (3.9%)

1.3 Status of past 24 hours of COVID-19 in Nepal:

- Recovered discharged: 5,055
- Deaths: 214
- Total COVID-19 tested: 20,245
- New COVID-19 cases: 8,960 (44.3%)

- Positive cases in ICU: 1,381
- Positive cases in Ventilators: 380

2. Major Progress made after 31st nutrition cluster meeting:

- 1,321 children under five years with severe acute malnutrition were admitted using ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) in the past one month.
- A total of 147,114 pregnant and lactating women received telephone counselling on maternal, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and care. .
- A total of 251,671 households were reached with nutrition messages and IYCF messages.
- A total 591,166 Households were reached with COVID-19 and nutrition messages through 190 FM station throughout the country.
- A total 13,602 people (pregnant and lactating women: 1,69, and 6-23 months children: 12,233) received Supercereal
- In the last national Vitamin A campaign on 6 and 7 Baishakh 2078 (19-20 April 2021), the coverage of Vitamin A capsule distribution was 2,320,000 (85%) out of total 2,718,459 6-59 months children and deworming tablet distribution was 2,026,840 (84%) out of total 2,408,330 12-59 months children
- Completed annual workplan and budget of nutrition specific interventions for the fiscal year 2078/079. Total volume of the budget for three levels is NPR 1,908,246,000.00 (i.e. one billion, nine hundred eight million and two hundred forty-six thousand rupees only) which equivalent to 16.5 million US Dollar
- Draft contingency plan for nutrition in emergency response has been drafted and it will be finalized soon.

3. Issues and challenges

- Lack of protective equipment for FCHVs to run community-based health and nutrition programme.
- Lockdown in many districts restricts mobility of FCHVs to support community-based programmes
- Health staff are engaged with COVID-19 care and there is limited capacity for other essential health and nutrition services
- Screening children for wasting continues to be constrained due to lockdown and other public health measures
- Lack of supplies to address the needs of supplementary feeding programme in emergencies

4. Way forward/next steps:

- Finalize nutrition cluster contingency plan (monsoon) in all provinces by end of Baishakh 2078.
- Finalize as soon as possible the procurement process of nutrition commodities before the end of the fiscal year.
- Complete to procure Supercereal amounting NPR 5,000,000 for emergency response.
- Finalize guideline for Working on the NRH operation guideline
- Submission of BMS act to the cabinet as soon as possible from MoHP
- Continue implementation of nutrition programme as per the approved budget for Fiscal Year 2077/078
- Continue service monitoring of nutrition interventions