

# 30th PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

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### **D. PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF INDUSTRIALLY PRODUCED TRANS-FATTY ACIDS 2020-2025: MIDTERM REVIEW**

#### **Background**

1. Increased trans-fatty acid (TFA) intake is estimated to be responsible for more than 500,000 deaths per year globally, 160,000 of which occur in the Region of the Americas (1). The 57th World Health Assembly endorsed the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, committing to take action toward eliminating TFA (2); and the 13th General Programme of Work of the World Health Organization (WHO) also commits to supporting Member States in eliminating industrially-produced trans-fatty acids (IP-TFA) (3).

2. This midterm review evaluates the progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-Fatty Acids 2020-2025 (Document CD57/8) (4), which was approved by the 57th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

#### **Analysis of Progress Achieved**

3. To varying degrees, progress was made in meeting the indicators of the four strategic lines established in the plan of action. This midterm review provides an analysis of country progress according to these four strategic lines of action and the accompanying indicators, based on information derived from the WHO Global Database on the Implementation of Nutrition Action (GINA) and the Countdown to 2023: WHO report on global trans fat elimination 2021 (5, 6). The most up-to-date data from the Region of the Americas (up to 31 December 2021) (5, 6) are presented, which include information available for the following: *a*) enactment and implementation of policies for the elimination of IP-TFA; *b*) plans or mechanisms in place to ensure compliance of IP-TFA elimination policies; *c*) completion of pre-regulation and post-regulation assessments of food products regarding their content of TFA and/or saturated fats; and *d*) implementation of education and communication strategies for the general public on the negative health impacts of TFA and benefits of IP-TFA elimination policies.

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4. More countries have enacted and/or have started implementing the PAHO/WHO best practice policies for the elimination of IP-TFA, resulting in a 63% increase in the proportion of the population in the Region protected from consuming this harmful substance in 2021, compared to the baseline. The sustained efforts of PAHO to support such progress covers the entire policy cycle—including landscape analysis, policy discussion and design, implementation, enforcement, and monitoring and evaluation—as well as making technical and financial resources available for countries and territories to achieve the agreed commitments under the plan of action.

5. A summary of progress on each strategic line of action is presented below, along with the respective evaluation of the indicators, following the criteria presented in Annex B of Addendum I to the Report of the End-of-biennium Assessment of the PAHO Program and Budget 20182019/Final Report on the Implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (Document CD58/5, Add. I) (7).

***Strategic Line of Action 1: Enact regulatory policies to eliminate partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) from the food supply and/or to limit IP-TFA content to no more than 2% of total fat in all food products***

6. Some Member States have advanced in the implementation of this important line of action. In addition to Canada, Chile and the United States of America, which had already implemented best practice policies for the elimination of IP-TFA prior to the adoption of the plan of action (8-10), Brazil and Peru have also enacted and started implementing the PAHO and WHO best practice policies (11-13). Paraguay and Uruguay have enacted regulations to implement best practices in line with the plan of action, due to become fully effective by 2024 and 2022, respectively (14, 15). The Mexican senate has also approved a bill to eliminate IP-TFA from the food supply using PAHO and WHO best practices, and this is pending final approval and enactment (16). Member States, including Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), have enacted and/or implemented new labeling laws and regulations that support the enforcement of the elimination of IP-TFA (17-21).

<b>Objective 1.1: Adoption of policies to eliminate IP-TFA from the food supply</b>	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>1.1.1</b> Number of countries and territories that prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of PHO in foods for human consumption</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 2 Target (2025): 10</p>	<p>Four countries and territories prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of PHO in foods for human consumption.</p>

<b>Objective 1.1: Adoption of policies to eliminate IP-TFA from the food supply</b>	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>1.1.2</b> Number of countries and territories that prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of any food product with IP-TFA content in excess of 2% of total fat</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 4 Target (2025): 15</p>	Five countries and territories prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of any food product with IP-TFA content in excess of 2% of total fat.
<p><b>1.1.3</b> Number of countries and territories that prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of PHO in foods for human consumption and prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of any food product with IP-TFA content in excess of 2% of total fat</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 0 Target (2025): 5</p>	Two countries and territories prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of PHO in foods for human consumption and prohibit the production, importation, distribution, sale, and use of any food product with IP-TFA content in excess of 2% of total fat.
<b>Objective 1.2: Adoption of labeling policies to support enforcement of IP-TFA reduction</b>	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>1.2.1</b> Number of countries and territories that require standardized labeling of PHO in ingredient list</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 0 Target (2025): 15</p>	A total of 15 countries and territories require standardized labeling of PHO in ingredient list.
<p><b>1.2.2</b> Number of countries and territories that require standardized quantitative declaration of TFA content</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 10 Target (2025): 25</p>	A total of 16 countries and territories require standardized quantitative declaration of TFA content.
<p><b>1.2.3</b> Number of countries and territories that require front-of-package labeling that allows for quick and easy interpretation of saturated fat content</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 3 Target (2025): 15</p>	Seven countries and territories have passed front-of-package labeling regulations that allow for quick and easy interpretation of saturated fat content, and this is being implemented in five countries.
<p><b>1.2.4</b> Number of countries and territories that require front-of-package labeling that allows for quick and easy interpretation of TFA content</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 1 Target (2025): 10</p>	Four countries and territories require front-of-package labeling that allows for quick and easy interpretation of TFA content.

<b>Objective 1.2:</b> Adoption of labeling policies to support enforcement of IP-TFA reduction	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1.2.5</b> Number of countries and territories that establish requirements for the use of claims such as “trans fat free” or “reduced trans fat”  Baseline (2018): 15 Target (2025): 25	A total of 14 countries and territories establish requirements for the use of claims such as “trans fat free” or “reduced trans fat”.

***Strategic Line of Action 2: Implement IP-TFA elimination policies by means of clearly defined regulatory enforcement systems***

7. There has been little progress under this line of action, with one additional country having plans or mechanisms in place to ensure compliance consistent with the IP-TFA elimination policy they have adopted or intend to adopt. Nine countries and territories have these mechanisms or plans in place compared to eight that already had such mechanisms and plans in place prior to the adoption of the plan of action.

<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Adoption of effective implementation and enforcement policies	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>2.1.1</b> Number of countries and territories that have defined a plan to ensure compliance consistent with their adopted policy  Baseline (2018): 8 Target (2025): 25	Nine countries and territories have defined a plan to ensure compliance consistent with their adopted policy.
<b>2.1.2</b> Number of countries and territories that have data on enforcement actions  Baseline (2018): 5 Target (2025): 25	Five countries and territories have data on enforcement actions.
<b>2.1.3</b> Number of countries and territories that define and implement practices to ensure compliance of imported foods  Baseline (2018): 8 Target (2025): 25	Eight countries and territories define and implement practices to ensure compliance of imported foods.
<b>2.1.4</b> Number of countries and territories with assessment data on compliance levels for PHO or IP-TFA content  Baseline (2018): 2 Target (2025): 18	Four countries and territories have assessment data on compliance levels for PHO or IP-TFA.

***Strategic Line of Action 3: Assess progress of IP-TFA elimination policies and their impact on the food supply and on human consumption***

8. There has been some progress under this line of action, with five new countries and territories completing pre-regulation and post-regulation assessments of food products regarding their content of TFA and/or saturated fats.

<b>Objective 3.1:</b> Assessment of progress toward elimination of IP-TFA from PHO and restriction of other forms of IP-TFA in the food supply and in human consumption	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>3.1.1</b> Number of countries and territories with at least one publicly available pre-regulation national assessment of foods that are sources of IP-TFA, and if possible, the quantity of IP-TFA in these products</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 9 Target (2025): 15</p>	<p>A total of 14 countries and territories have at least one publicly available pre-regulation national assessment of foods that are sources of IP-TFA.</p>
<p><b>3.1.2</b> Number of countries and territories with at least one post-regulation national assessment of foods that are sources of IP-TFA, and if possible, the quantity of IP-TFA in these products</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 2 Target (2025): 9</p>	<p>Six countries and territories have at least one post-regulation assessment of foods that are sources of IP-TFA.</p>
<p><b>3.1.3</b> Number of countries and territories with at least one pre-regulation national assessment of saturated fat levels in products identified as significant sources of IP-TFA</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 1 Target (2025): 9</p>	<p>A total of 12 countries and territories have at least one pre-regulation national assessment of saturated fat levels in products identified as significant sources of IP-TFA.</p>
<p><b>3.1.4</b> Number of countries and territories with at least one post-regulation national assessment of saturated fat levels in products identified as significant sources of IP-TFA intake prior to regulation</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 0 Target (2025): 9</p>	<p>Six countries and territories with at least one post-regulation assessment of saturated fat levels in product identified as significant sources of IP-TFA intake prior to regulation.</p>

***Strategic Line of Action 4: Create awareness, through outreach and educational campaigns, of the negative health impacts of TFA and the health benefits to be gained from the elimination of IP-TFA, among policy-makers, producers, suppliers, and the public***

9. There has been some progress under this line of action, with 11 countries and territories implementing education and communication strategies for the general public on the negative health impacts of TFA and benefits of IP-TFA elimination policies, compared to five countries and territories in the baseline.

<b>Objective 4.1:</b> Creation of awareness of the negative health impact of TFA and the benefits of the elimination of IP-TFA	
<b>Indicator, baseline, and target</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><b>4.1.1</b> Number of countries and territories that implement education and communication strategies for the general public on the negative health impacts of TFA and benefits of the elimination policies</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 5 Target (2025): 25</p>	<p>A total of 11 countries and territories implement education and communication strategies for the general public on the negative health impacts of TFA and benefits of the elimination policies.</p>
<p><b>4.1.2</b> Number of countries and territories that implement education and communication strategies for food producers, importers, and retailers on the new policies and how to comply</p> <p>Baseline (2018): 10 Target (2025): 25</p>	<p>Five countries and territories implement education and communication strategies for food producers, importers, and retailers on the new policies and how to comply.</p>

### **Lessons Learned**

10. TFA elimination policies gained momentum after 2018, when WHO set TFA elimination as a global priority, released recommended policies and strategies, and called on countries to act. This plan of action sustained and strengthened such momentum in the Region of the Americas. The synthesis of best practices and call to action, based on experiences and successes in several pioneering countries, has helped provide the evidence underpinning policy action in the Region. The COVID-19 pandemic may have driven resources and priorities away from the elimination of IP-TFA in some countries. Conversely it may also have intensified the recognition of the need to eliminate such substance from the food supply to help protecting populations from the ongoing epidemic of non-communicable diseases, which have further aggravated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Action Needed to Improve the Situation**

11. The following actions need to be considered to improve the current situation:
  - a) Strengthen and expand technical and financial support to adopt the plan of action for developing landscape analyses and policy design, improving laboratory capacity, and monitoring and evaluating policy compliance and enforcement.
  - b) Disseminate guidance and capacity-building tools for designing and implementing the policies and actions proposed in the plan of action by means of publications, webinars, and online courses.
  - c) Support Member States in protecting the policy cycle from interference by industry and other actors whose products, practices or policies conflict with the implementation of the plan of action. This can be done by preparing technical briefs, questions and answers, and other publications with sound evidence to protect policy-making from opposing interests.
  - d) Disseminate country experiences, success stories, and best practices to help Member States learn from each other, by means of webinars and publications.
  - e) Strengthen advocacy efforts targeted at focal points at ministries of health, policy-makers, civil society, and PAHO country and sub-regional officers, by disseminating and encouraging increased uptake of the online course on the elimination of IP-TFA.
  - f) Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that health programs in each country provide continuity for policies that can contribute to the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCD), such as the elimination of IP-TA, as the epidemic of NCDs did not cease and, in addition, aggravated the risk of getting severely ill and die from COVID-19.
  - g) The adoption and/or amendment of laws and regulations by Member States needs to be accelerated in order to fulfill best practices and policies, so that the implementation of IP-TFA elimination can meet the timeline committed under the plan of action.

### **Action by the Pan American Sanitary Conference**

12. The Conference is invited to take note of this report and provide any comments it deems pertinent.

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