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A.37 Ready to Use Therapeutic Food

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) recognizes that Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is of high importance and has revolutionized and improved the treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) by shifting it from a completely inpatient-based treatment lasting 30 days to essentially outpatient-based care. It has thus facilitated decentralization and treatment in earlier phases of malnutrition, reducing the prevalence of very severe and complicated acute malnutrition.

MSF notes that UNICEF and the WHO Nutrition and Food Safety (NFS) Department have submitted a proposal to the WHO Essential Medicines List (EML) Secretariat to develop an appropriate category for therapeutic foods (section 12, page 12 of the application). This submission addresses MSF's concern regarding the risk of requirements by regulatory bodies of pharmaceutical standards for the manufacturing of RUTF – raised during previous applications for the addition of RUTF to the EML (in 2017 and 2019).

MSF therefore now supports the inclusion of RUTF in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children (EMLc), **on the condition that it will be included in the newly created category described above, and with a clear mention that Codex Alimentarius standards and guidelines apply for their manufacturing (not to be confused with pharmaceutical standards).**

In 2022, the Codex Guidelines for RUTF ([CXG 95-2022](#)) were adopted by the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU). The publication of these guidelines clarifies the regulatory status of RUTF, which is defined as *“foods for special medical purposes [...] for the dietary management of children from 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition without medical complications with appetite”*.

MSF recommends consistently use of the terminology defined by Codex – namely either “Food for Special Dietary Use”, to allow inclusion of more products in the future, or the more specific “Food for Special Medical Purpose” – for the new category to be created in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children (EMLc).

Previously, all products listed in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children were also listed in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines: if this logic is maintained, RUTF should also be added to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

In light of all these elements, MSF urges the 24th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to include RUTF in both the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children and WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. In addition, MSF recommends having a newly created category as mentioned above.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Dr. Daniela Belen Garone

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International Medical Coordinator

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