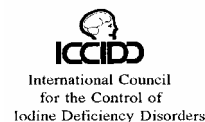


OPTIMAL IODINE NUTRITION IN THE AMERICAS

Regional meeting
May 5- 6, 2004, Lima Perú

TRIBUTE IN MEMORIAM TO JOHN T. DUNN
a life dedicated to the elimination of IDD



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Partner Organizations in the
Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency

LIMA CONSENSUS ON OPTIMAL IODINE NUTRITION IN THE AMERICAS

At the Regional Meeting “Optimal Iodine Nutrition in The Americas” held in Lima, Peru, May 5 and 6, with the participation of official delegations from 21 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico¹, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela), and representatives of international agencies and organizations (PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, ICCIDD, Kiwanis International, MI, Salt Institute, Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency), the following consensus was approved:

Whereas

- At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in May 2000, the governments of the American countries renewed their commitment to achieve the goal of virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) by the year 2005.
- Nations have committed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, one of which is directly related to improving the nutritional wellness of their constituent populations.
- The Executive Board of the Pan-American Health Organization has a mandate to oversee the progress of the health situation of The Americas.
- Globally the countries of The Americas have made significant progress towards the elimination of IDD; however, problems remain that threaten the effective and sustained elimination of IDD in the whole region. A few countries are still deficient, others have been incompletely assessed, and the risk of iodine excess has risen in some.

- National multi-sectoral delegations have analyzed the requirements for ensuring permanence of adequate supplies of dietary iodine in terms of continued national efforts in program organization and surveillance, effective monitoring of iodine nutritional status and salt iodization, education and communication, and regional coordination.

As a result of the discussions of key issues in achieving and sustaining optimal iodine nutrition, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Organization of National efforts for Sustained IDD Elimination

- ✓ Maintain high level political commitment to and priority on the prevention and correction of nutritional deficiencies, such as infant brain damage due to inadequate intakes of iodine, while at the same time preventing the excess intake of essential nutrients. Food guides addressed to promote health must consider deficiencies as well as micronutrients imbalances.
- ✓ Report every two years on the status of national programs and on the efforts being made to ensure progress and sustainability at the highest national level as well as regional governmental fora.
- ✓ The following elements are essential to sustain progress toward optimum iodine nutrition: high-level political commitment with permanent funding from regular budget, mobilization of social demand, securing adequate resources, ownership and empowerment of salt producers, and an enabling legal environment linked to a system of transparent and effective enforcement.

2. National Coalitions to Promote and Sustain Optimal Iodine Nutrition

- ✓ Progress in ensuring optimum iodine nutrition cannot be achieved without a deliberate process to join forces and blend all required talents.
- ✓ A National Coalition is the critical tool to ensure that all stake holders continue their contribution to the progress in iodine nutrition, each according to agreed-upon roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ The composition of a National Coalition may differ to reflect national realities, but usually includes the Ministry of Health, the salt industry, the civil society, scientific groups, and others as appropriate.
- ✓ The single most important action by an effective National Coalition is communication, aimed at engaging the various elements of society in making their contributions to permanent progress towards reaching and sustaining the goal.

3. Ensuring Adequately Iodized Salt

- ✓ Provided with adequate assistance, all salt producers - small and large - can iodize salt effectively.
- ✓ The cost of iodization is small and does not justify a price difference to consumers of more than 5US cents/person per year.
- ✓ Technology does not pose any significant obstacles against reaching and sustaining universal salt iodization.
- ✓ Experience from many countries confirms that the use of iodized salt in food processing and preservation does not affect consumer acceptability of the end product.

4. Effective Systems for Monitoring Iodine in People and Salt

- ✓ Monitoring of iodine in salt and in people is essential to assess and maintain optimum iodine nutrition status. For this purpose the indicators approved by WHO, ICCIDD and UNICEF must be used (Assessment of IDD and Monitoring their Elimination, WHO/NHD/01.1).
- ✓ Monitoring must be sustained and systematic, and results must be communicated to the appropriate levels of decision taking to make necessary corrections.
- ✓ Laboratories with adequate quality assurance systems in place are required to guarantee the validity of monitoring results.
- ✓ Other indicators such as goiter prevalence and neonatal TSH screening are important insofar as they reflect longer-term iodine nutrition.

5. Role of Education and Communication

- ✓ Communication, including advocacy and education, needs to be planned comprehensively as an integral part of the overall national effort.
- ✓ To bridge the generation gap and ensure sustained optimum iodine nutrition, it is important to infiltrate and pervade national education systems permanently.
- ✓ The content of messages and learning should emphasize the hidden and latent danger of brain damage due to iodine deficiency.

6. Regional Cooperation

- ✓ Increase the efforts toward harmonized legislation on salt fortification levels with iodine.

- ✓ Promote the exchange of information on managerial capacity development and the establishment of active regional cooperation among national coalitions.
- ✓ Support the ongoing efforts to establish the International Resource Laboratories for Iodine (IRLI) laboratory network and other pertinent initiatives.
- ✓ Hold periodic regional or sub-regional meetings for exchange of experiences and training.

7. Current and Future Role of Agencies and NGOs

- ✓ Renew the commitment of agencies and NGOs in supporting national efforts to achieve the sustained elimination of IDD in all the countries of The Americas. In this context the national and regional efforts by different sectors are to be emphasized, including government, private sector and civil society.
- ✓ International agencies and NGOs are urged to continue supporting the implementation of commitments to eliminate the IDD as a way to guaranty national commitment and resources in favor of this goal.

Upon return to our respective countries, members of the delegations will endeavor where appropriate to:

- Hold a meeting of a wide national audience to strengthen commitment and accelerate actions toward reaching and sustaining the goal of IDD elimination.
- Systematically review and if needed, make adjustments to the national strategy for IDD elimination
- Establish or strengthen national and sub-regional coalitions for continuing the efforts.

We express gratitude to the Government of Peru for hosting the high-level Meeting on Optimal Iodine Nutrition in The Americas.

May 6, 2004

¹Represented AMISAC