Oct 2016

Food Industry Asia (FIA) Comments on the Zero Draft
Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
15 Oct 2016

ABOUT FIA

Food Industry Asia (FIA) is a non-profit industry association established in Asia to represent the food industry as a trusted partner in multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Our goal is to harness the expertise of major food and beverage companies and respond to the region's complex challenges in food safety, regulatory harmonisation and health and nutrition. Our members share common values on the responsible promotion of balanced diets and lifestyles. Together, we work with a broad range of stakeholders in Asia to promote the role of public-private partnerships as a cost-effective mechanism for delivering positive socio-economic outcomes.

Please visit www.foodindustry.asia for further information.

COMMENTS

Food Industry Asia (FIA) wishes to thank the World Health Organisation (WHO) and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation on the Draft Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Ensuring sustainable health and well-being for all.

With 1.9 million of people overweight or obese and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) ranked as the number 1 cause of death in Asia, health promotion is particularly relevant for Asia. It is also part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which the Goal 3 is aimed at ensuring healthy lives and the promotion of well-being for all at all ages.

We support the goals of the Zero Draft to position health promotion as fundamental for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which the Goal 3 is aimed at ensuring healthy lives and the promotion of well-being for all at all ages. With 1.9 million of people overweight or obese and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) ranked as the number 1 cause of death in Asia, health promotion is particularly relevant for Asia.

At the heart of our philosophy lies a belief that the private sector can play a more positive role in civil society if it has a seat at the table. To this end, FIA is committed to working collaboratively with governments and policy makers throughout Asia, either directly or through existing local industry groups.
FIA was particularly encouraged by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 that recognised achieving the ambitious Goals and targets requires a global partnership, bringing together governments, the United Nations, civil society, and the private sector.\(^1\) We fully endorse this approach in Asia. Given the complexity of the nutrition double burden challenge, it is essential that all stakeholders work together to develop holistic, impactful, and sustainable solutions.

We would like to propose in this Zero Draft to strengthen acknowledgement of multi-stakeholder partnership, and take into account the role private sector can play to achieve in alignment with SDG 17. Particularly in Paragraph 6, we recommend the Draft to also take into account of “public-private partnership approaches” and “voluntary industry initiatives” when considering policy approaches to deliver results.

In our view, public-private partnerships can and have delivered successes in health promotion, particularly for Asia. For example, Singapore Health Promotion Board (HPB) collaborates with various partners across the people, public and the private sector as a “catalyst” for healthy lifestyles in a number of national health education and disease prevention efforts\(^2\). HPB collaborated with food manufacturers in the Healthier Choices Symbol (HCS), which has observed an increase in the percentage of sales of HCS products compared to the total number of products in the same category from 29 percent in 2003 to 50 percent in 2007. In their Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) Program, HPB worked with trade unions, business associations, and employers to execute the recommendations of the WHP national strategic roadmap\(^3\).

OTHER SPECIFIC COMMENTS

FIA shares the common objective to strengthening health literacy and in our efforts, we and our members understand that many consumers are increasingly seeking ways to manage their calorie intake. To this end, FIA has recently launched a region-wide guideline on the consistent use of voluntary front-of-pack nutrition labelling in the form of percentage Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs). The FIA GDA Toolkit\(^4\) provides an industry guide to help its members to apply the logo in various markets.

The scheme is voluntary for all manufacturers and retailers, with support for its implementation provided by national trade associations in each country.

Our members have already made significant progress in rolling out these voluntary labels on their key brands across Asia and we have increased penetration in all countries by the end of 2015.

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Based on FIA’s Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) Nutrition Labelling Survey 2015, which surveyed 13 FIA member companies on the status of their GDA labelling roll-outs across countries and product categories, we have seen increased adoption and awareness. The results show that, Asia sees 52% growth while Southeast Asia sees 58% growth in GDA labelling penetration. Since the first survey in 2012, an increasing number of members have adopted GDA in more markets, such as the Philippines and Singapore. Nine more FIA members have adopted GDA labelling for all or some SKUs in the Philippines, where in 2012, only three members had put in place GDA labelling in the country.

We also recognise and support the role industry can play in obesity and NCDs through some self-regulatory and voluntary nutrition initiatives. Self-regulation is cost-effective, measurable, flexible, and can quickly respond to societal concerns.

Industry-led self-regulation has formally been recognised as a means of implementing the policy objective of reducing the impact on children of the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar and salt in the 2010 WHO recommendations.

In 2008, members of International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA) voluntarily adopted an approach restricting how and what they advertise to children globally. The self-regulatory approach is continually monitored globally to ensure compliance. In the latest 2016 Compliance Monitoring Report, it reported that IFBA members globally have continued to demonstrate a high rate of compliance. In its seventh year of monitoring, there was 97% compliance for television advertising, 99.8% for internet advertising and 100% for print advertising in child-directed media.

In Asia, FIA is playing an important role in facilitating the implementation and monitoring of this commitment. FIA is driving the self-regulatory commitment at the national level in Singapore, India, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

For example, in Singapore, a public-private partnership was formed comprising the Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Board, Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF), the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), and FIA and delivered the Singapore Code of Advertising Practice (SCAP) in 2014. The Code is comprehensive in scope, applicable to all advertisers in Singapore, and based on uniform nutrition criteria, which would distinguish between products that may and may not be marketed to children.

We support that a good governance structure should be enhanced for health targets. We believe that interventions such as product reformulation, portion control, restrictions on the marketing of foods and beverages high in fat, sugar and salt to children, nutrition literacy and labelling, public education on diet and physical activity programmes are likely to be more effective when a holistic approach is made, rather than focusing on or singling out individual interventions, such as the tax recommendation (13b).

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We would propose that the recommendation on the taxation of certain products be approached with further evaluation based on solid science base.

**Summary**

FIA and its members share common values and vision to position health promotion as fundamental for achieving the 17 SDGs. FIA members are continuously committed to and exploring to improve product offerings to create products that offer healthier options, carrying out initiatives aimed at promoting physical activity in schools and in communities, pledging for responsibly marketing and joining voluntary Front of Pack GDA labelling across Asia markets to encourage consumers to make healthy eating choices.

We are encouraged by the recognition in the Goal 17 of SDGs to deliver with a whole of society approach and we look forward to opportunity to share our regional expertise on nutrition science, marketing, consumer behaviour and public-private partnerships with the UN systems, Member States, civil society and other stakeholders to make a meaningful contribution in the development of the plan.