

NEWS RELEASE

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Global Anti-Obesity Strategy is Too Lite on Corporations

Today, the World Health Organization released the latest draft of its global strategy on diet, physical activity and health. Following are comments from Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert, on the WHO draft global strategy.

“The WHO global strategy diet, physical activity and health is far weaker than it should be. The advertising and junk food industries should be happy because it doesn’t encourage countries to ban junk food advertising to children. The sugar industry should be thrilled because it doesn’t specifically recommend that free sugars should be less than 10% of daily calorie intake. Television companies will cheer because it doesn’t mention the major role of television in the promotion of obesity. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo will be overjoyed that it doesn’t contain specific recommendations to reduce consumption of soda pop. The WHO caved into the US and the junk food industry by deleting support for policies that promote the production and marketing of fruit, vegetables and legumes.”

”That said, the WHO global strategy still contains many positive aspects. For example, it does say that ‘food and beverage advertisements should not exploit children's inexperience or credulity’ and that ‘messages that encourage unhealthy dietary practices should be discouraged.’ It says that ‘Member States need to take healthy nutrition into account in their agricultural policies.’ And it urges governments to ‘limit the availability of products high in salt, sugar and fats’ in schools.”

“The World Health Assembly should strengthen and approve the global strategy next month.”