



11 October, 2016

International Council of Beverages Associations' Response to the Technical Committee report on Fiscal Policies for the Diet and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases

Today the International Council of Beverages Associations released the following statement in response to the report of the technical committee convened by WHO, titled "Fiscal Policies for the Diet and Prevention of NCDs:"

"ICBA is disappointed that this technical committee's report advocates the discriminatory taxation solely of certain beverages as a 'solution' to the very real and complex challenge of obesity. We strongly disagree with the committee's recommendation to tax beverages, as it is an unproven idea that has not been shown to improve public health based on global experiences to date. While we support WHO's efforts to address obesity, we believe a comprehensive approach including emphasis on the whole diet is necessary to achieve a real and lasting solution. This total diet approach is supported not only by WHO's own food-based dietary guidance, but also by the McKinsey Global Institute's 2014 Report, which found that taxing beverages is one of the *least* effective interventions in reducing calories in the diet.

The committee members have lost sight of the real-world implications of these type of recommendations. In Mexico, for example, 10,000 jobs were lost and those who could least afford it carried the burden of the tax, all for a minimal decrease of fewer than 6 calories per day out of a diet of 3000 calories. And statements by the authors such as "people don't need any sugar in their diet" do not constitute helpful or real-world guidance to the millions of families trying to negotiate a healthy balance every day.

As producers of a wide variety of non-alcoholic beverages, ICBA believes that all of our products can be part of a healthy lifestyle. To that end, the global non-alcoholic beverage industry has been working with government, industry, the healthcare community, and consumers around the world to be part of the solution, and to promote healthy, balanced, and active lifestyles. ICBA and our members have, for example:

- Developed and made available more beverage options with fewer calories, including more reduced, low- and no-calorie product offerings.
- Reformulated existing beverages to significantly reduce calories.
- Further developed smaller portion size options.
- Supported the removal of soft drinks from primary schools.
- Developed and successfully implemented the 2008 ICBA Guidelines on Marketing to Children, which were updated and expanded in 2015.
- Developed ICBA Guidelines on Nutrition Labeling to aid the global non-alcoholic beverage industry in providing meaningful and understandable fact-based nutrition information.
- Created the 2013 ICBA Guidelines for the Composition, Labelling, and Responsible Marketing of Energy Drinks to help ensure such products are not marketed to children.
- Supported physical activity and nutrition programs, and research and partnerships that advance nutrition science.”

Such widespread, voluntary industry actions have reduced caloric availability and help shape consumer choice much more so than discriminatory beverage taxes. ICBA welcomes the opportunity to work with stakeholders on productive solutions to the obesity challenge, and we are committed to being part of the solution.”

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The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) is an international nongovernmental organization established in 1995 that represents the interests of the worldwide non-alcoholic beverage industry. The members of ICBA include national and regional beverage associations, as well as international beverage companies that operate in more than 200 countries and territories and produce, distribute, and sell a variety of non-alcoholic sparkling and still beverages, including soft drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, bottled waters, flavored and/or enhanced waters, ready-to-drink teas and coffees, 100% fruit or vegetable juices, nectars and juice drinks, and dairy-based beverages. For media inquiries please contact ICBA’s media line at +1 (202) 463-6739 or icba@icba-net.org.