

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

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Subject  
Global strategy on diet, physical  
activity and health

Enclosure(s)

Your reference

Excellence,

Further to the endorsed EU statement on the WHO draft global strategy on diet, physical activity and health, submitted to you by the Irish presidency of the EU, I would like to follow-up your invitation to submit comments on this important topic.

First and foremost, the Netherlands very much supports the suggested global strategy, welcomes your efforts on this matter and considers WHO work in this field as extremely valuable. The draft strategy is in line with existing Dutch policy papers on diet, physical activity and health. Especially the combination of healthy diets and physical activity to prevent chronic diseases (i.e. cardiovascular diseases, diabetes) and obesities is underscored by our own policy concepts. Furthermore we support the recommendations that limit the consumption of 'free' sugars, salt (sodium) and fat and shift consumption away from saturated fats and *trans*-fatty acids towards unsaturated fats. On the other hand increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts are vital to achieve energy balance for weight control.

Second, we strongly support the scientific validity and integrity of the evidence based technical report on which the draft strategy is based. Also on the issue of the compelling evidence which accumulates on the issue of the nutrition risks to health in later life associated to breast-milk substitutes (Para. 23 document EB113/38).

Third, the issue of individual responsibility for health. We concur with the balanced way the strategy tackles this issue. It is again in line with our own policies which emphasize individual responsibility in the context of the public task to facilitate a healthy choice and to encourage the private sector to market healthier products.

Fourth, we welcome and agree with the strategy for its global dimension. As the products concerned are manufactured globally a multilateral strategy to provide member states with policy recommendations from WHO is equally useful and needed.

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Fifth, we have two suggestions related to the physical activity part of the strategy. We think a more profound distinction could be made between the promotion of daily physical activity for defined target groups and the promotion of sport. WHO might for instance join up forces with the 'Sports for all' initiative of amongst others IOC and FIFA. Also, the leisure industry could be involved more explicitly into the private sector activities of the strategy.

Let me conclude by sharing with you my firm belief that WHO will receive the needed support for the endorsement of the strategy during the 57<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Health Assembly in May.

Yours sincerely,

H. Hoogervorst  
Minister of Health,  
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