The timing is good – Drs. Mirta Roses, Irene Klinger, James Hospedales

This meeting brings forward two tasks for the Consortium identified at the May 2012 meeting of the Pan American Forum for Action on Non-communicable diseases (PAFNCDs) in Brazil:

- formalize the Consortium way of working and its membership
- identify preliminary steps in two areas of common interest: social marketing and setting market-wide standards for the sodium content of food products.

The timing is good for the Consortium to accelerate dietary salt reduction in the region:

- the 2011 Declaration from the UN High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs identifies unhealthy diet as a risk factor to NCDs and dietary salt reduction as a best buy to lower NCD burden;
- since 2009, there has been a Policy Statement prepared by the PAHO Expert Group (EG) for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention through Dietary Salt Reduction with guidance as to the roles and responsibilities of multiple sectors and stakeholders in dietary salt reduction and it has over ______ endorsements including by governments, societies of health professionals, advocacy organizations;
- a number of countries in the region have and continue to engage the food industry in negotiating targets and timelines for salt/sodium content reductions in food categories.

The PAFNCDs and now the Consortium are examples of PAHO’s response to the global momentum to deal with NCDs with holistic “whole of society” approaches. Both are platforms for open dialogue where stakeholders from multiple sectors can find common interests, agree to pursue them and ultimately contribute, in the case of salt, to reducing its overconsumption. PAHO, as the lead convener for PAFNCDs and the Consortium, is positioned to promote consistency and alignment in the approaches of the various sectors participating.

Presentation by Dr. Irene Klinger on the PAFNCDs at http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626
Going forward – key points from group exercises and plenary sessions

Develop a clear understanding of the Consortium’s role

Essential to the Consortium moving forward effectively is a clear understanding of its own role, what it can do best, and that relative to the role of the broader PAFNCDs. To this end, the Consortium needs to:

- define its terms of reference with a scope discrete to dietary salt reduction
- identify the issues that it as a multi-sector entity is best positioned to deal with
- agree on priorities
- prepare a two-year plan, reflecting the need for the Consortium to move forward gradually, taking into account the learning curve that it as an entity and its members face in terms of how to go forward
- develop process indicators by which to judge its performance
- plan a meeting schedule with a frequency that can build and support action
- secure members’ commitments to roles and responsibilities
- open its door to allies
- secure operating resources

Acknowledge the incentives

There are a number of incentives for members to participate in the Consortium:

- The aim is to create a positive environment that enables consumers to choose low/no salt/sodium food products.
- The contributions and achievements of the Consortium and its members will be acknowledged.
- The Consortium will be an open and safe platform to share best practices and lessons learned, both positive and negative.
- The Consortium will support country initiatives to reduce the overconsumption of salt.

A particular incentive for the food industry is that participation in the Consortium is visible and credible as an endorsement of social responsibility.

Clarify accountabilities

In the region, there are academics and researchers, governments, civil society/NGOs and the food industry already active in contributing to dietary salt reduction, accountable for their roles within their respective sectors (listed below). What the Consortium can strive for is to bring the sector roles into closer parallel formation to strengthen their collective impact. It also needs to clarify the nature and extent of its accountability and that of members to a common goal, and the relationship and accountability to the PAFNCDs.
Current accountabilities within each sector

**Academia**
- maintain and update the science on the impacts of high salt diets and benefits of reducing intake
- interpret and transfer the knowledge to optimize the impact on practice; use the Consortium as one platform for transfer
- identify and prioritize the research gaps
  - key gaps include food technology regarding what is feasible to lower salt/sodium content in products; baselines of salt/sodium intake, food sources, levels in foods consumed; knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of consumers; economic impacts of high salt/sodium diets and benefits from reducing intake levels; healthy intake targets by age/gender; health outcomes of high salt/sodium intake; best approaches for eg social marketing, optimal knowledge transfer of science; how to personalize the population phenomenon of high salt intake
- advocate for research funding

**NGOs/civil society**
- monitor as to whether
  - governments are following through and monitoring voluntary agreements or regulations affecting the food industry and allocating sufficient funds to public health programs targeting dietary salt reduction
  - health systems are monitoring population level blood pressure
- advocate and educate governments, the food industry, consumers regarding dietary salt reduction
- maintain transparency of own processes and involvements; self-monitor that own processes are effective
- open dialogue with the sectors being “watched”; use the Consortium as one platform
- mobilize key target groups eg mothers
- align with academia/research communities to be vehicles for knowledge transfer

**Governments**
- Surveillance to serve all stakeholders/sectors (build systems and maintain)
  - including dissemination of impacts and achievements
- Create climates for consumers to become aware of risks of high salt/sodium diets and benefits of reducing intake
- Be leaders in creating constructive and trustful environments for dialogue with multiple sectors
- Protect vulnerable populations eg regulatory approaches to limit marketing to children
- Establish healthy food procurement policies for public institutions
- Take into account the impacts or potential impacts on food quality of trade agreements/treaties
- Be transparent with rules, agreements, processes that involve the food industry eg targets and timelines for reformulations, labeling systems

**Food industry**
- do what commit to do (what is relevant to do) and report back
- share best practices within limits of confidentiality
• encourage other food industry players to also reduce salt/sodium content (supermarkets, fast food chains)

What is best dealt with by PAFNCDs

Two issues relevant but not specific to reducing dietary salt are more appropriately dealt with at the PAFNCDs level:
• harmonizing restrictions on advertising and marketing of processed foods to children
• harmonizing nutrition labels

Next steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Who takes action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft terms of reference</td>
<td>PAHO secretariat to draft; Steering Group to review and submit to Consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring broader issues to PAFNCDs</td>
<td>PAHO secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify the accountability of the Consortium</td>
<td>Steering Group in discussion with PAFNCDs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 1 – Building a new social norm for lower salt intake

Introduction to social marketing for dietary salt reduction

Presentation by Bill Smith (Making Change 4 U): *Applying a Social Marketing Framework to Salt Reduction – how the Consortium can accelerate demand* at [http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626](http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626)

Presentation by Hassan Hutchinson (Health Canada): *Canadian Social Marketing Activities* at [http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626](http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626)

Discussion of how to integrate supply and demand sides for the benefit of consumers

It is urgent that members of the Consortium working in their respective sectors help create an enabling environment for consumers to reduce their intake of salt – to become “salt smart”. Referring to the *Social Marketing Framework* prepared for the EG, the Consortium is indeed in a position to push consumer understanding.

Developing and piloting a social marketing campaign is a place to start. There are possible steps that each Consortium member can take within the campaign to accelerate and expand the reach of the social awareness already present in LAC. Testing a social marketing idea, evaluating it and rolling it out could be possible; Brazil and Argentina are examples of countries with environments conducive to a pilot
campaign, where reformulations are underway hence supply is available, and where the governments are active in raising awareness and education hence already promoting demand.

For the Consortium itself, an early success as an entity is very important; it can push other partners’ (allies) general understanding of the importance of lowering the overconsumption of salt and specific to a social marketing campaign, can potentially increase the reach of messaging. Critical to moving forward with the idea is that Consortium members mobilize their respective resources and leverage others wherever possible.

To increase its own appeal, the Consortium can rebrand itself eg call itself the SaltSmart Consortium and consider some slogans for members to promote eg “what’s your salt IQ?” or “shake the salt habit” challenge or “salt watchers”. Consistent messaging by all sectors across all markets is essential.

**Next steps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Who takes action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Bring together the best creative forces in advertising to brainstorm social marketing ideas and tactics.  
  o Up to three advertising agencies to be approached to attend pro bono a meeting where their creative people are exposed to salt reduction as a social issue and brainstorm on tactics to get the public to understand the risks of high salt diets and/or benefits of low/no salt/sodium products without demonizing salt.  
  Messages are to retain key elements of social marketing (messages are simple, fun, imply a social activity, reflect a sound public health approach). Tactics are to outline roles for all Consortium sectors. | Industry and where relevant governments to approach their advertising agencies.  
Report back to PAHO by end of September.  
If go ahead, PAHO to seek resources for accommodation at the event. |
| • Consolidate available consumer demand research and disseminate to accelerate consumer understanding.  
  o There is already some consumer research conducted by industry, NGOs and governments.  
  o Identify what has been done, what has worked, what has not worked. | Food industry, NGOs, academia to supply; PAHO to compile.  
Present at brainstorming session of advertising agencies. |
| • Publicize the event. | PAHO to secure agreement/understanding as to how the event can be publicized. |

**Day 2 – Setting sodium content standards for food products**
What's been done already


Presentation by Henri-Pierre Lenoble (Nestle): Nestle Global Commitment to Sodium Reduction at http://new.paho.org/panamericanforum/?p=626

What's needed

Important to all members of the Consortium is an understanding of the consumer environment. This includes national data on baselines on salt intake, main sources of salt and eating habits to inform impact assessment of interventions.

For the food industry, the preference is agreement that salt/sodium content in food products is to be reduced in a gradual manner manageable by the food industry and that there is information (a mapping) of the countries moving ahead in which the consumer environments are ready for low/no salt/sodium products. With the latter, the multinationals would be in a better position to encourage national food associations to participate in reformulations.

Furthermore, if countries were to harmonize the targets and timelines for the salt/sodium content of key food products, in particular same-brand products available in multiple markets, reformulations and new product development can be facilitated.

Next steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Who takes action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Convene active countries and those planning action to discuss harmonization of targets and timelines for salt/sodium content reductions.</td>
<td>PAHO to first organize a writing group to draft a statement on common salt targets (AHA has volunteered to assist). PAHO to approach relevant countries to discuss feasibility. If go ahead, PAHO to organize a meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants and sectors represented

Governments

Adriana Blanco-Metzler – Instituto Costarricense de investigación y Enseñanza en Nutrición y Salud (INCIENSA), Costa Rica

Eduardo Augusto Fernandes Nilson – Ministerio de Salud del Brasil, Brasil

Hasan Hutchinson - Health Canada

Sonia Angell – [US] National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Sebastian Laspiur – Ministerio de Salud de la Nacion, Argentina

Research/academia

Norm Campbell - Health Science Centre, University of Calgary, Canada

Ricardo Correa-Rotter – National Medical Science and Nutrition Institute Salvador Zubiran, Mexico

Colin Rehm – Center for Public Health Nutrition, University of Washington, Seattle

Civil society/non-governmental organizations

Diana Vaca McGhie – American Heart Association

Hubert Linders – Consumers International [Chile]

Beatriz Champagne – Inter American Heart Foundation

Trevor Hassell – Healthy Caribbean Coalition

Food industry

Douglas Balentine – Unilever [North America]

Elizabeth Vargas – Unilever [Latin America]

Brenda Salgado – Grupo Bimbo [Mexico]

Henrie-Pierre Lenoble – Nestle

Maria Rosa Rabanal – Kraft Foods [Argentina]
Miriam Gutierrez – Kraft Foods [Latin America]
Sarah Delea – Kraft Foods [Global]

PAHO

Branka Legetic, secretariat
Barbara Legowski (Temporary Advisor), Canada

Guest facilitators

Day 1: Bill Smith – Making Change 4 U, FHI 360, USA

Day 2: Ricardo Uauy – Instituto de Nutrición y Tecnología de los Alimentos (INTA), Chile