**Working Towards Improving Undernutrition in Odisha: A Technical Session**

October 8, 2013

**Short bios for technical speakers**

**Discussant**

Vandana Prasad is the Founding Member, Ex-Secretary and Former National Convenor of the Public Health Resource Network. Dr. Prasad has been an ardent social activist and social worker for nearly two decades and has a vast experience in health and development. She has been closely associated with many national health movements like People’s Health Movement-India (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan), Mobile Creches, Right to Food Campaign etc., to name a few.
Dr. Prasad is a community pediatrician with an MRCP from UK. She has also done her MPH from the School of Public Health, University of Western Cape, South Africa. Her special areas of interest are child health and nutrition, specifically in the areas of early childhood care and development with particular focus on training, research and advocacy. Presently, Dr. Vandana Prasad is the Member of NCPCR and a special invitee to the Governing Body of PHRS.

**Technical Session 1**

**Rasmi Avula** is Postdoctoral Fellow in IFPRI’s Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division, and is based in New Delhi, India. Her research focuses on programs and system strengthening to improve infant and young child feeding. Dr. Avula has a Ph.D. in Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior from University of South Carolina and a MS in Nutrition from South Carolina State University.

**Purnima Menon** is Senior Research Fellow in IFPRI’s Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division, and is based in New Delhi, India. She leads the multi-country evaluations of the Alive & Thrive initiative, and co-directs POSHAN, an initiative to support and enhance the use of evidence in policies and programs in India. Her research interests lie in the area of maternal and child nutrition, including infant and young child feeding. Dr. Menon has a Ph.D. in International Nutrition from Cornell University, a M.Sc. in Nutrition from Delhi University, and is courtesy associate professor at Cornell University.

# Arun Gupta is Regional Coordinator at IBFAN Asia/ Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) and is based in New Delhi, India. Dr. Gupta completed his education from Medical College, Patiala. Dr. Gupta is a passionate advocate for infant and young child feeding, especially breastfeeding, in India and globally.

**Technical Session 2**

**Suneetha Kadiyala** is a Senior Lecturer in nutrition sensitive development at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Prior to joining LSHTM, she was a Research Fellow in the Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Her main research interests are focused on the intersection of structural dimensions of health (especially, HIV and AIDS), food security and nutrition in eastern and southern Africa and South Asia.  Suneetha has a PhD in International Food Policy and Applied Nutrition from the School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston. She has a M.SC (Nutrition Science) and B.Sc (Food and Nutrition) from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, India

**Biraj Patnaik** is the Principal Adviser to the Supreme Court Commissioners on the right to food. He has been actively involved in the Right to Food Campaign in India and he works intimately with States Advisers to oversee the performance of food schemes on the ground. Mr. Patnaik, has been a member of a number of Committees of the Planning Commission, the Government of India and State Governments on food, health care and public sector reforms.

**Technical Session 3**

**Mamata Pradhan** is Senior Knowledge Management Coordinator in IFPRI’s Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division, based in New Delhi, India. She leads the policy communications and stakeholder engagement component of POSHAN, an initiative to bring evidence to the program and policy discourse on nutrition in India. Ms. Pradhan has over 14 years of experience in policy advocacy, strategic health communications, knowledge management and partnership management in the areas of health and nutrition in India. She has an M.Phil. in English Literature and a Diploma in Journalism..