

# Strategies to Monitor and Evaluate Population Sodium Consumption and Sources of Sodium in the Diet



The International Food & Beverage Alliance  
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# IFBA's Commitments to the WHO 2004 *Global Strategy*



13 May 2008

Her Excellency  
Dr. Margaret Chan  
Director General  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Dr. Chan:

**RE: A Global Commitment to Action on the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**

As the CEOs of major international food and non-alcoholic beverage companies, we would like to take this opportunity ahead of the World Health Assembly in May to set out our global commitment to further action in support of continuing efforts to implement the 2004 WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

We fully recognise that experts agree that significant increases in non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes) are directly linked to increasing prevalence of obesity resulting from a number of factors including poor diets, less physical activity and changes in lifestyle in both developed and developing countries around the world.

The WHO Strategy acknowledges that efforts to help people improve their diet and health require actions by all stakeholders – including the private sector. As companies, we take this responsibility seriously and have already taken concrete steps to:

- Reformulate our existing products and develop innovations that offer healthier options for our consumers;
- Provide our consumers with more and clearer information about the nutritional composition of their foods and beverages;
- Adopt voluntary measures on the marketing and advertising of food and beverages, particularly to children; and
- Promote greater physical activity, sports and healthier lifestyles, including in the workplace.

• Commitment 1: Product Composition and Availability

• Commitment 2: Nutrition Information to Consumers

# IFBA's Commitment to Transparency and Monitoring

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- We support transparency and the need to measure progress in our actions
- We are monitoring and reporting on our efforts
  - Annual, public progress reports
  - Global third-party monitoring of our marketing commitments
  - Local monitoring of our marketing pledges

# Industry Action on Sodium Reduction: Ongoing Commitments

Company	Territory	Target
General Mills	U.S.	-20% across 40% of product portfolio (2015)
Grupo Bimbo	US/Mexico	-40% across bread portfolio (2015)
Kellogg's	Global	Continue reducing salt in breakfast cereals leading brands
Kraft Foods	North America	-10% across product portfolio (2012)
Mars	Global	Continuing to reduce sodium across entire global food portfolio (e.g. 25% reduction in flavoured varieties of Uncle Ben's rice by 2015)
Nestlé	Global	-25% in products with a sodium content greater than 100mg/100kcal (2005-2010)
PepsiCo	Global	-25% in key global brands in key countries (2015)
Unilever	Global	Pursuing 6g dietary intake (2010) with ambition to go further to 5g (2015)

# Industry Action on Sodium Reduction: Reformulation

Unilever (EU & South America):  
dry soups by 10-15%



Grupo Bimbo (Mexico and US):  
bread portfolio by 20-30%



PepsiCo: 25-55% reduction  
across Walkers products



Kraft Foods: Dairylea  
cheese line by 30%



General Mills (EU): Old El  
Paso Dinner Kits by 23%



Unilever (North America):  
Side dishes by 10-15%



Kellogg's (EU): Major  
cereal brands by 50%



Mars (EU): 35%  
reduction across Dolmio  
Taste of Italy pasta  
sauces



Nestlé (Chile): Maggi new  
soups & bouillon range with  
50% less



Nestlé (France): Herta  
reformulated with 25% less



# Product Formulation: Regional Differences



For salt reformulation efforts to be successful, broad industry support is needed



- Products are developed based on local tastes and cultural needs
- Ingredients are sourced from different locations for different markets
- Today, there is no widely available suitable substitute for sodium that provides similar functionality
- Regulatory approval for suitable sodium substitutes differs by country
- Government approval process for suitable substitutes must support innovation requirements

# Industry Action on Sodium Reduction: Collaboration with Governments

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- PAHO Partner's Forum
- UK/FSA
- Australia
- New York City/CDC
- Canada

# Sodium Reduction Initiatives

## Monitoring & Evaluation: The Goals

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- Identify and track, based on local data, national consumption habits
- Track, by country, the overall impact on public health of the entire sodium reduction initiative
- Track the impact of specific elements, including:
  - consumer education/awareness initiatives
  - voluntary industry efforts
  - changes over time of population consumption patterns

# Way Forward:

## Evaluating Sources of Sodium in the Diet

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- A market by market approach is necessary due to different dietary and social consumption patterns –
  - Identify all sources of sodium intake – home cooking, packaged foods, restaurants/take-away, bakeries, food services
  - Identify foods that are significant contributors to sodium intake
    - Could be foods that do not contain significant amounts of sodium but may be significant contributors due to consumption levels
  - Identify other contributors of sodium, including functional ingredients
- Effective monitoring and evaluation systems need to be based on dietary intake surveys that look at all nutrients

# Key Realities and Barriers

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“One size fits all” approach will not work

- There is no single baseline – acceptable sodium intake levels vary country by country
- Sodium intake levels are based on local tastes/cultural habits
- Lack of sodium intake data on local level, particularly in the developing world
  - Information needed from all intake sources – especially in developing countries where local producers are primary source
  - Lack of accurate nutrition dietary surveys on local level
- Lack of consistent and measureable data across categories and regions

# Key Realities and Barriers

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- Lack of robust data collection and tracking systems
- Differing views among countries on how to monitor
- Companies do not employ a common methodology for monitoring or evaluating changes in sodium content
- National awareness of the need for sodium reduction is a must

# Monitoring Consumption of Sodium: Pros and Cons of Approaches

Data Source	Pros	Cons
Food consumption surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>very beneficial for developed and developing countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expensive</li> <li>requires accurate nutrient databases which many countries do not have</li> </ul>
Urinary sodium excretion data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>most robust assessment tool</li> <li>24-hour urine assessment most accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expensive</li> <li>doesn't identify the source</li> </ul>
Label data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifies the sodium content in a category/ product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not cover all categories</li> <li>for some categories, the data is not sufficient (e.g. sandwiches)</li> <li>varies by region and/or country</li> <li>alone, without food consumption survey or sales data, it is of little value as it does not identify the major sources in a population as consumed</li> </ul>
Sales data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to track purchasing</li> <li>meaningful if tracked year on year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meaningless if collected for short or selected period less than a year</li> <li>expensive for governments to obtain</li> <li>no link to nutritional data</li> <li>legal/competitive restraints on industry providing sales data</li> </ul>

# IFBA's Proposed Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation

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- Stepwise approach – different models for different regions
- Progress must be monitored on a long-term basis
- The role of government:
  - establish dietary intake surveys that:
    - reflect local dietary habits/culture and intake standards
    - consider the entire dietary nutrient intake
    - is reliable, consistent and kept current
  - determine the target for reduction and primary sources of sodium to focus efforts
    - involve all sectors of the food and beverage industry
    - involve local producers (often the primary source of food sold, particularly in developing markets) to ensure a level playing field
  - promote the need for sodium reduction on a national basis
    - raise consumer demand for low sodium diets
    - encourage local stakeholders to support sodium reduction initiatives
  - undertake data collection, monitoring and impact assessments

# IFBA's Proposed Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation

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- The role of health care professionals:
  - raise awareness and consumer demand for low-sodium diets
  - support and help fund research into suitable sodium substitutes
  - collaborate with industry to achieve regulatory approval of suitable sodium substitutes
- The role of NGOs:
  - raise awareness and consumer demand for low-sodium diets
  - encourage all local stakeholders to participate in sodium reduction initiatives

# Industry's Contribution

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- Prioritize reduction efforts based on highest volumes (highest selling products) to get the greatest reduction across a portfolio
- Continue collaboration with governments and others on voluntary sodium reduction initiatives
- Embrace transparency - engage in on-going dialogue with governments to identify progress made and challenges
- Help develop a baseline for developing markets
- Lead by example

# In Summary

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- We agree that industry and government can work together as a way forward to reduce sodium intake.
- National awareness of the need for sodium reduction is critical.
- There is no single baseline – acceptable sodium intake levels vary country by country.
- Governments need to develop dietary intake surveys and identify the sodium contributors to effectively address concerns.
- Governments need to undertake monitoring and impact assessments.
- Health care professionals can raise consumer demand for low-sodium diets and help progress suitable sodium substitutes.
- NGOs can raise consumer demand and encourage all local stakeholders to participate in sodium reduction initiatives.
- Food manufacturers can, and do, provide label data on sodium content and nutrition information to consumers.
- Food manufacturers can prioritize reduction efforts on products based on volume to achieve the greatest reduction.
- All stakeholders - governments, NGOs, and industry - need to support sodium reduction.
- Consumer education is key to bring the consumer along the sodium reduction journey.

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Thank you