

Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity: No single policy action alone is going to address the growing global obesity epidemic

We strongly support the World Health Organization's Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity's Final Report that urges governments and society to take urgent and meaningful action to address childhood obesity. We welcome the report's emphasis on the full implementation of a comprehensive, integrated package of policy actions to address this pressing issue.

We commend the Commission for outlining concrete policy recommendations to address childhood obesity. These recommendations include implementing an effective tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages, developing nutrient profiles to identify unhealthy foods and beverages, implementing a standardised global nutrient labelling system, setting standards for healthy foods and improving opportunities for physical activity in schools, providing health and nutrition literacy in core curriculum in schools and actions to optimise maternal and infant health by protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

Childhood obesity is a strong predictor of adult obesity and therefore indirectly increases the risk of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life, which are the number one cause of death and disability worldwide. It is therefore imperative that the recommendations outlined in the Commission's report are implemented in full and that governments receive the necessary technical support required to do so.

Lack of political commitment is recognised in the report as the greatest risk to effective progress on childhood obesity. We therefore urge the WHO to make further discussion of the report's recommendations and the development of a robust framework for implementation a priority at the 69th session of the World Health Assembly and in the lead up to the Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G Summit) in Brazil in August. Civil society organisations will be calling on governments to make SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) political and financial commitments at the N4G Summit to address malnutrition in all its forms, as part of the continued follow-up from the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

World Cancer Research Fund International's NOURISHING policy database¹ is an excellent tool to identify examples of implemented government policies to promote healthy diets and prevent obesity and nutrition-related NCDs. Governments can learn from policies implemented in other countries when developing a comprehensive package of policies to tackle childhood obesity appropriate to their national context.

Lastly, we support the Commission's call for governments to prioritise investing in the development of robust monitoring and accountability systems that identify specific indicators that measure childhood obesity and related determinants. As part of this work, we urge governments to evaluate the impact (including intermediary outcomes) of implemented policy actions.

¹ www.wcrf.org/NOURISHING