Population-Wide Approaches to Dietary Sodium Reduction:
Summary of Action in 50 Countries

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Mobilizing for Dietary Salt Reduction Policies and Strategies in the Americas:
WHO/FAO Goal

In 2003, WHO and FAO recommended average population intake

< 5 g of salt per day

Based on strong evidence that no other single measure

- is as cost-effective or
- can achieve as much for hypertension prevention and associated morbidity/mortality from vascular diseases
WHO Recommendations for Program Implementation: Three Pillars of Action

- Product Reformulation
- Consumer Awareness Education Campaigns
- Environmental Changes
Product Reformulation

In countries where processed foods are major source of dietary salt, recommended steps include:

1. **Identification and monitoring of salt content** in commercialized foods and meals,

2. **Working with industry** to reduce salt content, and

3. **Dedicated staff and budget for reduction programs**
Consumer Awareness and Education Campaigns

- Clear, simple and coherent messaging
- Population-specific messaging and means of communication
- Include education on how to read and interpret food labels
Environmental Changes

Necessary to develop

1. Clear and achievable reduction targets
2. Pricing strategies
3. Labelling strategies
4. Labelling strategies
5. Labelling strategies
WHO’s 8 Steps to Population Salt Reduction

1. Organize support for change
2. Identify current levels and primary sources of high salt intake
3. Set targets
4. Develop campaigns and engage partners
5. Raise consumer awareness
6. Apply easy to understand and clear labelling
7. Negotiate salt reduction levels with industry
8. Monitor progress and continually evaluate
8 Steps in Action: UK, Ireland & Finland

- Comprehensive, salt-reduction-specific programs engaging a broad range of partners
- Broad-based consumer education and media campaigns delivered by government and NGOs
- Clear targets & ongoing monitoring
Combination Approaches: France & Spain

- Dietary salt reduction part of wider healthy diet/lifestyle programs
- Targeted reduction in specific food products, i.e. bread
- Monitoring and program evaluation non-specific and irregular
Regional Approaches: European Union (EU)

- Significant reductions achieved *only* within countries with specific salt-reduction programs
- Effort to implement a common salt reduction strategy across all member states
- Framework for National Salt Initiatives developed in 2008, with recommendations for action
EU Recommendations for Member States

- Clear decision to act on salt
- Set-up national data collection & analysis
- **Benchmark:** 16% reduction over 4 years
- **Priority given to** breads, meat products, cheeses and ready-to-eat meals
- Raise public awareness
- **Develop reformulation actions with** industry/caterers
- Monitor salt content in food, individual intake levels and consumer awareness
Asia and Australia

- In many countries, salt intake significantly exceeds WHO recommendations
- Good examples of partnership between non-governmental organizations and the food industry
Nigeria and South Africa have dietary guidelines for salt intake (2006, WHO Forum in Paris)
Americas

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Bolivia
- Canada
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Uruguay
- USA

Detailed presentations later today
South America

- Diversity similar to that of Europe
- Strategies and approaches differ, however: aligned with WHO recommendations
- Rising political awareness about health impact of high salt intake
- Notable examples from Brazil, Chile and Argentina
Canada & USA

• Reporting of sodium content mandatory

• Voluntary approach to sodium reduction

• 2007: Canada established a government-led Working Group on Dietary Sodium Reduction

• USA has started looking at possibly limiting amount of sodium food producers can add
Key Issues

- Voluntary versus regulatory approach
- Mandatory salt/sodium labelling
- Specific focus on salt and clear commitment to change
- Working in partnership: government, NGO & food industry
THANK YOU!

GRACIAS!

OBRIGADA!