

SIXTH MEETING OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

MEETING
14TH OF JULY 10.00-17.00

Minutes

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

The agenda was adopted as well as the minutes of the previous meeting with a small correction from Germany.

2. OUTCOMES OF LAST PLATFORM MEETING

Philippe Roux summarised the outcomes of the last Platform meetings from April and July 2009.

- 3rd April meeting discussed monitoring of Platform commitments and “reformulation” commitments. The score 3/5 or above for 80% of the monitoring reports was not achieved. Platform members having a score of less than 3 on their commitments were invited to revise their reports to improve the score of their 2008 commitments. To support this process The Commission has organised a Monitoring workshop on 29 June.
- 9th July session was organised back to back with the Youth health conference at which the “Green Lace” joint action was presented. Platform members were invited to participate in the conference. Commitments related to the education specifically dedicated to youth population were presented.
- Platform evaluation process has started with the first meeting of the steering group (consisting of Platform and HLG members in addition to Commission staff) held on 19th June to prepare terms of reference for the evaluators work.

3. STRATEGY MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Gillian Kiy presented the DG SANCO paper proposing a set of core indicators based on RAND expertise (presented during previous HLG meeting in April) and on SANCO/WHO Europe Monitoring project. All suggested indicators are linked to existing data sources in Member States. The Commission is planning to publish the Strategy progress report in the end of 2010 and an evaluation report in 2013.

Trudy Wijnhoven WHO coordinator of the SANCO/WHO Strategy Monitoring project, recalled that national focal points network was established and is operational since last autumn. It allows collection of broad range of data from actions, interventions to policy initiatives. The second snapshot data will be validated early next year during focal point meeting in Copenhagen and reported in September 2010.

Discussion:

Members States welcomed the Commission draft and in particular the fact that the proposed indicators are anchored to existing monitoring systems in Member States, limiting the burden for data collection. Nevertheless, Member States considered that more time is required to study document and give final opinion on it.

Some Member States underlined that a few indicators should be rephrased not to exclude countries that, for example, would not have a central national budget for evaluation. The

necessity to consider the recourse to qualitative indicators as the available data sources for the proposed indicators may not always be fully comparable between Member States and that in some cases the number of initiatives give no indication of the effective proportionality of these. Some concerns were raised about indicators for which the main data source is the industry.

The Chair acknowledged that HLG was not in the position to endorse the set of indicators during the meeting, stated that the list of core indicators is too ambitious and that the aim of the monitoring exercise should be to timely show to the Council and the Parliament what have we achieved in the implementation of the strategy in response to the Council conclusions. The Countries differ substantially in the level of implementation of the Strategy but should collectively report on achievements made since that adoption of the Strategy. When reporting the four main questions which we should be able to answer are:

- Which countries are active under each of the sub headings of the EU nutrition strategy at the time of reporting?
- What is being done? What are the different approaches explored by Member States?
- What is the impact? What can be said about the impact of the actions launched?
- What best practice in each policy sector?

Looking at the set of indicators, the Chair asked the Commission services to ensure that the final set of indicators covers all the aspects of policy conclusions and rephrase the questions so there is space for qualitative analysis and description of best practices. The progress report will also include a narrative around the figures to put them in context.

The Commission services will consolidate and circulate the Core Indicators list in advance to the next meeting in December.

4. MEMBER STATES DEVELOPMENTS

Inger Andersson (Swedish National Food Administration) presented the current situation and future expectations of "The Nordic Keyhole project". Keyhole symbol is a combination of the food circle and the food pyramid. The keyhole was introduced for 15 food groups in 1989 (dairy products, meat products, margarine, ice cream and cereals), and today there are 25 food groups covered. The scheme is built up of different criteria with regard to maximum levels of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugars for the 25 different food categories. This fact is a very important aspect when comparing with e.g. the traffic light system and the GDA (Guidance Daily Amount) systems. A constructive dialogue with industry results in "getting them on track". The keyhole has been a tool for stimulating product development.

5. REGIONAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS

Madi Sharma (UK member of ECOSOC) *rapporteur* on the report on the "Fight against obesity and civil society responsibility" which reviewed local best practices, introduced the concept of engaging "Ambassadors" to mobilise local and regional stakeholders into positive action, and continuing momentum, to reverse current trends by promoting healthy living and physical activity. She currently acts as the "Health"

ambassador of the Nottingham city. She promoted the creation of a Regional Nutrition Platform which will be launched in September in East Midlands.

The HLG is asked to help to identify potential regional ambassadors.

Charlie Keeney (Nottinghamshire NHS) presented the East Midlands region. Regarding obesity, it ranks in the worst quartile in England for obesity at age 4/5 Left unchecked, obesity could reach 15% of children aged 4/5 by 2014. He described plans they are drawing also from the experiences of other countries like Finland and Singapore. They work very closely with local government and other partners and have agreed joint obesity targets. Mansfield Local Strategic Partnership is also engaged with the EPODE feasibility study.

The HLG members discussed about comparable initiatives in France, Slovenia and Portugal. There is strong interest for continuing exchanges of experiences on these local initiatives in particular when they are Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

The Chair:

- asked HLG members to map with their permanent representations potential partners for obesity prevention actions;
- underlined that members should help consolidating the Commission inventory of local PPPs currently focussed on the Public health Programme financed initiatives;
- suggested that the Commission services should present the financial tools for regional initiatives and, if necessary, to organise specific workshops with HLG members having interest in launching jointly local initiative;

6. REFORMULATION

EU SALT REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Stephanie Bodenbach (DG SANCO) informed about current developments:

- National Salt reduction initiatives document has been completed and published on the Commission website.
- The Commission attended a meeting organised by the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME). One of the main points of discussion was the scepticism about scientific evidence supporting any actions on salt reduction. The conclusion of the meeting was that the Commission can count on UEAPME help in terms of public awareness concerning salt reduction initiative.
- The draft information brochure prepared by the Commission was distributed. HLG members are invited to suggest National Quotes that could be incorporated. It was agreed that MS will send comments on the brochure by 15th of September.

WHO POSITION ON IODINE SUPPLEMENTATION POLICY

Dr Juan-Pablo Pena-Rosas (WHO) presented WHO position on iodine supplementation policy in the context of the of salt reduction initiatives. The current WHO position and recommendations regarding salt intake are as follows:

- policies for salt iodization and reduction of salt intake to less than 5 g a day are compatible.

- reliance of salt as a vehicle for dietary intake should not be used to justify promotion of salt intake to the public and additional vehicles should continue to be explored.

FAT AND SUGARS INITIATIVES

Stephanie Bodenbach presented the paper prepared by the Commission services following the request of Member States at last meeting on the possible approaches for the cooperation at EU level on the initiatives for fat and sugars reformulation - reduction.

There is evidence to support the focus of future actions on decreasing energy density of food products because of the association of high energy density diets with increased risk of weight gain.. They are many areas for action including improving the nutritional quality of the fat, the decrease of saturated fatty acid (SFA) content in foods, the continuous decrease of trans-fatty acid (TFA) content and the increase of unsaturated fatty

In contrast to salt, fat, saturated fat and sugars do contribute to the bulk of a product and would, in most cases, have to be replaced by other substances.

The Commission is planning to organize expert meeting in November in order to discuss evidence and possible interventions, and identify possible approaches.

Discussion:

Member states congratulated the Commission services for the quality of the tabled discussion paper.

Majority of Member States considered that the best approach would consist in launching discussions on all nutrients simultaneously as reformulation requires a comprehensive approach.

In particular, the idea of following the model of the salt initiatives with shared benchmark is welcomed by Member States

Some Member States underlines that the discussions should also consider portion size and not only focus on reformulation of food products.

The necessity to give emphasis to the issue of the health inequalities between socioeconomic groups was also underlined.

Taking into account the technological complexity of reformulation processes, HLG members consider appropriate that the Commission conveys a workshop with their national experts to consolidate the basis of a common initiative.

In concluding, the Chair acknowledged the choice for a broad approach covering fat and sugar of the Member States and asked them to inform Commission services of their national expert to be invited at the exploratory workshop to be organised by Sanco in advance to December meeting.

The Commission will send before end September to HLG members a proposal of the agenda and date of the workshop on reformulation of fats and sugars.

Dutch Task Force for the improvement of the fatty acid composition

Dr. Claudia Oomen (Dutch Task Force for the Improvement of Fatty Acid Composition) presented results of the Dutch Task Force for the improvement of the fatty acid composition which is Partnership between Dutch suppliers and customers of vegetable oils and fats (bakery-, potato processing-, snack industry, fast food sector), government and nutrition education center. The main aim of the task force is reduce the amount of trans and saturated fat in foods. She stressed collaborative aspect of the actions undertaken. In the conclusions she said that Self-regulation has shown to be effective: the food industry has been working intensively to reduce TFA and SAFA for many years, but it is not just down to the food industry to solve this problem. Government involvement to ensure product reformulation is needed.

7. CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS:

- List of core indicators:
 - comments on the "Monitoring the Commission's Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues" paper are expected by end September (document available through circa).
 - second round of reading between 15 and 30 October on the base of a consolidated version to be provided by Commission services. The final version will be circulated in advance to December meeting.
- Salt reduction information brochure: comments by 15 September.
- "Reformulation" workshop: HLG members to provide names of experts for the workshop in early autumn for the preparation to HLG discussions on sugar and fat reformulation by end of July
- The next meeting to be held on 3 and 4 December will partly be organised jointly with the Platform. The meeting will cover :
 - "Reformulation initiative" on the morning of 3 Dec (HLG alone);
 - "monitoring of the strategy and indicators (with platform)" the afternoon the same day;
 - "Reformulation" and "Local networks in Public Private Partnership" (with platform) on 4 Dec in the morning.
- Provisional dates for HLG meetings in 2010 :
 - 10.02.2010,
 - 16.06 2010 in Spain under Spanish Presidency,
 - 24.11.2010