



World Obesity Federation PRESS RELEASE

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OVER 320 INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS CALL FOR A BINDING TREATY TO TACKLE POOR DIETS

In a global show of support for increased efforts to tackle diet-related ill health, leading health campaigners and consumer advocates from across the world have publically endorsed calls for a tobacco-style Global Convention to protect and promote healthy diets. With the world's governments gathering in Rome this week for a conference that aims to address malnutrition in all its forms, an open letter calling for a binding treaty has been sent to the heads of the WHO and FAO, co-authored by Consumers International¹, the World Obesity Federation, the UK Health Forum and consumer groups in Fiji and Mexico, with the support of over 320 individuals and organisations.

The letter urges greater action to protect and promote healthy diets using a similar mechanism to the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control which has already proved successful in reducing tobacco use. The letter is addressed to WHO Director General Dr Margaret Chan, and FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva, ahead of the International Conference on Nutrition (19-21 November, Rome)².

The letter states that 'the governance of food production and distribution cannot be left to economic interests alone,' and urges governments to take regulatory action to reduce children's exposure to marketing, to impose compositional limits on the saturated fat, added sugar and sodium content of food, to bring in fiscal measures to discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods, and to require all trade and investment policies to be assessed for their potential health impacts.

The authors, who have already drafted a ***Global Convention to Protect and Promote Healthy Diets***³, state such a treaty can 'help Member States, particularly smaller nations, to maintain a robust defence of public health for their citizens.'

Amanda Long, Director General of Consumers International said "Diseases like obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer are increasing in all regions of the world, most rapidly in developing countries. The policy actions that governments take now will determine whether we can turn the tide on this health crisis. A binding Global Convention offers the best hope of protecting and promoting the health of all consumers."

Dr Tim Lobstein, Policy Director for the World Obesity Federation, said "The rapid expansion of the marketing of highly processed foods is undermining health in much of the developing world, leading to rapidly rising rates of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases. Regulatory action to control food markets will require political courage. We should start with

a Global Convention which can help Member States, particularly smaller nations, to build and maintain a robust defence of public health."

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See the full letter and signatories here (pdf): <http://consint.info/OpenletterICN2>

See an up-to-date list of supporter signatories here: <http://consint.info/foodtreatysupport>

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1: World Obesity Federation (WOF) is the world federation of over 50 national obesity organisations representing over 10000 obesity specialists and academics around the world. WOF works together with its members to prevent, manage and treat obesity and overweight global

2: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/icn2/en/>

3: Consumers International & World Obesity Federation: Recommendations towards a Global Convention to protect and promote healthy diets

<http://www.worldobesity.org/what-we-do/policy-prevention/advocacy/global-convention/>