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Applying international nutrition recommendations to the local market

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INVESTING IN PARTNERSHIPS TO STOP MALNUTRITION



What is GAIN?

- The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was created within the UN system in 2002 and became a Swiss foundation in 2005
- GAIN is driven by a vision of a world without malnutrition. It aims to reach 1 billion people through access to affordable, better quality nutritious foods
- GAIN supports public private partnership to increase access
- To nutritious foods
- GAIN-supported nutrition programs are reaching an estimated 400 million vulnerable people in 30 countries

Main topics of the presentation

- Under the topic of Nutrition and Healthy Food, we ought to refer to two sorts of international recommendations:
 - International Food Standards
 - International Nutrition Recommendations
- The focus of this presentation is on International Nutrition Recommendations but we will briefly discuss the International Food Standards also called Codex standards

Outline of the presentation

- International Food Standards
 - Brief on the Codex Alimentarius
 - Definition of Codex food standards
 - Definition of National Codex Committees
- International Nutrition Recommendations
 - Historic update
 - Examples of international nutrition recommendations
 - A new approach to developing nutrition recommendations
 - Applying international nutrition recommendations to the Middle East region

International Food Standards

- IFS are established by the Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” to:
 - Protect the **health of consumers**
 - Ensure fair practices in **food trade**
 - Assist policy makers in building sound **national food control system**
- Codex Alimentarius organization (established by FAO and WHO in 1963)
 - Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)
 - CA Executive Committee
 - CA Secretariat
 - CA Subsidiary bodies
 - <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/>

What is an International Food Standard?

Definition: An international food standard is a set of criteria that a food must meet if it is to be suitable for human consumption, such as source, composition, appearance, freshness, permissible additives, and maximum bacterial content.

Examples:

- CODEX STAN 207-1999: General Codex standard for milk powders and cream powder
- CAC/GL 4-1989: General Guidelines for the Utilization of Vegetable Protein Products (VPP) in Foods
- CAC/GL 9-1987 : General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods
- CAC/GL 24-1987: General Guidelines for Use of the Term Halal

About food standards

- Codex standards are based on the best available science provided by FAO and WHO.
- While being recommendations for voluntary application by members, Codex standards serve in many cases as a basis for national food legislation
- Codex members cover 99% of the world's population.
- Members of the WTO and signatories of the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS) and the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) are expected to participate in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

Nutrition Recommendations - General

- INR are evidence-informed recommendations prepared by well known scholars and researchers under the scientific supervision of the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Aim to promote nutritionally acceptable diets and therefore improve the nutrition of people
- Nutrition Recommendations have a long history of almost 100 years
- WHO improved the process of generating all nutrition recommendations through establishing the Guidelines Review Committee (GRC) in 2007, standard stepwise procedure, and the Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG)

Forerunner of Nutrition Recommendations

- Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs)
 - USA started in 1984 to develop official dietary advice for the public
 - In 1916, these advices were promoted to the level of guidelines for selecting foods for nutritionally satisfactory diets (RDAs)
 - These guidelines began to be developed at a global level since the 1960s through joint FAO/WHO expert consultations , took different names and expanded in scope: RDAs, Recommended Nutrient Intake (RNI), Food-based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG)...

2nd generation of Nutrition Recommendations

- To protect high risk groups from inadequate feeding and dietary practices, WHO has been issuing recommendations, guidelines and global strategies since the 1980s to date, some examples are:
 - International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes (May 1980)
 - Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategy (IYCF, 2002)
 - Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAS, 2004)
 - Feeding for children with acute severe malnutrition (in progress)
 - Recommended intake of total sugars, total fats, sodium and potassium (in progress)

Micronutrient related recommendations

- Another area of nutrition receiving increased focus of international recommendations is micronutrient deficiencies and their related supplementation and fortification strategies, some examples are:
 - Vitamin A supplementation guidelines (1997)
 - Guidelines on food fortification with micronutrients (2006)
 - Use of multiple micronutrient powders for home fortification by children 6 to 23 months of age (2011)
 - Rice fortification with iron and folic acid (in preparation)

Applying nutrition recommendations to GCC countries - DPAS

- Dramatic increase in diet-related non communicable diseases (NCD) in GCC
 - Overweight/obesity: 50 to 69% (M) and 60 to 78% (F)
 - CVD: 20% in Bahrain, 28% in Kuwait
 - Diabetes: 11% in Bahrain, 24% in Saudi Arabia
- Health cost if unattended
 - Projected demand in disease treatment will increase by 240% in the next 20 years, approx. USD 60 billion in 2025
- Adoption of DPAS strategy for prevention of NCD
 - Government and household saving of billion of dollars
 - Longer productive and good quality life

Applying nutrition recommendations to GCC countries - IYCF

- Sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices in GCC countries:
 - Exclusive breastfeeding during first 6 months very low
 - Early introduction of semi solid and solid foods
 - Inadequate complementary feeding after 6 months
- Consequences on child health and physical growth are tremendous
- Adoption of IYCF strategy will bring enormous health and economic benefits

Conclusions and Recommendations

- International Nutrition Recommendations (INR) are standard recommendations and guidelines based on the best available scientific knowledge
- The aim of INR is to improve nutritional status of population groups, particularly those at high risk of nutritional imbalance and deficiencies
- Application of INR is voluntary but highly recommended
- Some become part of national policies and action programs if endorsed at the global level, i.e. salt iodization
- Food business companies should be aware of all INR and are recommended to **comply with them**