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Date: 23 January 2020

Ms Tamar Gabunia  
First Deputy Minister  
National Counterpart  
Ministry of Internally Displaced Person from the  
Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and  
Social Affairs  
144 Ak. Tsereteli Ave.  
Tbilisi 0119  
Georgia

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Dear Ms Gabunia,

### **WHO European Action Network on Reducing Marketing Pressure on Children**

The high levels of childhood obesity and the heavy burden of diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) across the WHO European Region call for broad policy responses. One important area for action is to reduce marketing pressure on children — especially the marketing of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor, foods and beverages. Such marketing influences children's knowledge, preferences, attitudes, food choices and dietary behaviours.

The establishment of a WHO European Action Network on Reducing Marketing Pressure on Children (hereafter referred to as 'the Network') in 2008 reflected the joint interest of several countries in the WHO European Region to act on this issue. The Network was established in close cooperation with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, to facilitate country exchange and collaboration on this issue. Norway initially took on the responsibility of leading and facilitating the network.

The long-term goal of the Network is to protect children's health and wellbeing as a basic human right, through sharing experiences and best practices to identify and implement specific actions which will substantially reduce the extent and impact of all marketing to children of high salt, energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and beverages.

The main aims and objectives of the Network are:

- To constitute a coalition of committed countries who can identify and demonstrate specific actions to protect children against pressure from marketing of high salt, energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and beverages.
- To share and discuss experiences in work relating to regulation of food and beverage marketing to children and ensure that information is exchanged between the network countries and available to other countries in the Region and globally, including countries in transition.
- To discuss approaches to control marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverage to children, such as statutory regulation, self-regulation, voluntary measures and co regulation and identify content and principles and contribute to international recommendations on the regulation of marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverage to children.
- To develop tools and share experiences to support monitoring of food and beverage marketing to children, as well as compliance and impact of control mechanisms in place, and when possible to identify the impact on different socio-economic groups.

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- To discuss and come up with advice on nutrient profiling/profile models as a tool to control the marketing of food and beverages.
  - To follow-up and identify how WHO HQ Recommendations and Network Code can be used to support member states in their work to protect children from food and beverage marketing.
  - To report and contribute to various international meetings such as to the World Health Assembly and Regional Committee (RC) meetings in the WHO European Region.
  - To explore and develop multisectoral competences and knowledge, and health in all policies approach, involving different disciplines and sectors, enabling the Network to achieve comprehensive solutions.

Portugal leads this network where 28 countries have joined. In addition, several organizations and institutions take part in the Network, such as WHO, European Commission, FAO, UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, Consumers International, World Obesity, UNICEF, European Heart Network and World Cancer Research Fund. Meetings of the network are also attended by external experts, temporary advisers and observers. The only condition for a country to join is that the country is working on marketing aimed at children or planning to do so, and that its representatives work for government or have been nominated by government.

I would like to explore with you the possibility of Georgia joining the European Marketing Network as an official member and participating in future meetings and activities that are organized with the full support of the WHO. Previously, Dr Robizon Tsiklauri has attended the meetings as observer and is familiar with the network.

If interested, we request that you officially nominate a focal point to represent Georgia within the network.

It would be appreciated if you would address your reply to Dr João Breda, Head WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable & *a.i.* Programme Manager Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity, Division Of Noncommunicable Disease and Health through the Life-course, (E-mail: [rodriguesdasilvabred@who.int](mailto:rodriguesdasilvabred@who.int)) with a copy to Ms Liza Villas ([villasl@who.int](mailto:villasl@who.int)).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Bente Mikkelsen

Director

Division of Noncommunicable Diseases and Promoting Health through the Life Course

**Copy for information:**

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