

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Rome, 19-21 November 2014

Statement of Latvia

Mrs. Egita Pole, Under Secretary of State on Health Policy Issues, Ministry of Health

Mr. Chairperson,

Excellencies, Honourable ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

We congratulate FAO, WHO and the entire membership in preparing the Second International Conference on Nutrition and welcome the adoption of the Rome Declaration and the Framework for Action. Latvia strongly supports actions proposed in the Rome Declaration and the Framework for Action and is fully committed to continue policy implementation to tackle malnutrition in all its forms.

Latvia as the upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015 has committed to continue the work already done by other countries to emphasize healthy lifestyle and nutrition as the main horizontal priority. We are keen to highlight the problems of rising childhood obesity by organizing a high level conference on healthy lifestyle, nutrition and physical activity for children and young people at schools trying our contribution into the stopping an increase of obesity especially in children.

Better eating habits and positive health behavior is one of the most challenging tasks in the overall effort to improve nutrition and public health. In Latvia children are the most important group for actions, to promote good habits from an early age, to provide access to healthy and nutritious food and to introduce children with the taste of healthy food. To promote availability of healthy and nutritious food to children we have banned sweetened beverages, confectionery and other unhealthy foods and snacks in kindergartens and schools and also set dietary standards for kindergarten and school meals. Now Latvia is planning also to restrict trans-fatty acids in food products.

Today's rapidly changing and busy world and continuous evolution of high technologies are some of the contributing factors on the increasingly poor eating and drinking habits and sedentary lifestyle. In the future we must adopt stronger measures in order to reduce the overall marketing pressure on children of foods high in energy, saturated fats, trans-fats, sugar or salt.

We must also find innovative, motivating and practical approaches how to support people, especially children and families in making healthier choices regarding their nutrition and lifestyle for example improving health and nutrition information and education, implementing nutrient profiling and labeling and organizing public awareness campaigns and activities. Intersectoral as well as intergovernmental collaboration is vital here, because key policy areas like welfare, agriculture, education and the environment have a great impact when speaking of food system and nutrition.

Therefore we need to continue our work together to promote healthy diets throughout the life course, starting from the early stages of life to adulthood, before and during pregnancy, by protecting exclusive breastfeeding, promoting healthy eating in families, and at school during childhood.

Thank you!