



Partnership for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency

Report of Board Meeting
July 16 – 17, 2001
Chicago

Hosted by Morton Salt

Present:

J. Werner Schultink (Chair), Nita Dalmiya (UNICEF)
M.G.Venkatesh Mannar (Secretary - MI)
Walter W. Becky, Richard L. Hanneman (Salt Institute)
Jan van Ingen (ESPA)
Bruno de Benoist (WHO)
Jack C.S. Ling, Gerard Burrow (ICCIDD)
L. Nettles Brown, William A. Brown (Kiwanis)
Glen F. Maberly, Frits van der Haar, Robert J. Baldwin (Emory/CDC)

Absent with apology: Lin Jiahua (China Salt Association)

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was agreed with minor rearrangement of subjects.

2. Approval of the report of previous meeting

Bruno de Benoist requested that his name would be properly spelled. The Board approved the report of the meeting in Indianapolis, April 30 – May 1, 2001.

3. Action points from the previous meeting

a. Terms of Reference

The Board revised the proposed terms of reference for the Partnership. A revised document was prepared and circulated at the end of the meeting. This version is attached (ANNEX 1) to this report.

The Board agreed that the Secretariat will consist of a full-time professional with extensive experience in public health/nutrition, policy and programs, particularly in the area of iodine nutrition.

Additional personnel may be needed, depending on demonstrated requirement and available financial resources.

The Board noted that UNICEF is prepared to support the initial “start up” cost of the Secretariat for the first year of operation (July 2001 – June 2002). During this initial phase, the Secretariat will be located at the Department of International Health, Emory University School of Public Health, Atlanta. At the end of the initial one-year phase, it is proposed that the tasks, functioning, and future financing of the Partnership Secretariat will be evaluated and determined by the Board.

The Board decided that for the initial period, the Board Secretariat function would be provided by Frits van der Haar of Emory/CDC. Venkatesh Mannar was elected as Vice-Chair of the Board.

b. By Laws

The Board reviewed and revised the proposed By Laws and agreed that they would be renamed as Memorandum of Understanding among Partner organizations. The Working Group, consisting of Becky, Brown and Mannar would accordingly revise the MOU and circulate it to all members by Aug 15, 2001.

There was discussion about the rule to be used for decision-making by the Board. The general consensus was that a simple majority would be sufficient for most decisions. In case of major issues (for instance on the TORs or MOU), a two-third majority of the eligible votes would be needed. Proxy voting in meetings would be allowed if the Secretariat is notified in advance in writing.

c. Global Score Card

The Board received a report by Nita Dalmiya of a global update assembled by UNICEF of household iodized salt use based on recent data. Survey data from 70 MICS, 21 DHS/Measure and 14 other survey sources are included, all from 1996 onwards.

Compared with a previous analysis (Summit of Leaders, January 2001), 71 new data of nationally representative surveys are included. This database is used by the UN Secretary General for reporting on the progress achieved since the World Summit for Children.

Changes in reported household consumption include small increases in CEE/CIS/Baltics, Sub-Saharan Africa and M.East/N.Africa; and small reductions in South Asia, E.Asia/Pacific and L.America/Caribbean.

Of the 41 million newborns yet to be protected in the developing world, 17 million are in S.Asia; 8 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 7 million in E.Asia/Pacific, followed by CEE/CIS/Baltics (4 million); M.East/N.Africa (3 million) and L.America/Caribbean (2 million).

Although the reported levels of household iodized salt consumption have somewhat dropped, it should be noted that a number of large countries have data from before 1995 and these were therefore not included: Brazil, Pakistan, Russian Federation and Turkey.

A world average of 70% by end 2000 is reported.

d. Guidelines for independent review

Glen Maberly presented an overview of the proposed process for independent Partnership verification of IDD Elimination in a country, based on an agreed-upon, standardized methodology. The approach consists of 6 steps: Initializing, National Preparations, Assembling the Team, Evaluation, Verification and Continued Vigilance.

Jack Ling proposed that ICCIDD be given a prominent role in missions to verify IDD elimination. Regional coordinators of ICCIDD were already involved in evaluation of national programs and ICCIDD has received requests for external verifications. Bruno de Benoist emphasized that first step should be a national evaluation by members of the national coalition. This would be helpful for assessing whether a Partnership verification mission would be warranted. Nita Dalmiya proposed that the verification experience of countries such as Bolivia should be reviewed since in that country the coverage has slipped after it was declared as IDD free.

There was considerable discussion on the criteria and process of verification. It was agreed that while making an assessment of whether IDD has been eliminated is based on clear criteria for IDD status, it is more difficult to assess whether this success will be sustained and for how long. Bruno de Benoist felt that criteria for sustainability should become better and more objectively defined. Walter Becky offered that salt industry would help strengthen the salt component of the evaluation.

Werner Schultink proposed that as a next step, UNICEF would work through its channels to mobilize national interest in verification under the Partnership umbrella. Suggested countries are Zimbabwe, Poland, Ecuador, and Iran, and maybe one province in China. Time frame suggested was Sep-Oct 2001. Salt industry should also nominate a member to be part of an evaluation mission.

Glen Maberly was asked to proceed with refining the proposed guidelines, while Werner Schultink would start soliciting interests and a government request in the countries mentioned.

Members (Supporters) of the subcommittee: Glen Maberly, Jack Ling (John Dunn), Walter Becky (Richard Hanneman), Werner Schultink (Nita Dalmiya), Bruno de Benoist (Henrietta Allen), (David Haxton).

e. Partnership Work Plan

Members discussed ways in which the Partnership could work together in support of activities in regions or specific countries. It was felt that the Partnership needed to send out a short note explaining its role and services through all Partner networks.

Philippines: Glen Maberly reported (based on his recent visit) that UNICEF and KI would follow up on recent meetings with the new Secretary of Health in terms of repeal of the 10% VAT on salt and conduct of an updated salt situation analysis. Werner Schultink proposed to write to UNICEF Philippines offering the services of the Partnership to assist with this. China Salt Association would be contacted to see how they could collaborate to ensure that all exports to the Philippines are adequately iodized.

Turkey: UNICEF has had recent discussions with a Government representative, who insists on a new IDD survey. Werner Schultink asked whether on a parallel track, could the salt industry do an analysis of the situation? Jan van Ingen said he would look into this. Bruno de Benoist proposed that WHO

could follow up with Ministry of Health. UNICEF (through Kul Gautam) would write to Richard Reed (re contact with Dr. Dobramachi). KI could contact local Kiwanis clubs.

Ukraine: Glen Maberly summarized the work in the CEE/CIS/BS region based on his recent visit. In Ukraine the salt iodization levels continue to be abysmally low. He wondered if ESPA could assist in assessing the salt marketing situation in the country and possibly the region. Jan van Ingen offered to meet with Philip O'Brien (regional Director, UNICEF) and Eddie Sigurdssen of KI to look at the possibility of a salt situation market based assessment in Ukraine and the other Baltic States. Werner Schultink would check to see if the UN Secretary General could speak with the leaders of the region re IDD and need for USI.

Latin America: The Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba) and Brazil need special attention. Mexico needs a new salt assessment and/or a verification mission. Walter Becky (Richard Hanneman of the Salt Institute) offered to assist with this.

Reporting back by Partners in 4-6 weeks time.

4. Partnership participation at the UNGA Special Session for Children

Werner Schultink informed the Board that the plans for a Round Table on Food Fortification during the UNGA Special Session had been abandoned. The Partnership might however organize a special event, for instance to commemorate the global progress and give greater publicity to the launch of the Partnership. UNICEF had made a tentative reservation with the organizers of the UNGA to allow for such a special side event. The Partnership side event might be planned to take place as a "bridge" between the time of the UNGA (September 19-21) and the special salute to Kiwanis, planned for September 22.

A subcommittee consisting of Walter Becky (Brian Weston at Morton Salt), Glen Maberly, Jack Ling, Werner Schultink (Joyce Green at UNICEF) and Venkatesh Mannar (Faris Ahmed at MI) would coordinate the planning of a special event. Obviously, time is of the essence. Glen Maberly was asked to initiate the group work by a quick follow-up communication to outline the initial ideas.

5. Other Updates

a. *Bangkok Meeting on Iodine Laboratory Network*

Bob Baldwin (Emory/CDC) presented the conclusions of the Bangkok workshop, held in May 2001. 90 participants attended from 31 countries. Among organizing partners, agreement is growing that good quality laboratory data is increasingly crucial for evaluation and advocacy.

An IRLI (International Resource Laboratories for Iodine) network of iodine resource laboratories could improve the availability of good quality data and reinforce sustainability. The network can ensure standardized laboratory procedures and data, provide geographic service in all regions, and facilitate the work of regional and national networks or laboratories. CDC has a successful track record in international laboratory cooperation and is confident that it can lead the design and coordination of the IRLI Network as part of the collaborating organizations.

Venkatesh Mannar asked how the lab network could link with the goals of the Partnership in ensuring sustained IDD elimination. Jan van Ingen said that ESPA has standing committees to develop standards and quality control procedures.

b. *UNICEF-ADB collaboration in Central Asia*

In Central Asia, a \$6million ADB grant from Japan is available to implement country investment plans for food fortification, particularly salt iodization. UNICEF is assisting the multi-sectoral country groups in preparing the plans. ADB is looking for a salt consultant and SI, ESPA offered to inform their networks to search for such a person.

c. *Sub-Regional Salt Producers Meeting, Dakar (Senegal)*

This UNICEF-Salins du Sine Saloum jointly organized meeting, 2-4 July 2001, drew more than 90 people from 15 countries, mainly francophone and lusophone. A summary of the meeting, with conclusions, is in preparation. The meeting is an example of the new paradigm of partnerships at national level to accelerate the progress to IDD elimination through USI.

Jan van Ingen explained that an issue in these countries often is that salt industry looks to make additional profits through iodization. This misconception needs to be addressed and the key players be made to understand that iodizing salt is an obligation on their part.

d. *Data availability in Western countries*

The Board noted that in the Global Score Card, data on household iodized salt use from New Zealand are included. Werner Schultink asked how salt industry could help in obtaining reliable data on iodized salt consumption in developed countries. Walter Becky and Jan van Ingen indicated that SI and ESPA could get production level data of iodized salt and uniodized salt by region. The data would be presented at the next meeting of the Partnership.

6. Plans for next Board meetings

A next Board meeting was proposed in September in New York at the time of the UNGA Special Session for Children, and the side event to be organized by the Partnership. Host would be UNICEF.

Tentatively, the following meeting would be held in Amsterdam, November 29-30. Host would be ESPA.

Terms of Reference
Partnership for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency

Objectives and functions of the Partnership

The partnership is a collaborative effort of public, private and civic organizations. Its mission is to support national efforts for sustained elimination of iodine deficiency, primarily through universal consumption of iodized salt.

To serve its mandate, the Partnership will help stimulate and harmonize activities among its members in order to assist countries to reach and sustain the elimination of iodine deficiency as a public nutrition problem. The Partnership will promote the strengthening of multi-sectoral National Coalitions that will ensure this lasts forever.

The Partnership is made up of organizational members drawn from leading Salt and Iodine Producers associations, UN and/or Bilateral Agencies, international not-for-profit NGOs, research institutions and private foundations.

Initial activities of the Partnership will focus on the promotion of joint action to protect newborns brains from the harmful effects of iodine deficiency by:

- Identifying countries where the population is largely unprotected and help stimulate new action to address this problem
- Assisting countries that are protecting their population to verify that this is successful and identify actions that will help them maintain this success into the future
- Collecting, processing and sharing information among partner organizations, national and global professionals, and policy makers to support the goal.

Secretariat

A Secretariat will be responsible to the Board and work to facilitate the activities of the Partnership. The following items are illustrative of the actions it will take:

- Assist in preparing the Board and other meetings as directed by the Board by helping prepare and organize material for the agenda, the minutes and other support services
- Facilitate communication among the Partners, the Board and National Coalitions and to other external organizations
- Keep abreast of and inform the Board of latest developments in the progress towards sustained national and global elimination of iodine deficiency and activities of the Partnership
- Assist the Board to identify, analyse, and suggest actions to support the work of the Partners
- Develop a web-based information-clearing house, linked to other sites related to partner organizations that will support the work of the partners. This will include information about the partnership, reports on national progress, technical information, educational materials and information about how to find consultants that may be most helpful to countries.