



PRESS RELEASE

Support for breastfeeding mothers key to healthier babies and productive workplaces

Vientiane Capital, 2 August 2023 - *"Comprehensive support for mothers to breastfeed is key to healthy babies as well as improved morale and productivity in the workplace."* This was the key message from the Deputy Minister of Health to the event by SUN Laos to promote Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace in Lao PDR as part of World Breastfeeding Week 2023 celebrations.

This year, more than 100 participants from the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in Laos movement, including government, civil society, business, UN and other development partners joined the event to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week under the theme "Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for working parents".

The event highlighted the benefits for all workplaces that support their female staff to breastfeed after returning to work by providing them with safe clean spaces to express breastmilk, facilities to help care for their children in proximity of their place of work, breaks for breastfeeding/expressing milk, flexible working hours or working arrangements, extended maternity leave and more.

"The evidence from Laos and globally shows that workplaces that support working mothers to breastfeed or express milk at work have higher productivity, improved morale and better outcomes for babies and children", explained HE. Dr. Snong Thongsna, Deputy Minister of Health. "There are many small but impactful actions that employers can do which will make their workplace supportive for breastfeeding. We call on all employers to ensure that the necessary policies and resources are available at the workplace to support breastfeeding mothers."

"We are proud today to provide 28 organisations with the SUN CSA 'Workplace-Friendly Breastfeeding Awards' to recognise their efforts to make breastfeeding easy and more accessible for working parents", said Anthony Glanville, the Co-Chair of the SUN CSA in Laos, and Senior Women's Health and RMNCH Advisor at CARE International in Lao PDR. "The large number of awards highlight the growing enthusiasm by many progressive workplaces to be inclusive and provide benefits that are low-cost but have high impact for their staff."

"Considering that one of the most effective ways to improve a child's health and wellbeing is through breastfeeding, the promotion of this practice is at



the center of our advocacy efforts around nutrition," said Mr. Vincent Vire, Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to the Lao PDR. "The benefits of breastfeeding extend to all of society. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to support and protect this practice," he added.

"Breastfeeding, the bedrock of health, growth, and the b mother-child bond, is integral to Lao PDR's cultural and economic vitality," said Mr. Marc Overmars, Officer in Charge of Deputy Representative of UNICEF Lao PDR. "Neglecting this practice has repercussions beyond health, causing a yearly loss of USD \$180 million to our economy, and sadly contributing to over 1,000 child deaths and 250,000 instances of child illness. Let's pledge to support and uphold this natural act - fostering a healthier, thriving future for our children."

This year's World Breastfeeding Week Celebration under the theme of "Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for working parents" was supported financially by Plan International in Laos, Catholic Relief Services, Save The Children in Laos, UNICEF and the European Union.

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About SUN CSA Laos

SUN CSA Laos (Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance) is a formal network of over 70 organisations in Lao PDR working to support the nutrition efforts of the Government of Lao PDR. Last year, SUN CSA organisations reached over 1 million people across Laos through 88 nutrition projects. SUN CSA is part of the global SUN Movement.

Find out more at www.suncsalaos.org, on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and in our [newsletter](#).

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