PRESS RELEASE

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World Obesity Federation welcomes increasing use of sugar taxes worldwide

The World Obesity Federation, an international professional society representing over 50, 000 clinicians and researchers globally, has lent support to the increasing use of sugar taxes to reduce consumption of sugary beverages and snacks.

The Federation welcomes the news that a further five countries have introduced taxes this year, bringing the total to over 30 countries worldwide. In May 2018 Peru and Ireland introduced taxation measures, following the UK's sugary drinks levy, and taxes introduced in South Africa and the Philippines earlier in 2018. (See table below).

International dietary advice recommends people should consume less than 10% of their energy from free sugars – and preferably less than 5%. For a typical adult this amounts to less than 50-60 grams of sugar a day (and preferably less than 25-30 grams). A 500ml portion of soda such as a cola or sparkling orange has 50 grams alone.

"There is good evidence now available that a soda tax can reduce consumption, particularly among those that consume these drinks most," said Professor Donna Ryan, President of the Federation. "While the beverage industry demands evidence that such taxes actually decrease obesity levels, we know that reducing consumption will have other health benefits, and that as a precautionary measure we cannot wait for more data.

"Once individuals develop obesity it is biologically very difficult to significantly reduce bodyweight," she added. "We know that reducing sugar consumption will not have an immediate effect on obesity prevalence. However, it will help to prevent new cases.

"As a global Federation, we have an obligation to ensure that the dietary profiles of countries like the USA with high obesity rates are not transmitted around the world", she said. "We need to stand firmly behind taxation of added sugars."

Tim Lobstein, World Obesity Federation Policy Director, added "Taxation of products with high sugar levels not only sends a message to the public that these products are unhealthy, it also sends a message to producers that governments are prepared to step in with regulation to protect public health. Added sugars are not a necessary part of our diet, and they cause tooth decay, weight gain and potentially contribute to all the consequences of weight gain including diabetes, heart disease and a range of cancers.

"While we welcome continued research into the impact of taxes on diet and health, we cannot afford to wait while the rates of obesity continue to rise."

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Notes

Countries introducing taxes on sugary beverages

Year	Countries
1980-2000	Norway, Samoa
2000-2010	French Polynesia, Palau
2011	Finland, Hungary
2012	France
2013	Mauritius, Tonga,
2014	Mexico, Kiribati, St Helena
2015	Chile, Vanuatu, Barbados, Dominica
2016	Belgium, Ecuador, St Vincent & Grenadines, Fiji
2017	Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Brunei, India, UAE, Thailand, Bahrain
2018 to May	Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, Ireland, Peru

Source: Adapted from: World Cancer Research Fund International. *Building momentum: lessons on implementing a robust sugar sweetened beverage tax*. London: WCRFI, 2018. https://www.wcrf.org/sites/default/files/PPA-Building-Momentum-Report.pdf

The World Obesity Federation represents professional members of the scientific, medical and research communities from over 50 regional and national obesity associations. Through our membership, we create a global community of organisations dedicated to solving the problems of obesity. Website www.worldobesity.org

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