



World Obesity Federation
Suite 406
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February 11th, 2020

To: Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President
Jorge Alcocer Varela, Health Minister
Graciela Márquez Colín, Economy Minister

Modification of the Official Mexican Standard NOM-051-SCFI/SSA1¹ on the *General Labelling Specifications for Pre-packaged Foods and Non-Alcoholic Beverages – Commercial and Health Information*

Dear President and Ministers,

Given the current obesity epidemic in Mexico, the World Obesity Federation welcomes the approval of front-of-pack (FOP) warning labels on foods high in calories, sugar, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. World Obesity was shocked by the 2018 figures that 36% of children, 41% obesity of adolescents and 75% of adults are living with overweight or obesity. The rates in Mexico are unacceptably high by global and regional standards.

Around the world, consumers are unaware of the high content of harmful ingredients that many packaged products contain, such as sugar, sodium, and fats. Front of pack labelling has been identified by the World Health Organization as an essential policy tool that can support healthy diets. Warning labels are easy to interpret, target non-core products, and help consumers make healthier decisions, while simultaneously encouraging product reformulation. FOP labelling has been recognized as a cost-effective strategy to address the incidence of obesity and related diseases.

Mexico consumes the second highest rate of ultra-processed foods in Latin America. Thus, a simple and understandable FOP label can help consumers make healthier food choices.² The label proposed by the Mexican government will allow the population to easily identify if a product is healthy or not.

On January 24th, 2020, the Mexican government approved the modification to the law NOM-051, requiring food and drink manufacturers to include FOP warning labels on their products, despite strong interference from the food industry. The World Obesity Federation congratulates the President and the Mexican government for the transparent and democratic process undergone to modify the law, where all sectors were heard and scientific evidence prevailed.

¹ https://dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5575205&fecha=11/10/2019

² Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization, "Ultra-processed food and drink products in Latin America: Sale, Sources, Nutrient Profiles and Policy Implications," Washington, DC, 2019



We commend Mexico for their work to prevent obesity, safeguard children's interests, and privilege the right to information by implementing warning labels. World Obesity welcomes this initiative and fully supports regulatory frameworks to improve food environments. The new regulations have enormous importance for the health of Mexicans and the country's efforts to improve healthy food choices among the population.

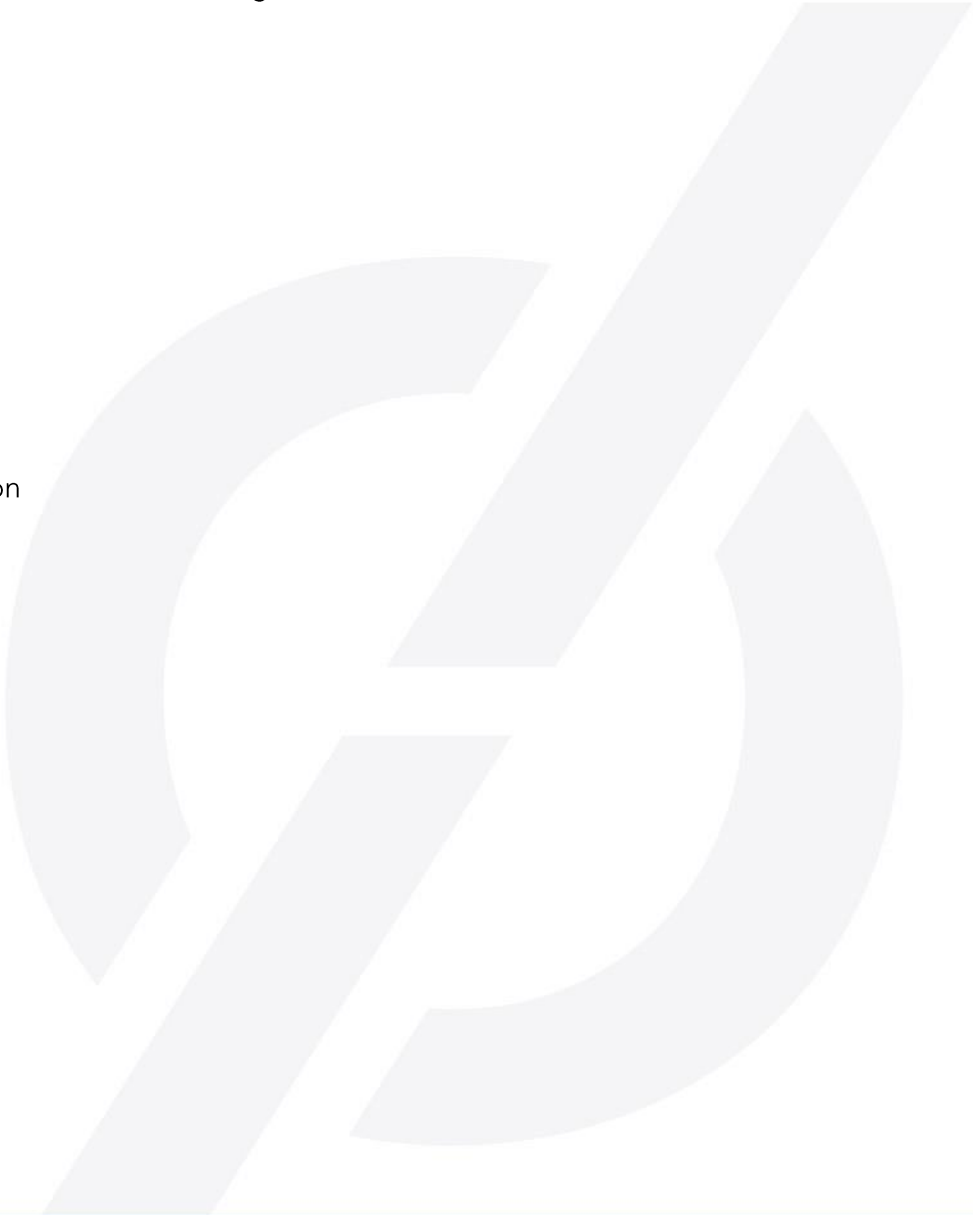
Lastly, we recognize the Pan American Health Organization's nutrient profile model, which was chosen by Mexico, as the strongest evidence-based nutritional profile to assess the quality of packaged foods and beverages.

We look forward to following the progress of this new policy in action and witnessing the positive health benefits that it will bring. We urge the government to stand strong in its policy decision, and to prioritize the health and human rights of its citizens above all else.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Johanna Ralston".

Johanna Ralston
CEO, World Obesity Federation



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