

Meeting  
with  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Geneva, 17 June 2003

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**Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**  
**World Health Organization**  
**Geneva 2003**

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**World Health Organization Meeting with Industry Associations**  
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**Meeting Note**

On 17 June 2003, WHO representatives met with representatives of a number of industry associations and producer groups in Geneva HQ. The objectives of the meeting were to engage in a dialogue between WHO and industry on the impact of diet, nutrition and physical activity on chronic diseases, and for industry representatives to provide input and recommendations to the Consultation Document to Guide Development of a WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health ([www.who.int/hpr/global.strategy.shtml](http://www.who.int/hpr/global.strategy.shtml)).

***Industry Participants List:*** Australian Food and Grocery Council, British Nutrition Foundation, Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre, Confederation Food & Drink Industries, European Food Law Association, European Modern Restaurant Association, European Salt Producers Association, European Vending Association, Grocery Manufacturers of America, Institute of Food Research, International Alliance of Dietary/Food Supplement Associations, International Dairy Federation, International Meat Secretariat, International Sweeteners Association, International Soft Drinks Council, International Special Dietary Foods, International Tree Nut Council, International Federation Agricultural Producers, National Food Processors Association, The Salt Institute, Union of European Soft Drinks Associations and Confederation of International Soft Drinks Associations, World Federation of Advertisers, World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry, World Self-Medication Industry, and the World Sugar Research Organization.

The meeting was introduced by Dr Derek Yach, WHO, Executive Director, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health.

Dr Pekka Puska, WHO, Director, Noncommunicable Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, outlined the present state of world health. He noted that noncommunicable diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancers, account for 59% of global deaths, and 45.9% of the global burden of disease. The world is in transition and the majority of chronic diseases are caused by a few known risk factors, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, lack of exercise and diets high in saturated fats, sugar and salt. Dr Puska reviewed the recommendations of the WHO/FAO report *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases* (TRS 916), which will provide an evidence base for the Global Strategy. Dr Puska said that the food industry, at all levels of the production and distribution chain, plays a key role in addressing the problems created by unhealthy diet. He noted that World Health Assembly resolution WHA55.23 mandated the strategy and specifically requested the inclusion of the private sector in developing strategies for diet, physical activity and health. He emphasized that WHO wished to work with industry in reducing chronic diseases and identifying incentives for industry to make the healthy choices the easy choices.

## **Core Tenets of a WHO Global Strategy**

**The WHO Global Strategy must be flexible, recognizing that**

- every food and beverage can contribute to a healthy diet
- under-consumption of nutrients contributes to non-communicable diseases, even in developed economies, and is of particular concern to developing economies
- modern globalisation has had a positive impact on global nutrition, providing greater access to micronutrients, safe and affordable food – especially in developing economies
- national governments must determine their specific needs, policies and priorities; these will vary from country to country
- global quantitative conclusions are inappropriate in determining national needs or priorities; food-based dietary guidelines are a more appropriate means of communication and must be developed in specific socio-cultural contexts reflecting national health issues
- diet and nutrition behaviours are influenced by a wide range of interconnected psycho-biological, family, cultural, social and environmental factors
- physical activity is critical to achieving a healthy lifestyle - energy balance
- recommendations should encourage healthy lifestyles as a positive and enjoyable experience
- messages must be compelling, practical and readily understood by all consumers
- the Strategy must place strong emphasis on empowering consumers
- behavioural changes are dependent upon personal initiative
- consumer education in physical fitness and nutrition is essential
- the credibility and acceptability of the Strategy depend upon the scientific integrity of underlying assumptions and data
- *all* WHO reports be transparently-developed and peer-reviewed prior to publication or distribution to guarantee their quality
- recommendations for dietary interventions should be evidence-based and peer-reviewed and, where studies have been done, focused on health outcomes
- policies and recommendations may need revisions in light of new scientific evidence, which should be reviewed on an ongoing basis

## **Final Recommendations from the Consultation to WHO**

### **The Food and Drink Industry will support the WHO Global Strategy by**

- continuing to develop and provide healthy, nutritious choices to the consumer
- continuing to provide consumers with nutrition and product information
- contributing its expertise and marketing capabilities in communicating effective healthy lifestyle messages to consumers through points of sale, across distribution channels, and in advertising
- advocating and participating in programmes that promote health and wellness programmes, physical activity and nutrition education in schools and communities, particularly in communities where we operate our own companies, working together with other stakeholders including public health authorities, healthcare, educational, governmental and other organisations
- promoting voluntary national self-regulatory mechanisms encouraging responsible marketing and advertising, especially to children
- providing consumers with a wide range of choices in portion sizes

## **Final Recommendations from the Consultation to WHO**

### **WHO should support and encourage food and drink industry involvement by**

- encouraging governments to work with national food industries to promote effective voluntary self-regulatory mechanisms designed to meet specific national needs, circumstances, and realities
- encouraging governments to create and maintain regulatory environments which allow industry to inform consumers about the health benefits of their products
- encouraging industry to promote healthy lifestyles through community programmes and marketing
- establishing a high profile award system to reward excellence in best practices that encourage healthy lifestyles
- commissioning studies on the correlation between caloric consumption and physical activity
- identifying, funding and promoting effective, science-based culturally appropriate community and school based physical fitness programmes
- encouraging national policies to enable opportunities for increased physical activities
- inviting private sector experts to contribute their expertise to FAO/WHO expert consultations

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