

NETWORK FOR SUSTAINED ELIMINATION OF IODINE DEFICIENCY

Road Map for Universal Salt Iodization in Africa

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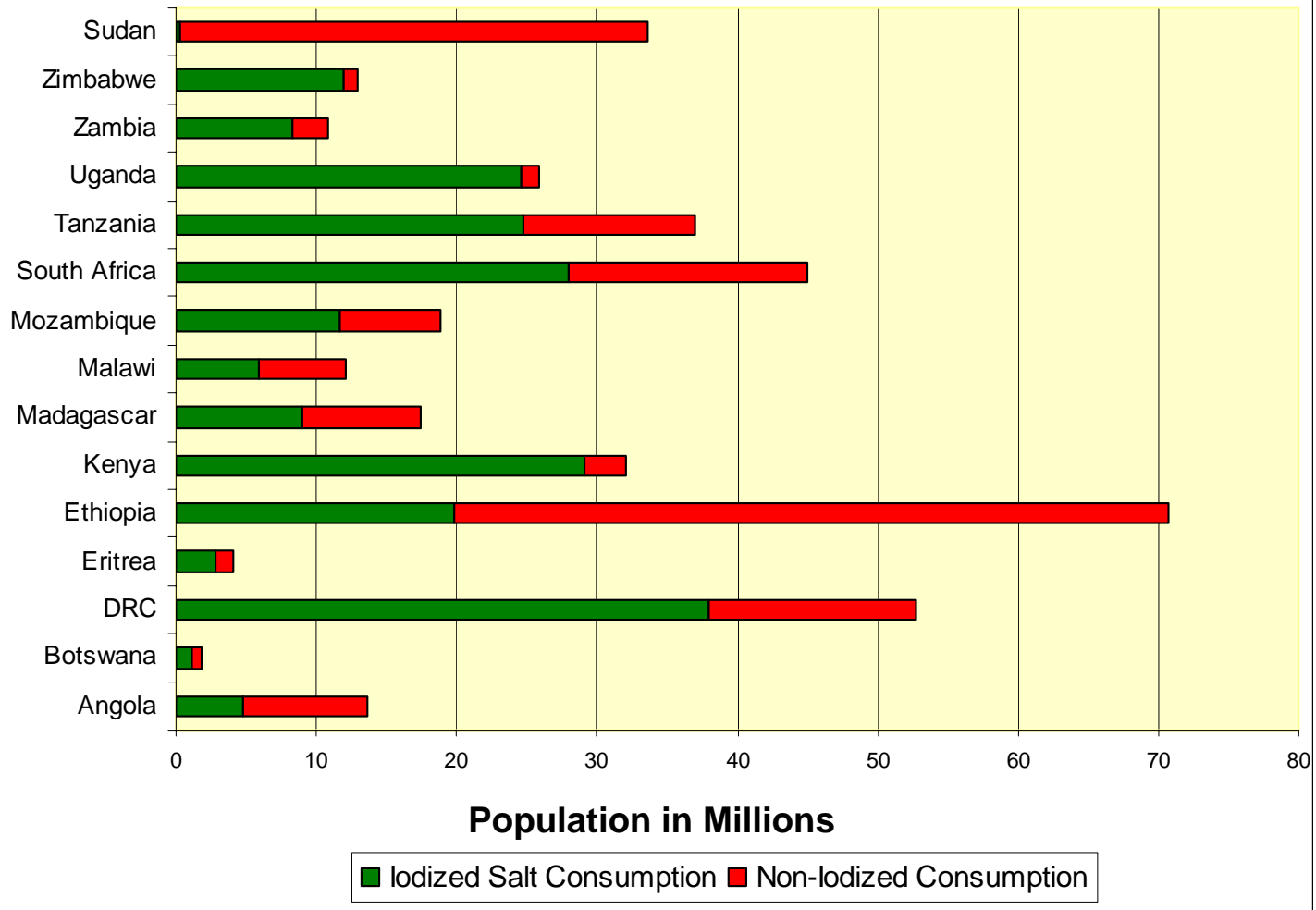
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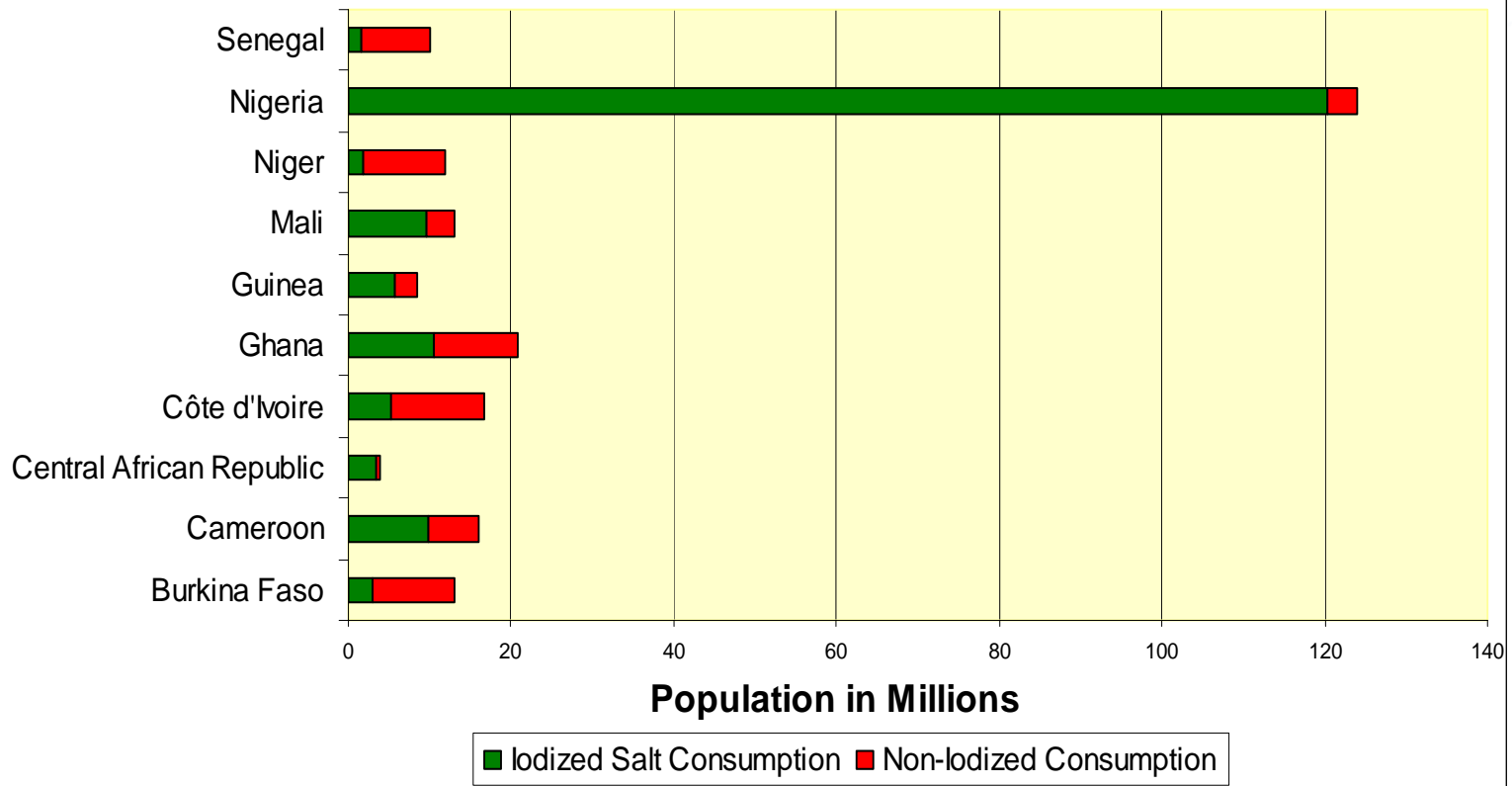
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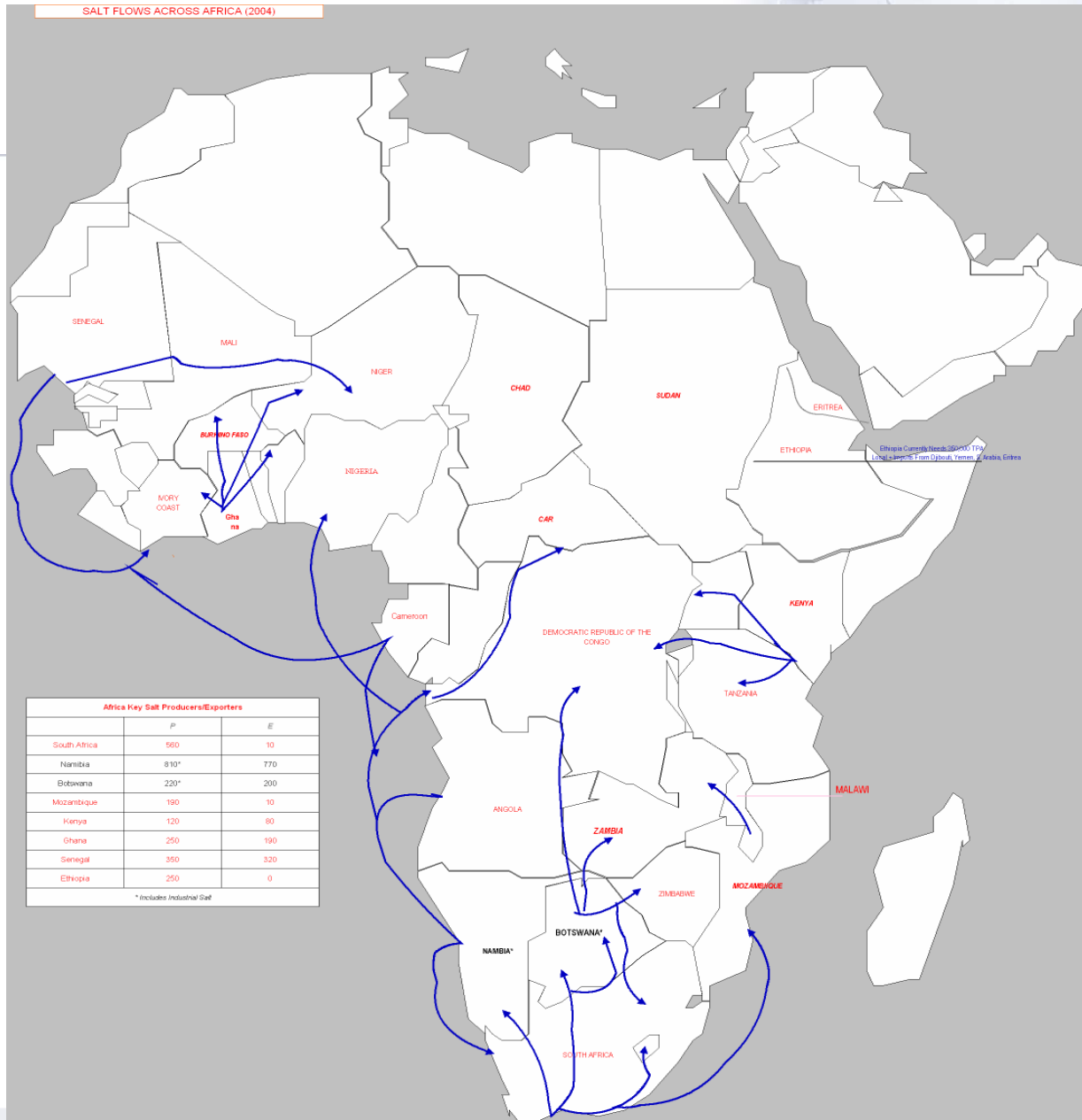
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Household Salt Iodized in North, East, Central and Southern Africa (Select Countries)



Household Salt Iodized in West Africa





Background

- Only a few countries across Africa produce salt and these countries supply almost the entire demand for salt in Africa.
- The coverage of iodized salt in most of the salt producing countries is very low and should the trend continue the entire continent will be negatively affected.
- More than ever it is important to focus on the salt production and salt industry in these countries if Universal Salt Iodization goals are to be met and sustained.
- It therefore makes sense to target salt iodization programs in countries that produce salt in order to achieve USI

Rationale For Focus On Salt Producing Countries

- The complexity and reliance on resources would be less when fewer countries are targeted
- If salt is iodized at point of production it would virtually guarantee high coverage of populations having access to iodized salt
- Combined with harmonization of salt iodine levels monitoring and enforcement programs across borders and within countries could be streamlined
- Awareness of IDD would be complemented with availability of iodized salt

Salt Situation Assessments

In 2005 MI initiated a series of assessments of production/distribution of iodized salt from key producer countries to map the flow of salt across the continent, identify key bottlenecks to iodization and develop strategies to address these challenges.

- Ghana
- Senegal
- Ethiopia
- Mozambique
- Angola
- South Africa
- Namibia
- Botswana
- Tanzania
- Sudan

Cross Cutting Considerations - Policy

- **Political Commitment** should be reflected in USI programs being included within a comprehensive maternal/child health/nutrition programs and supported by communications, regulation, monitoring and enforcement.
- Focus in salt producing countries to achieve USI calls for a combination of **advocacy, partnership building and resources to facilitate infrastructure development** to support the salt industry.
- **Advocacy messages should be targeted** to different audiences. (viz. the salt industry, traders, government officials and political partners, consumers)
- Governments across sub-regions (at a minimum) to agree on **standard Iodine Levels**. This would greatly facilitate and harmonize cross border trade in iodized salt.

Cross Cutting Considerations - Trade

- In salt-importing countries **legislation backed with adequate border control** is important. Importing countries can apply pressure on salt producing countries to supply iodized salt. Salt traders in importing countries could be instrumental in achieving USI if they are made to buy salt from producers who iodize.
- **Regional trade barriers** inhibit growth in the salt industry. In West Africa trade between Anglophone and Francophone countries is restricted and limits the marketability of iodized salt from Senegal and Ghana.
- Larger producers typically iodize salt already and that is why the coverage of iodized salt in importing countries is higher and this trend is also seen at locations further from producing sites in salt producing countries as well. **Initial focus on larger producers** could trigger growth and efficiency and market for iodized salt. This gives the producers a competitive advantage in injecting iodized salt to displace non-iodized salt from the market.

Cross Cutting Considerations – Producer Support

- Small producers can form **collectives to improve profitability** and growth. Cooperatives need **horizontal support** which includes business development services (microfinance, branding and marketing of salt, improved resource utilization and reduced wastage) and training.
- **Iodization Equipment/ technology** needs to match the production set-up and be integrated into production process
- **Producer ownership** has to be created through a contribution by the producer for the units or technical services.
- An assured and **sustained supply of Potassium iodate** supply is key to the success of the program. Provision of Iodate in smaller sachets could make it more affordable and accessible by small producers.

Key Actions to Ensure USI

- Pay attention to the complete salt production system and not just iodization
- Support the salt industry
- Include salt traders and distributors as part of the solution
- Strengthen the marketing of iodized salt
- Increase demand for iodized salt
- Engage food processors and major buyers of salt
- Continue and strengthen surveillance

How Network Members Can Help

- Advocacy to countries and the salt industry
- Technical Assistance to countries and salt companies
- Financial support
- Facilitating the easy availability and accessibility to potassium iodate
- Support for internal and external monitoring of salt-iodine levels

Proposed Next Steps

- Prepare Country and sub-Regional investment plans for USI in Africa with defined performance targets and timeframe and support implementation with technical and financial resources.
- Help harmonize salt iodine levels through regional mechanisms (SADC, ECOWAS, AU)
- Prepare a potassium iodate supply plan
- Focus technical support to small producers and cooperatives
- Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement