

Launch event on the WHO global sodium benchmarks
for different food categories, 5 May 2021

Overview of WHO's work on sodium reduction and Global Sodium Benchmarks for Processed Foods

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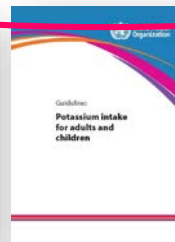
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Overview of WHO's work on sodium reduction

Background of sodium work

WHO's scientific advice & guidance on sodium intake

- ❑ 1989 WHO Study Group on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic diseases (TRS 797, 1990)
→ **< 6 g/day of salt**
- ❑ **2002** Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases (TRS 916, 2003)
→ **< 5 g/day (sodium chloride) or
< 2 g/day (sodium)
70 – 80 mmol of potassium**
- ❑ 2007 Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease: Guidelines for assessment and management of cardiovascular risk (WHO, 2007)
→ **< 5 g (90 mmol)/day of salt**
- ❑ **2012** WHO guideline on sodium and potassium intake (w/ new WHO guideline development process 2011 - 2012)
 - 6 systematic reviews including 1 re-analysis of existing Cochrane review
 - **< 2g/day sodium (< 5 g/day salt) in adults**



Sodium guideline:

http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sodium_intake/en/index.html

Potassium guideline:

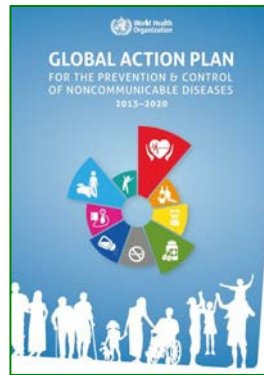
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/potassium_intake/en/index.html

Political commitment on reducing sodium intake

- 2004:** WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (WHA 57.17)
- 2011: Political Declaration of the 2nd High Level Meeting on NCDs
- 2013:** **Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013 - 2020** (adopted by WHA66 with 9 voluntary NCD global targets 2025) – Appendix 3
- Codex guideline**
- 2013:** Additional mandatory nutrients to be declared – **sodium, total sugars, SFA (TFA)**
- 2014: 2nd International Conference on Nutrition
- 2015: SDGs (i.e. Goal 2 & 3)
- 2017:** Updating of Appendix 3 – “**Best buys**” and other recommended interventions
- 2018: Political Declaration of the 3rd High Level Meeting on NCDs
- 2018:** **13th General Programme of Work (2019 – 2023)**

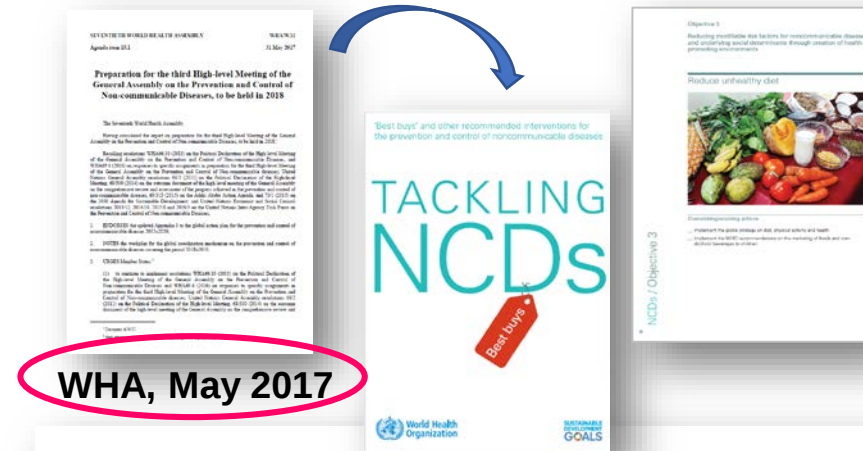
Global action to reduce sodium intake

Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 (adopted by the 66th **WHA in May 2013** together with 9 voluntary NCD Global Targets 2025)



Target = 30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt/sodium towards the WHO recommended level of less than 5g/day (2g/day sodium) for adults

Updating of Appendix 3



'Best buys' and other recommended interventions

'Best buys': effective interventions with cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) ≤ \$100 per DALY averted in LMICs	Reduce salt intake through the reformulation of food products to contain less salt and the setting of target levels for the amount of salt in foods and meals¹²
	Reduce salt intake through the establishment of a supportive environment in public institutions such as hospitals, schools, workplaces and nursing homes, to enable lower sodium options to be provided
	Reduce salt intake through a behaviour change communication and mass media campaign
	Reduce salt intake through the implementation of front-of-pack labelling ¹³
Effective interventions with CEA >\$100 per DALY averted in LMICs	Eliminate industrial trans-fats through the development of legislation to ban their use in the food chain¹³
	Reduce sugar consumption through effective taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages

Setting global sodium benchmarks for different food categories

Roundtable on noncommunicable diseases: Co-convened by WHO and Chatham House
Chatham House, London, 26 June 2018

Strengthening the role and contribution of the food & non-alcoholic beverage industry to respond to the 2011 Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs



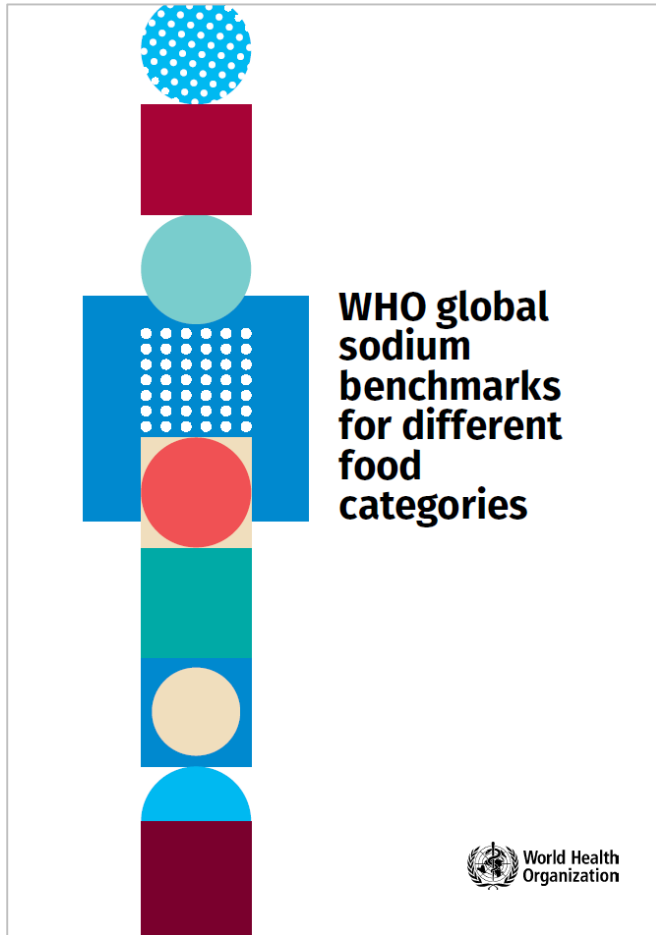
To achieve the global sodium target (30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt/sodium intake by 2025), WHO's asks to food industry were to implement:

1. **Reformulation of foods** to lower sodium concentrations

- ❑ Adopt standardised targets for sodium levels for food categories that are major contributors to sodium intake in diets and implement them by 2025 (all food industry - manufactured, retail and out of home and food services). A global common set of targets will be established, through a dialogue with WHO.

2. **Sodium content labelling**

- ❑ Provide the on-pack sodium data required by Codex (all food services and manufacturers in every jurisdiction). Food services and restaurant chains should also provide these data in store, on packaging or online.



Global Sodium Benchmarks for Processed Foods



What are the WHO global sodium benchmarks?

- The maximum sodium level that processed food can contain
- Harmonized global goal
- Guide for countries
- Basis for dialogue with industry
- Established for 64 food categories



WHO global sodium benchmarks established for 64 food categories

Savoury snacks

Crackers, savoury biscuits

Nuts, seeds and kernels

Potato, vegetable and grain chips, extruded snacks, pretzels

Breakfast cereals

Granola and cereal type bars

Nut butters

Cakes, pies, pancakes, scones, cookies, sweet biscuits

Processed fruit, vegetables and legumes (7 subcategories)

Bread and bread products
(3 subcategories)

Cheese
(8 subcategories)

Processed meat products
(6 subcategories)

Tofu and tempeh, meat analogues

Processed fish products
(3 subcategories)

Ready-made and convenience foods

Pizza, sandwiches and wraps

Pasta, noodles, and rice with sauce or seasoned

Canned foods

Soup

Ready-to-eat meals

Sauces, dips and dressings

Bouillon, soup stock

Dips, dipping sauces, emulsion-based sauces and dressings

Cooking sauces, condiments

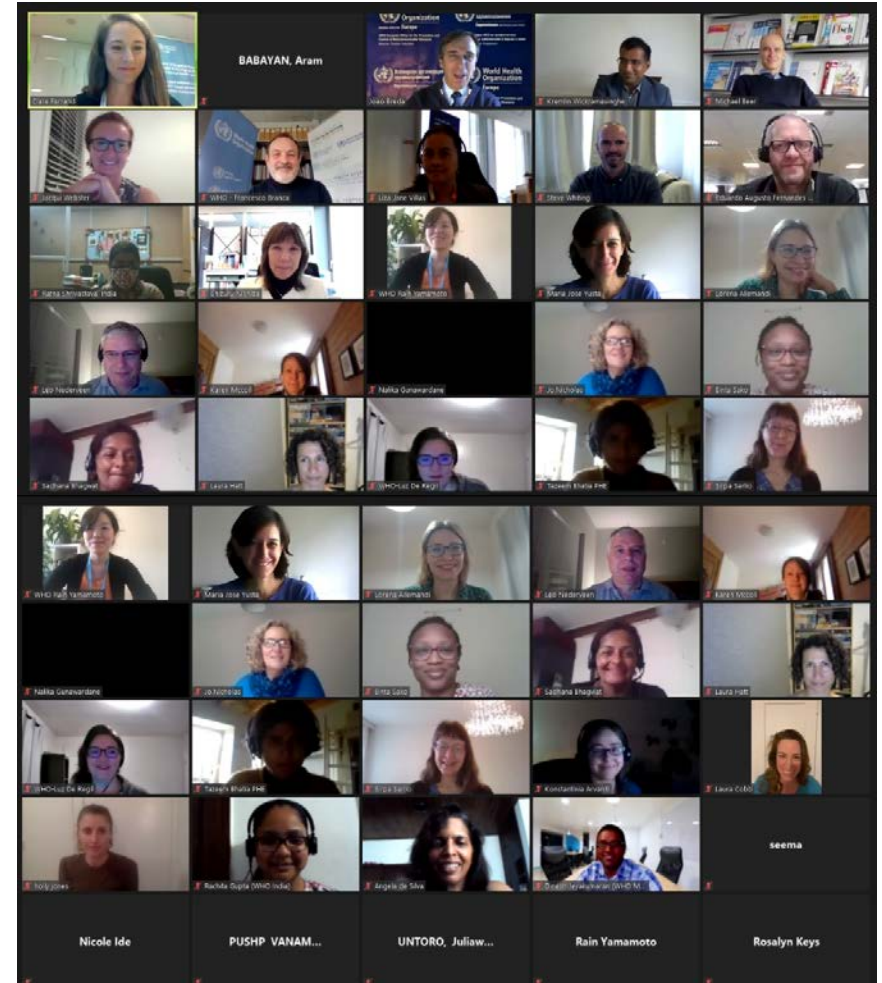
Soy sauce, other Asian-style sauces

Butter, margarine and oil-based spreads

etc....

Process for setting the global sodium benchmarks

- **Technical consultation**
 - **21-23 October, 2020 (Zoom meeting)**
- **Expert meetings and consultation**
 - **19-20 November 2020 (Zoom meeting)**
 - **26 January 2021 (Zoom meeting)**
 - **February – March 2021 (Online platform)**

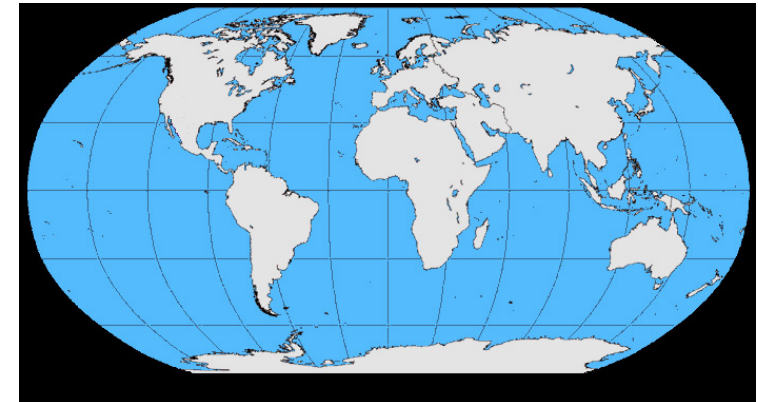


Global benchmarks are based on technical and scientific work and experiences of countries

- Data on sodium targets were collected and compiled from **41 countries, one WHO region and one WHO subregion** which had developed national and regional targets
- In principle, the lowest value for each subcategory from existing national or regional targets was chosen as a benchmark value
+ case-by-case review



- Challenging and ambitious targets
- Demonstrated feasibility



Example – Potato chips/crisps

Categorized under

- 3. Savoury snacks
 - 3c. Potato, vegetable and grain chips



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Main food category	Subcategory	Subcategory description	WHO global Sodium benchmark (mg / 100 g)
3. Savoury snacks	3a. Crackers/savoury biscuits	Plain (i.e. flavoured only with salt) or flavoured crackers, sandwich crackers, puffed cakes (e.g. cheese crackers, soda crackers and rice cakes). Includes dry breads such as Melba toast, rusks, breadsticks, pita or baguette chips, and other crisp breads. Excludes unsalted products.	600
	3b. Nuts, seeds and kernels	Popcorn, nuts, peanuts and seeds (seasoned with salt or flavour). Excludes unsalted products.	280
	3c. Potato, vegetable and grain chips	Chips made of potato, vegetables and grains (e.g. corn, wheat, multigrain and rice). Includes all flavours (including salt and vinegar flavours). Includes both reformed chips/crisps and sliced chips.	500
	3d. Extruded snacks	Sheeted, reformed, puffed or pelleted snacks made from starch-rich materials (e.g. corn, maize, wheat, rice or potato flour) or legume flours. Includes all flavours (including salt and vinegar flavours). Excludes chips (see 3c) and pretzels (3e).	520
	3e. Pretzels	Salted hard pretzels. Includes sweet and savoury flavoured, filled and unfilled pretzel snacks (e.g. chocolate covered pretzels and pretzels filled with cheese).	760

WHO global sodium benchmark for potato chips
= 500 mg sodium / 100g product

WHO global sodium benchmark for potato chips = **500 mg sodium / 100g product**

Brand A – Sea salt potato chips



SEA SALT POTATO CHIPS			
SERVINGS PER PACKAGE: (7)			
SERVING SIZE: 25g	PER SERVE	% DAILY INTAKE* PER SERVING	PER 100g
ENERGY	575kJ	7%	2300kJ
PROTEIN	1.5g	3%	5.9g
- GLUTEN	NOT DETECTED		NOT DETECTED
FAT - TOTAL	8.9g	13%	35.7g
- SATURATED	4.1g	17%	16.3g
- TRANS	0.0g		0.0g
- POLYUNSATURATED	0.9g		3.5g
- MONOUNSATURATED	4.0g		15.8g
CHOLESTEROL	0.0mg		0.0mg
CARBOHYDRATE - TOTAL	13.0g	4%	51.8g
- SUGARS	0.1g	0.1%	0.5g
DIETARY FIBRE	0.7g	2%	2.8g
SODIUM	161mg	7%	644mg
POTASSIUM	345mg		1380mg

> 500mg



WHO global sodium benchmark for potato chips = **500 mg sodium / 100g product**

Brand B – Sea salted potato chips



typische waarden / Valores Típicos / Valori medi	Per 100g	Per 100g
Energy / Energie / Valor Energético / Energia / Energi	1990kJ / 476kcal	
Fat / Matières grasses / Fett / Vetten / Grasas / Grassi	23%	
Saturates / dont saturées / davon gesättigte Fettsäuren / waarvan verzadigde vetzuren / de las cuales saturadas / di cui acidi grassi saturi	2.4g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides / Kohlenhydrate / Koolhydraten / Hidratos de carbono / Carboidrati	59.9g	
Sugars / dont sucres / davon Zucker / waarvan suikers / de los cuales azúcares / di cui zuccheri	2.0g	
Protein / Protéines / Eiweiß / Eiwitten / Proteínas / Proteine	5.2g	
Salt / Sel / Salz / Zout / Sal / Sale	1.0g	

Sodium = 1000mg / 2.5 = **400mg** < 500mg



How was the benchmark value determined?

Main food category	Subcategory	Subcategory description	Global benchmark (mg / 100 g)	Lowest target on which the benchmark is based
3. Savoury snacks	3c. Potato, vegetable and grain chips	Chips made of potato, vegetables and grains (e.g. corn, wheat, multigrain and rice). Includes all flavours (including salt and vinegar flavours). Includes both reformed chips/crisps and sliced chips.	500	Australia: Potato snacks, 500 mg

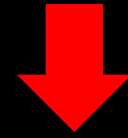
National targets for 3c. Potato, vegetable and grain chips

	Country	Country description	National target (mg/100g)
1	Australia	Potato snacks	500
2	Colombia	Flavored chips (Papas saborizadas)	501
3	New Zealand	Potato & other vegetable crisps	520
4	Brazil	French fries - Potato chips (Batata frita/palha)	529
5	PAHO	Snacks	530
6	South Africa	Flavoured potato crisps, excluding salt-and-vinegar flavoured potato crisps	550
6	UK	Standard potato crisps	550
8	Fiji	Corn chips	560
8	Fiji	Other: dalo, cassava chips etc	560
8	Netherlands	Chips - sliced potato: potato chips paprika	560
8	Slovenia	Salty snacks	560
8	WPRO	Corn chips	560
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

The Australian target at 500 mg/100g was the **lowest** of all the national targets collected

There were 32 national targets in total for this subcategory

Sodium content should be equally low everywhere



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



≤500 mg/100g



Australia:

WHO global benchmark = 500 mg/100g product

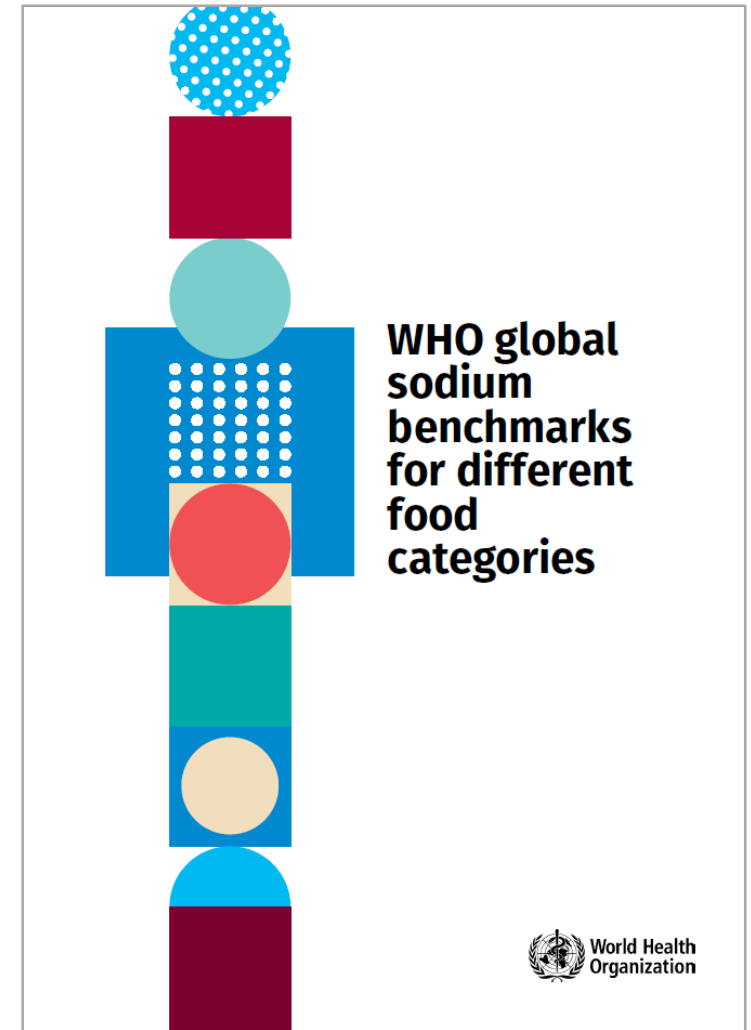


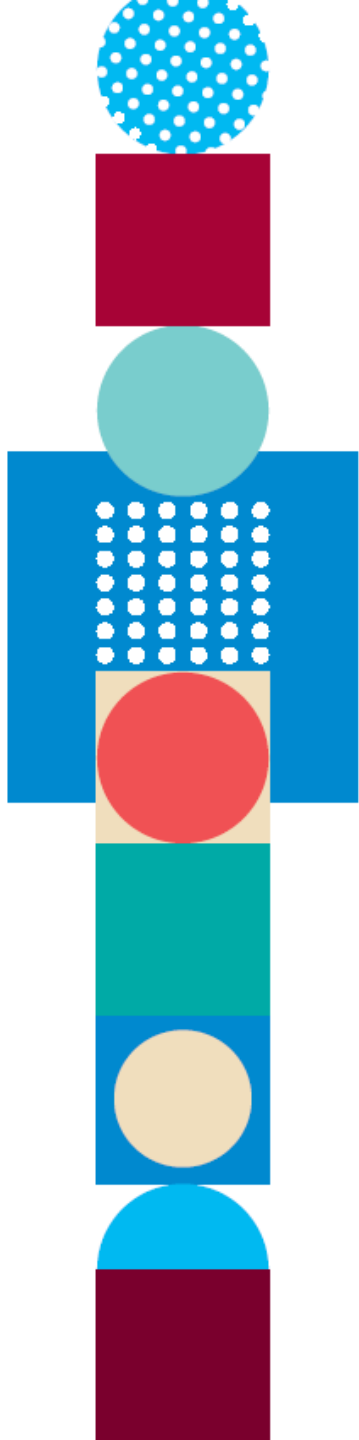
Subcategory	Global benchmark (mg / 100g)	Country with the lowest target on which benchmark is based
Cookies/sweet biscuits	265	Brazil/AMRO
Cakes and sponges	205	Brazil
Crackers/savoury biscuits	600	Paraguay
Nuts, seeds and kernels	280	Colombia
Minimally processed breakfast cereals	100	United States
Highly processed breakfast cereals	280	Slovenia
Fresh, unripened cheese	190	United Kingdom
Soft to medium ripened cheese	520	Canada
Semi-hard ripened cheese	625	United States
Processed cheese	720	United Kingdom
Canned foods	225	United Kingdom
Pasta, noodles, and rice or grains with sauce or seasoned (dry-mix)	770	United States
Pizza and pizza snacks	450	Australia
Leavened bread	330	Hungary
Flatbreads	320	Qatar
Canned fish	360	Fiji
Pickled vegetables	550	United States
Tofu and tempeh	280	Canada
Meat analogues	250	United Kingdom
Condiments	650	United Kingdom

etc....

Summary

- WHO global sodium benchmarks are the maximum sodium levels that processed food can contain, established for 64 food categories.
- It is a harmonized global goal, which serves as a guide for countries and provides a basis for dialogue with industry.
- They are based on technical and scientific work and experiences of countries, designed to be challenging and ambitious, but demonstrated to be feasible.
- Will enable all countries to benefit from foods lower in sodium and the corresponding health benefits, if implemented.





WHO expectation

- We expect:
 - o Countries to adopt the global sodium benchmarks to reduce their populations' sodium intake.
 - o Industry to implement the global sodium benchmarks to cut sodium levels in processed foods.
 - o Civil society and consumers to advocate and demand for lower sodium in processed foods.

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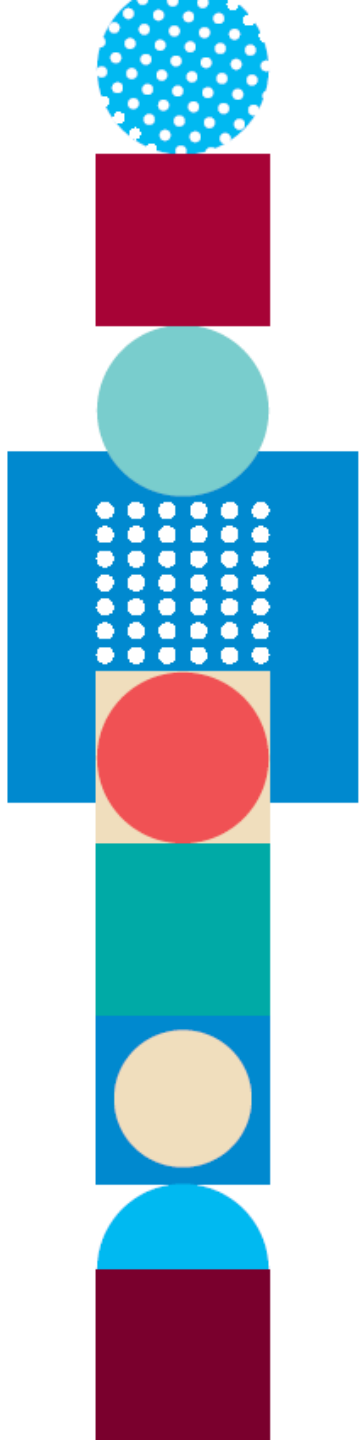
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Thank you!