

Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab
Director General, WHO Regional Office for Europe

The NCD Alliance
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1207 Geneva, Switzerland

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Dear Dr. Jakab,

I am writing to convey the congratulations of the NCD Alliance on the publication of the WHO Regional Office for Europe nutrient profile model in February. This important document enables governments to take concrete action to reduce marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and in doing so takes us a step closer to reducing the significant physical, mental and neurological damage caused by poor childhood nutrition.

We applaud the development of the model given the compelling evidence for the impact of advertising on children's food preferences. The current rise in childhood obesity across Europe demonstrates this growing need for decisive action as called for in the Vienna Declaration. This model is a first important step in helping to address this major issue.

The model is comprehensive in its approach to categorising foods for the purpose of food marketing restrictions. It provides transparent guidelines on acceptable nutritional thresholds for fats, sugars and salt, each of which has been identified as a key contributor to obesity. The model also contains flexibility for Member States to preserve culturally important foods, such as traditional specialities, and tailor it to address national diets.

Drawing on nutrition profiles already in place the model presents a practical mechanism to help governments implement international recommendations. It is widely accepted that the key stumbling block to action has been the difficulty in finding a workable classification system for foods. Therefore by setting out these clear criteria for inclusion or exclusion, governments now have a tool for advancing plans to help reduce childhood obesity. This is crucial given the physical and mental health risks at such a young age, but also the heightened risk of obesity and attendant health conditions later in life. Consequently, we see this model as an important springboard for further action by Member States in order achieve the Vienna Declaration, and for reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the long term.

We thank you for the time dedicated to developing this tool and look forward to working with you to further reduce NCD risk factors.



Cary Adams
CEO of the Union for International Cancer Control
Chair of the NCD Alliance

The NCD Alliance is led by:

