

PSM Healthy by Design Event “How Products and Guidelines Meet” Event Report

28 March 2018 | 13.30 – 15.00 | Hotel Capo d’Africa, Rome, Italy

Background

Following the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Nutrition meeting held during the morning of 28 March, the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) hosted *Healthy by Design: How Products and Guidelines Meet*. This interactive, educational event consisted of a luncheon and series of tastings guided by members of the private sector. These private sector actors shared examples of the practical implications of nutrient profiles on product development and reformulation, with the goal of demonstrating to attendees the challenges and opportunities for collective action that meets public health objectives.



Highlights from the Event

The event was moderated by **Dr. Adam Drewnowski**, a Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Washington. Among many other accomplishments, Dr. Drewnowski is the inventor of the Nutrient Rich Foods Index, which rates foods based on their nutritional value, and the Affordable Nutrition Index, which helps consumers identify affordable, healthy foods. Dr. Drewnowski provided a compelling introduction to the basic rationales behind nutrient profiles and their impact on product design and reformulation.



The session’s other presenters included **Els de Groene**, the Director of Nutrition and Health Refreshment at Unilever; **Peter Langborg Wejse**, a Senior Research Scientist and Program Manager at Arla Foods amba; and **John Athanatos**, the Director of Nutrition, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs for Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW), a Nestlé-General Mills joint venture.

Remarks were also made by **H.E Khaled El-Taweel**, First Secretary, Embassy of Egypt in Rome and Chair of the CFS Nutrition workstream that is currently developing the Terms

of Reference (ToR) for the nutritional guidelines that will constitute CFS' next major policy product; and **H.E Mario Arvelo**, Chair of CFS.

Attendance

The event was attended by over 40 invitees, including Ambassadors, FAO staffers, members of the Nutrition Technical Task Team (TTT), CFS Bureau Members, private sector actors, and others.

Healthy by Design's Key Messages

- PSM recognizes that reformulation and innovation guided by nutrient profiles can lead to positive public health impacts, such as helping consumers make healthy choices and benefiting overall public health. However, eliminating all forms of malnutrition requires a range of strategies that work synergistically to improve a population's diet, as any single intervention in isolation will only have a small overall impact.
- Nutrient profiles, which measure a food's overall nutritional value, are being used to inform product (re)formulation by the private sector. Product reformulation is focused on increasing nutrients to be encouraged and decreasing nutrients to be limited, as recommended by health authorities.
- The private sector can help achieve the SDGs by producing foods that are nutrient-rich, affordable, sustainable, culturally acceptable, and appealing. Taste, cost, and nutrition are among the global drivers of food choice.
- The private sector welcomes working with governments and other stakeholders to develop harmonized nutrient profiling systems that encourage the design and reformulation of products that are affordable, tasty, nutrient-rich, and safely processed and packaged, all while diligently taking into account the fact that food and diets are diverse and vary by country, region and environment. This kind of cooperative approach would contribute to global public health.
- Assessing consumer needs and expectations is key to the success of reformulated products. The private sector is a supportive partner in improving public health through listening, learning, and sharing expertise to discuss and develop practical opportunities for collective action that meets public health objectives.
- Innovation through reduction of nutrients of concern should be science-based and take into account technical and processing limitations.





Conclusions

Dr. Drewnowski's remarks and guided discussion, together with the tastings facilitated by the featured presenters and the closing remarks made by H.E Khaled El-Taweel and H.E Mario Arvelo, led attendees to consider the challenges of producing foods that are nutrient-rich while also being affordable, accessible, and appealing. Guests were also encouraged to appreciate how industry can work together with governments,

academia, and international agencies to improve health outcomes worldwide.

