

Salt reduction under threat at the UN High level meeting in New York

Embargoed until 01.09.11 00.01 GMT

Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of World Action on Salt and Health (WASH):

“We are shocked to hear that major Western countries, which are already reducing salt intake in their own countries, are trying to block salt reduction in all countries around the world.

“The WHO set a target of 5 gram a day in 1983, which was further endorsed in 2003 [1] and 2006 [2]. This target was therefore suggested by Norway in the Outcomes Document for the NCD High Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) taking place on the 19th September, but has now been removed by the EU, Australia, Japan, US and Canada, who are refusing to support the recommendation and requested its removal in the July 29th version of the Document

“This is a major step backwards, particular in view of the fact that Canada, Australia and the United States all have salt reduction targets of 4 [3], 5 or 6 gram a day [3]. Very similar targets have been set across the EU (e.g. UK 6 gram a day [4]). Without targets no action will take place and lives will be lost.”

“Why are these countries denying the rest of the world the benefits of a target that would ensure a reduction in salt intake over the next decade, saving millions of lives through preventing strokes, heart attacks and heart failure? Is this due to the influence of the global food industry [5]?”

“We ask these countries to urgently reconsider their position and support the NCD Alliance’s call on member states to make this a priority, as salt reduction has been shown to be one of the most cost-effective ways of tackling the NCD crisis [6]. Particularly as in the UK, the food industry has shown they can successfully reduce salt on a voluntary basis with no loss of sales or profit.”

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Notes to Editor

Go to www.worldactiononsalt.com for more information or contact:

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About WASH:

World Action On Salt and Health (WASH) was established in 2005 and is a global not-for-profit organisation of 432 members from 81 countries with the mission to improve the health of populations throughout the world by achieving a gradual reduction in salt intake.

Members are mainly experts in hypertension, however some have other roles as well - but all have an interest in reducing salt intake in their individual countries.