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Geneva, Switzerland

Comments of Azerbaijan Republic to the draft
Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health

The Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan Republic is very grateful for the opportunity to state comments and proposals on WHO Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health. In general we support the Strategy and consider it as an important and essential tool for strengthening of health at the global level.

Consequences of both economic crisis at the beginning of 90th (setback in production of industrial and agricultural outputs, unemployment, poverty, low efficiency of preventive sector of health services) and imposed war (occupation of 20% of the country territory, destructions and presence of about 1 million refugees and internally displaced people) had negative impact to food supply of all country population, including children. Analysis of information for the period of 1985-1995 revealed that level of production and consumption of the majority of foods was reduced in 1.5 – 3.0 times. In the greatest extend it concerns to livestock products. Lack of calories in the diet of population is compensating with cheaper carbohydrates, in particular bread. If among poor population need for bread is satisfied almost at 90%, vegetables and fruits are available for only hardly more than 40% of families.

This change of the nutrition structure of population contributed to increasing of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency. With the purpose to eliminate specified negative consequences national programme for eradication of iodine deficiency disorders is carrying out during the last years and programme for iron deficiency anemia eradication has been launched. Besides the issues of vitamin-deficiency disorders, undersized children and other issues related with malnutrition are on the agenda.

There is also an obesity problem (up to 30 %) which is an alarming factor in relation with such diseases like diabetes, diseases of cardiovascular system and etc.

Thus, tools provided by the WHO Strategy on diet, physical activity and health, may be successfully used in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan supports the Strategy as it will promote development of a national policy and plans on nutrition and its propagation and implementation.

Azerbaijan considers as important proposed by The Strategy steps toward introduction of restrictions and rules, regulating sell of food, especially, intended for children. Specified issue will allow more effective pursuing of policy for both sanitary education and increasing of consciousness and literacy of population at a choice of foods.

Azerbaijan also supports Strategy on issues regarding pricing policy and taxation, as mean for increasing of availability of more healthy diet for people with low social and economic status, taking into account that about 50% of country population is considered as poor.

In our opinion it is important to make investments in sanitary surveillance and scientific researches on nutrition hygiene as it is crucial to have available national data allowing to estimate and predict situation on health status related with nutrition in the country and for comparison between the countries.

We recognize also importance of an individual responsibility. From own experience it is obvious that when industry is directed by health services, which has both desire and abilities, it is possible to achieve best results in promotion and strengthening of population health.

Azerbaijan supports also Strategy in the field of physical activities for national policy development aimed to expansion of access to sport and other leisure facilities.

Our country attaches the important value to the role of non governmental organizations and civil society in increasing of population pressure on government regarding support to healthy life promotion.

WHO Global strategy will be extremely useful to Azerbaijan and will allow to establish necessary conditions that will enable people to take up the responsibility for their health.

The Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan Republic again expresses gratitude to the WHO and assures that all efforts for propagation of healthy diet, physical activity and strengthening the population's health will be made.

Sincerely yours,

Deputy minister



Abbas Valibayov