



International Association for the Study of Obesity

Covering information for comments on joint WHO/FAO expert consultation on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases held in Geneva, Switzerland on 28 January – 1 February 2002 from The International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO).

1. Name of organization submitting the comments:

The International Association for the Study of Obesity.

2. The postal address (including city, country, and postal code):

The International Association for the Study of Obesity
231 North Gower Street
London NW1 2NS, UK

3. The telephone number:

+44 207 691 1900

4. The scope of activities of the organization or institution submitting the comments (international, national, regional):

International

5. The mission of the organization or institution submitting the comments:

The IASO's objects are to promote the preservation and protection of health and relief of sickness for the public benefit in the field of obesity and its related disorders by:

promoting research, the dissemination of the results of such research and exchange of scientific information in the field of obesity internationally;

developing a deeper understanding of how to achieve and maintain a healthy bodyweight, and managing and preventing obesity and its related conditions by those engaged in the study of obesity, healthcare professionals, health related organisations, governments and the international community.

6. The organization's interest in diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases:

To foster the development of national, regional and international structures that enable and support the implementation of action on the prevention and management of overweight and obesity.

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International Association for the Study of Obesity

To disseminate information on all matters affecting research on obesity and related subjects via IASO's official journals *Obesity Reviews* and *The International Journal of Obesity*, together with the Newsletter and Website.

To increase awareness among governments, health care professionals, and people in general that obesity is a serious medical condition and major global health problem with substantial economic costs and to secure the commitment of policy makers to action.

To provide evidence and guidance for development of improved prevention and management strategies.

To form an authoritative panel for the purpose of consultation in matters of public and professional interest concerning research on obesity and related subjects

To facilitate contact between persons interested in any aspect of obesity by holding a quadrennial Congress, the *International Congress of Obesity*.

6. Sources of funding for the organization:

Membership subscriptions

Royalties from the publication of learned journals

Surpluses from scientific Congresses

Corporate donations

7. Email and fax number to facilitate communication:

Email: kate.baillie@iaso.org

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13 June 2002

Dr Pekka Puska
Director
Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
World Health Organization
Diet and Health
20, Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Dr Puska

Re: Comment on the Joint WHO/FAO expert consultation on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases held in Geneva, Switzerland on 28 January – 1 February 2002 from The International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO)

Further to your letter to Neville Rigby, Director of Policy and Public Affairs of the International Obesity TaskForce, dated 30th April 2002 inviting written comments to the above consultation, I have pleasure in attaching the following comments on behalf of the IASO Executive Committee:

The International Association for the Study of Obesity welcomes the report of the joint consultation and its recognition of the central importance of obesity in the prevention of other chronic diseases. IASO is also pleased that some of its members were able to make a contribution to the report. IASO endorses the report's recognition that the current prevalence of overweight and obesity has already reached unprecedented levels. We share the concern on the rising prevalence of childhood obesity and the emergence of type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents, particularly as it is not confined to industrialized countries.

IASO has recognized for many years that a reduction in the incidence and levels of obesity would make a major contribution lowering the global levels of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and other co-morbidities.

Prevention of chronic diseases depends on more effective approaches involving diet, and physical activity. In addition, the burden of the current obesity epidemic is of such magnitude that more effective therapeutic management of obesity and the promotion of nutrition as part of medical and other health professional training are necessary.

IASO recognizes that no single initiative will be appropriate for all populations and that a combination of behavioral, environmental, medical, political, agricultural and socioeconomic initiatives may be necessary to reduce the current epidemic of obesity. We welcome the report's recommendations and recognise that they are intended to be further adapted and tailored to local and national diets and populations.

IASO would welcome a strong emphasis being given to basic and applied research in the areas of nutrition and physical activity, and to research on the environmental and other changes

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needed to promote behavioral change in developing as well as developed countries. Providing an appropriate evidence base for policy development and implementation is essential, and a major challenge.

In addition, there are several technical issues that we would like to address and there is a need to ensure that the background documents and the report itself are set out in a consistent manner; these we will bring to the attention of the secretariat under separate cover, so that the full range of analyses and deductions are evident .

We expect that this report will represent an important milestone in increasing the awareness of societies and governments of potential approaches for the prevention of chronic diseases. We hope that each country will consider the options for early action with new programs and more research. The IASO will, through its member countries, its global office and its International Obesity TaskForce, continue its research, education and advocacy initiatives to enhance the understanding and awareness of obesity and encourage effective approaches to the prevention and treatment of this disease.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephan Rössner", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Professor Stephan Rössner
President
International Association for the Study of Obesity

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