WORKSHOP REPORT

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON FOOD FORTIFICATION IN TAJIKISTAN: FROM POLICY TO HEALTH IMPACT

01-02 July 2015, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

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WORKSHOP REPORT

National Workshop on Food Fortification in Tajikistan: From Policy to Health Impact

Jointly Organized by the:

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION
UNICEF TAJIKISTAN

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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>ANSA</td>
<td>Afghan National Standards Authority</td>
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<td>CAR</td>
<td>Central Asian Republics</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>DRS</td>
<td>Districts of Republican Subordination</td>
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<td>GoRT</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of Tajikistan</td>
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<td>FACT</td>
<td>Fortification Assessment Coverage Tool</td>
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<td>GAIN</td>
<td>Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBAO</td>
<td>Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICN2</td>
<td>The Second International Conference on Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>Iron Deficiency Anemia</td>
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<td>MCH</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Health Department</td>
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<td>MoHSPPP</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>MQSUN</td>
<td>Maximizing the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Program</td>
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<td>MI</td>
<td>Micronutrient Initiative</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>MT</td>
<td>Metric ton</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTD</td>
<td>Neural Tube Defect</td>
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<td>PHC</td>
<td>Primary health care</td>
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<td>QA/QC</td>
<td>Quality Assurance and Quality Control</td>
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<td>RT</td>
<td>Republic of Tajikistan</td>
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<td>RTK</td>
<td>Rapid Test Kits</td>
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<td>SBN</td>
<td>SUN Business Network</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>State Sanitary Epidemiological Service</td>
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<td>SI</td>
<td>Salt Iodine</td>
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<td>SUN</td>
<td>Scaling Up Nutrition</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations Agency</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USD</td>
<td>US dollar</td>
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<td>USI</td>
<td>Universal Salt Iodization</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Program</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WRA</td>
<td>Women of Reproductive Age</td>
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<td>VAT</td>
<td>Value Added Tax</td>
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Micronutrient deficiency is a substantial challenge for many countries in the region, including Tajikistan, and can have severe consequences for both the health of individuals and the prosperity of the country. The Micronutrient Status Survey 2009 found that 53% of children and 58.6% of women in Tajikistan were iodine deficient. Iodine deficiency disorders are the leading causes of preventable intellectual disability and other growth and development difficulties in Tajikistan. Furthermore, the same survey reported that almost a third of children aged between 6-59 months suffer from anemia, with almost 40% of children in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). These types of health problems have serious consequences for a country’s long-term social and economic development.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Tajikistan in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and UNICEF hosted a two-day National Workshop on Food Fortification: From Policy to Health Impact to advance ongoing fortification advocacy efforts, identify champions, strengthen partner relationships and build coalitions.

Bringing together leading policymakers, industry representatives, and national and international partners, the workshop highlighted and explored how wheat flour and salt fortification can bridge Tajikistan’s micronutrient gap and reduce the high levels of micronutrient malnutrition currently prevalent within the country.

The main objective of the national workshop was to share and discuss successes and challenges in the implementation of food fortification programs in order to enhance the delivery and maximize its effectiveness of such programs. The program was divided into two key areas: wheat flour fortification and universal salt iodization. The program of the workshop included presentations from local and international experts as well as discussions on critical issues during breakout sessions.

At the end of Day 1, Dr. Jafarov, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population presented the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification. All key stakeholders signed The Declaration, demonstrating their commitment to bring food fortification to Tajikistan to improve the nutritional status of the Tajik population.
BACKGROUND

Wheat Flour Fortification
Despite significant advances in the reduction of undernutrition, the population of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) is still affected by iron deficiency anemia (IDA), neural tube defects (NTD) and other conditions caused by micronutrient deficiencies. Fortification of wheat flour can be a cost efficient mechanism for providing adequate levels of nutrients in the diets and help offset some of the micronutrient deficiencies for the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Despite previous efforts to introduce wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan in the late 1990s and again from 2002-2007, there is currently no national flour fortification program in Tajikistan. GAIN has been working in Tajikistan since 2013 and working closely with the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (GoRT) to provide access to fortified foods to the people of Tajikistan. This workshop is a follow-on event to the GAIN-led roundtable held in May 2014.

This new project, starting in late 2014, Tajikistan Large-Scale Food Fortification Field Support funded by USAID is aimed at helping the GoRT to establish a sustainable national wheat flour fortification program. The project aims at building an enabling environment for wheat flour fortification by:

- assessing needs of the country to start fortification programs;
- developing a national plan for flour fortification in Tajikistan;
- working with Government to build commitment for wheat flour fortification and to position the intervention as a public health priority;
- supporting the Scaling up Nutrition Movement (SUN) and engaging business sector in Tajikistan, and,
- providing support in accessing to premix resources and building technical capacity of the mills and regulatory agencies.

Recent efforts in Tajikistan have included work on the national fortification action plan on wheat flour fortification, the Tajikistan birth defects registry, and advocacy efforts with parliamentarians that require further stakeholder discussions and coordination of efforts. Additionally, as part of the USAID/GAIN’s regional food fortification project, a series of Tajikistan-specific and regional assessments has been conducted, including:

- An in-depth wheat milling industry assessment in Tajikistan,
- A regional analysis of wheat flour fortification legislation and policies,
- A regional analysis of wheat and wheat flour trade flows, and
- An analysis of successes and failures of previous fortification efforts in the region.

Salt Iodization
In 1996, a National Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD) Prevention Program focusing mainly on Universal Salt Iodization (USI) was developed by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Energy and Industry with support from UNICEF and others. A hallmark in progress towards USI came in
2002 when the GoRT passed a national law requiring that all edible salt, both domestically produced and imported, be iodized. The fortification level for iodine in salt (40±15 µg/g) was laid down in the National Standard of Tajikistan (ST RT 1000-2004).

Despite substantial improvements over the past 20 years, progress towards establishing USI in Tajikistan has not been fully successful. A 2009 National Micronutrient Nutrition Survey found that iodine deficiency affected more than 58 percent of women and almost 53 percent of children nationally. Regional variation was shown to be wide. Low levels of urine iodine were found in almost 85 percent of women in Khatlon, the province with the highest IDD prevalence, while around 2 percent% of women in Sughd. Barriers still persist to scale up adequate iodization of salt, such as USI legislation and regulatory enforcement, supply of potassium iodate supply, marketing of iodized salt, etc.

The USAID/GAIN Universal Salt Iodization project started in 2012 addressed some of these barriers. Specifically the project worked to improve the availability of adequately iodized salt in retail outlets in Khatlon Province; improving basic salt iodization quality assurance capacity of salt producers and inspection agencies; and generating community awareness about salt iodization and iodine deficiency disorders. To achieve these objectives GAIN partnered with UNICEF to replicate a highly effective community mobilization and awareness creation strategy using Rapid Test Kits (RTKs) that was successfully implemented in Kyrgyzstan resulting in displacement of non-iodized salt from the market. This effort is complemented by support to salt producers within Khatlon to build quality assurance and control capacity and enable access to affordable fortificants for salt iodization.

Objectives

The main objective of the national workshop was to share and discuss successes and challenges in the implementation of food fortification programs and to enhance the delivery and maximize effectiveness. Specific objectives of this workshop included to:

- share the latest international evidence on the benefits and impact of food fortification;
- present key findings and recommendations of recent national and regional wheat flour fortification-related analyses;
- strengthen SUN efforts in Tajikistan and help in initiating the SUN Business Network;
- introduce the concept of regional harmonization of fortification standards, regulations and laws;
- provide a platform for discussion of various legal and technical issues related to food fortification as well as stakeholder needs, priorities, concerns, and,
- identify solutions and develop recommendations for advancing the food fortification agenda in Tajikistan and in the region.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the workshop were as follows:
improved understanding of the benefit and impact of food fortification;
shared knowledge of the recent assessment findings and the national fortification efforts;
better perception of the key stakeholders about regional harmonization initiative and the associated benefits and challenges;
stronger national fortification partnership, and,
gathered recommendations and next steps for advancing food fortification efforts in the country and in the region.

Summary of the Workshop Program

The program was divided into two key areas: wheat flour fortification and universal salt iodization. Below is the summary of the workshop program (Please see Appendix 1 for the detailed program of the workshop):

Overview of Day 1:
Welcoming remarks
Plenary Sessions/Presentations:
• Status of nutrition in Tajikistan
• Government policies on health and nutrition
• Introducing the Scaling up Nutrition Movement, achievement and results in Tajikistan.
• Discuss on benefits of food fortification and global evidence on impact.
• Previous fortification initiatives in Tajikistan, presenting the successes achieved and challenges encountered.
• The state of the wheat flour milling industry in Tajikistan.
• Regional analysis of legislation and policy.
• Lessons from the past food fortification programs.
• Regional harmonization.
Break out Session
Signing of the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification
Closing remarks.

Overview of Day 2:
Welcoming Remarks
Presentations
• SUN Movement Business Network and the role of the private sector in nutrition.
• Salt iodization - Global Perspectives.
• Salt iodization efforts in Tajikistan, its implementation, successes and challenges.
• Results of household coverage assessment.
Break out discussion groups
Closing remarks.
Participants

The workshop had a high level of attendance. In total, there were 80 participants at the workshop with all key stakeholders represented. Day one of the workshop was devoted to the wheat flour fortification program in Tajikistan and key stakeholders from the Republic of Tajikistan Parliament, various ministries and Government agencies, academia, international NGOs and local CSOs. Day two was devoted to salt iodization efforts in the country and individuals and organizations working in this area came together for this workshop. A representative from the national radio and TV was also invited to the workshop.

Parliament of RT:
Majlisi Namoyandagoni Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan

Ministries and State Committees:

Food Fortification Regulatory Control Agencies:
Agency of Standardization, Accreditation, Metrology and Trade Inspection under the Government of Tajikistan, State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service

Liaison Entities:
Tajikistan Wheat Corporation (Korporatsiya Ghalla), Food Corporation (Korporatsiya Khurokvory)

Research Institutes/ Academia:
The Institute of Preventative Medicine, the Scientific-Research Institute “Ghizo”, the State Clinical Research Centre for Pediatrics and Children’s Surgery, the Center for Endocrinology of Dushanbe

Donor Organizations:
Unites States Agency for International Development – Tajikistan,

UN Agencies:
UNICEF Tajikistan, World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP)

International Civil Society Organizations:
Save the Children, Mercy Corps

Local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):
Consumer’ Union of Tajikistan, Tajikistan National Chamber of Commerce, Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Nissojon, and NGO Nuri Salomati

Private Sector:
Wheat Flour Filling Companies, Salt Producing Companies, Soft Drinks Company

Consumer Associations:
Chair of Consumer Union
DAY 1 – WHEAT FLOUR FORTIFICATION

Opening Remarks and Key Note Speakers

The workshop was formally inaugurated by Dr. Jafarov, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population of Tajikistan.

Dr. Jafarov welcomed all participants and highlighted the importance of the workshop that will contribute to the improvement of women and children’s health and nutritional status. The Deputy Minister highlighted that wheat flour consumption is very high in Tajikistan, and thus flour fortification is an effective food vehicle to reach population and reduce micronutrient burden.

The first welcoming keynote speech was followed by the welcoming speech from USAID, UNICEF, a Member of the Parliament of Tajikistan and GAIN. Each keynote speaker highlighted the importance of addressing micronutrient deficiencies and encouraged participants to build partnerships and join efforts to solve these issues.

Mrs. McDonald, USAID Tajikistan Mission Director, welcomed participants and highlighted that food fortification is considered as the most cost-effective intervention and may even go unnoticed by most consumers. Mrs. McDonald emphasized that it would only cost 33 dirhams per person per year to fortify flour with vitamins and minerals. Thus, food fortification is an effective and cost-effective intervention, with the potential to reach large population groups. She encouraged the Government of Tajikistan to take immediate action to bring forth flour fortification into practice. As Tajikistan has become a member of the Scale-Up-Nutrition Movement in 2013, Mrs. McDonald encouraged discussions between public and private sector representatives’ to move the SUN agenda forward. She acknowledged the studies conducted by GAIN with support from USAID in the field of wheat flour production and food fortification legislation in Tajikistan, analysis of trade of wheat flour in the region and successes and failures encountered in the programs. The USAID Tajikistan Mission Director provided a framework for the meeting and encouraged participants to actively participate and discuss how food fortification could be implemented and increased in Tajikistan and in the region. She also shared her hope to sign and commit to the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification to improve the health of the people of Tajikistan.

Mrs. Elmi, UNICEF Tajikistan Office Representative, underlined that this 2-day workshop is not only a journey for the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, GAIN and USAID, but is a journey for all participants, representing private sector and NGOs. UNICEF Office Representative highlighted that a multi-sectoral approach is required in addressing the issues of malnutrition. She pointed out that UNICEF is working towards making nutrition one of the priorities of the National
Development Strategy along with food security. Mrs. Elmi stressed the importance of developing a joint plan on food fortification and commitment to the Dushanbe Declaration and measuring results of these efforts together.

Mrs. Gulbakhor Ashurova, Member of Parliament (MP) of Tajikistan, highlighted the importance of food fortification and making sure that the population of Tajikistan’s health is ensured. The MP explained the issues related to accepting flour fortification law and stressed the importance of the signing and commitment to the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification.

Mr. Greg Garrett, Director of Large Scale Food Fortification at GAIN, informed participants that GAIN has been working in Tajikistan and with the Government of Tajikistan since 2013. Wheat flour consumption is one of the highest in the world and as such, wheat flour fortification is a suitable food vehicle for fortification. Wheat flour fortification will reduce iron deficiency anemia and birth defects that are common in Tajikistan, and will increase the gross domestic product (GDP) and general performance of the population. Mr. Garrett emphasized that GAIN will continue its collaboration and partnership with the GoRT in addressing public health needs, in particular, the most vulnerable groups of society such as women and children.

Presentations

**Tajikistan: The Status of Nutrition and Government Policies on Health and Nutrition**

Dr. Navruz Jafarov, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population of the RT

The latest surveys in Tajikistan have highlighted the high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, with almost a third of children aged between 6-59 months suffering from anemia. This number rises to almost 40% in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), in one of the provinces of Tajikistan. One of the reasons listed for the high prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (WRA) is a lack of understanding of nutritious food. The local food product contains high levels of iron, however, food practices, such as the high consumption of tea, prevents adequate absorption of iron. Thus, supplements should be distributed and are required.

In Tajikistan, more than half of the children aged 6-59 months are iodine deficient (52.9%), with the provinces of Khatlon and Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS) being most affected (70%). One of the reasons listed is that some private salt producers don’t follow the salt iodization regulations and provide population with non-iodized salt. Improved situation is observed in Sougd Province.

Some of the achievements highlighted to date, include:

- Coordination Council on Mothers and Children’s Health and Nutrition has been established in 2010 and has remained operational under the RT Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population.
- 58 out of 72 maternity hospitals certified as “baby-friendly”, where around 96.2% of deliveries take place in these hospitals.
- Strengthened capacity of key national and *oblast* (or provincial) experts on micronutrient supplementation through home based fortification of complementary food for children of 6-23 months of age.
- Around 1,350,000 children aged 6-59 months have received Vitamin A twice a year.
- Over 1,000 severely malnourished children have received treatment in line with the international protocols.
- A comprehensive salt situation analysis has been conducted.
- Community mobilization and capacity building of the producers, regulatory and inspection agencies, and local authorities toward Universal Salt Iodization have been funded and conducted.

**Scaling up Nutrition Movement: Achievements and Results in Tajikistan**

**Dr. Rahmatulloev Sherali, Head of Maternity and Child Health Department, MoHSP**

The Government of Tajikistan joined the SUN Movement in September 2013 to show its commitment to scaling up nutrition for its citizens. Tajikistan took several important steps upon joining the SUN Movement: the 1st Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection was appointed as the SUN Focal Point responsible for the coordination of domestic and external assistance. A multi-sectoral Coordination Council and a Technical Working Group were set up.

A meeting was held bringing key stakeholders from all relevant sectors such as agriculture, food security, health, social protection, education, development partners and civil society representatives. The meeting reviewed the SUN indicators and progress achieved. It was agreed that the Common Results Framework and a Plan of Integrated Interventions on Nutrition should be developed and implemented.

Following a request of technical assistance in the development of the Common Results Framework, MQSUN (Maximizing the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Program), and a consulting group of top-ranked specialists were appointed to assist Tajikistan in 2014. As a result MQSUN conducted an analytical review and made recommendations for the technical report that provides a conceptual clarity of priorities for the framework were developed.

SUN Tajikistan representatives took part in the Movement Global Gathering, which provided a platform to share experience and knowledge. It was agreed to track public resources in the area of nutrition. Active participation of Ministry of Finance and UNICEF has enabled the present three-staged approach budgeting. First self-assessment of SUN progress in the country was conducted. However, despite the progress in introducing the SUN movement in Tajikistan nutritional problems still persist.

The following actions were identified:
- strengthen inter-sectoral coordination and involve other stakeholders;
- include reduction of inadequate nutrition as a key indicator of poverty reduction in Tajikistan;
- align the Common Results Framework with the new National Development Strategy for 2016-2030;
- indicate Nutrition and Food Security as a separate goals in the National Development Strategy 2016-2030;
- scale up cost effective interventions in nutrition;
- set up investment in nutrition, and
- Strengthen nutrition monitoring and awareness raising.

The presenter highlighted the importance of prevention of the diseases that are consequences of micronutrient deficiencies.

**Why Fortify? Benefits and Evidence of Impact**

*Greg Garrett, Director of Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN*

Food fortification is a cost effective approach to reduce micronutrient deficiencies as a part of a food-based approach when and where existing food supplies and limited access fail to provide adequate levels of respective nutrients in the diet. In such cases, food fortification reinforces and supports on-going nutrition improvement programs and should be regarded as a part of a broader, integrated approach to prevent micronutrient malnutrition, thereby complementing other approaches to improve micronutrient status. Therefore, it is import to identify the need, articulate appropriate objective, and establish potential to benefit.

The impact of fortification with folic acid, iron and iodine has been shown across a number of studies. Indeed, the number of iodine deficient countries has significantly decreased from 54 to 32 in 2011. Additionally, the number of countries currently enforcing mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid has significantly increased, with impressive results, leading to high prevention rates of neural tube defects. Food fortification has been shown to be a cost-effective way of reducing micronutrient deficiencies. Indeed in Tajikistan, GAIN’s initial costing analysis shows that fortification of wheat flour would far outweigh the marginal increase in cost and would result in an increase of 0.38% of the current 50kg bag of wheat flour.

GAIN has developed the FACT tool (Fortification Assessment Coverage Tool). This tool aims to demonstrate impact by documenting successes and identifying potential program blockages related to coverage and utilization of programs. This survey tool can be used to classify at-risk population subgroups and to assess coverage and consumption patterns in targeted (point-of-use) and large-scale (staple) fortification programs. In 2014, GAIN conducted a FACT survey in Senegal and found high coverage of both flour and oil vehicles among WRA, with 85% and 73% of WRA consuming fortifiable flour and oil respectively at least once a week. Importantly, when we assessed the coverage of these vehicles by poverty status, about 56% of poor WRA consumers were consuming fortifiable flour and oil products at least once a week.

**Fortification Initiative in Tajikistan: Past, Present and Future**

*Dr. Vokhidov, Deputy Director of State Clinical Research Centre for Pediatry and Children’s Surgery, Former Project Coordinator for the Regional Food Fortification Project funded by ADB*

The goal of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) project was to improve the nutritional status of women and children from low-income families by increasing access to fortified salt and flour. The project piloted some activities in 7 pilot large milling companies and in 10 small milling companies.
22 ton of premix was purchased resulting in 146,000 tons of flour to be fortified. Feeders were purchased and installed in all pilot mills. A Vitamin - Mineral Premix “KAP - Complex” (developed by Kazakh Academy of Nutrition) has been identified and approved.

Lessons learned: Fortification of food products is the most cost-effective approach to prevent micronutrient inadequacy. The milling industry has a unique opportunity to partner with the Government, international organizations and other partners to make flour fortification happen and they have the potential to make a significant contribution to public health.

Next steps: To increase the effectiveness of the fortification program there is a need to adopt mandatory law for the fortification of wheat flour. Healthcare workers, policy - makers, universities and communities should be mobilized for the successful integration of the program.

State of the Wheat Flour Milling Industry in Tajikistan
Mr. Philip Randall, International Consultant, GAIN
The milling industry plays a crucial role in the fortification process. Wheat occupies about 40% of total arable land. The daily per capita consumption is circa 360 g/day. Following a recent milling industry assessment, Sougd Province was found to be the main wheat flour-producing region in Tajikistan. Wheat grain is imported from Kazakhstan into Sougd Province where milling occurs and is then transported to the rest of the country. Tajiks prefer Kazakh grain and flour. There are 30 mills with at least 15 with a high capacity (>120 MT/day).

In 2010, the Government reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) for imported wheat from 18% to 10%. Thus, the Government made a political shift in the flour milling industry to develop domestic flour milling industry. Wheat flour fortification programs should be nation-wide, not just targeting the specific region. Every milling company should feel that they are the part of the program. Having fortified and non-fortified flour in the market is not advisable, this can confuse the consumer. The pilot programs tend to be subsidized, and are thus not sustainable in the long run. Fortification isn’t only a health issues, but should be considered by all relevant ministries.

Regional Harmonization: Experience of West Africa
Mr. Quentin Johnson, International Consultant, GAIN
Regional harmonization helps serve the needs and goals of Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. In 2007, several partners including GAIN, Helen Keller International, Micronutrient Initiative (MI), and the West African Heath Organization began supporting a multi-country food fortification program in the eight West African countries with a regional harmonization component. The approach included developing regional strategies for government awareness, laws, regulations, inspection system, testing capacity, certification, standards, education, training, human resources, information technology, and public outreach. A harmonization framework was developed which included country assessments, integration of findings into a regional report, national and regional discussions of the report, development of regional standards and regulations, their adoption by a regional council, followed by adoption by individual countries and designing an implementation program. The regional harmonization efforts in West Africa led to increased trade between the 8 West African countries.
Analysis of Fortification Legislation and Policies in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Mr. Anton Luchitsky, Regional Project Manager, GAIN

The main objective of this analysis was to analyze the situation with such food fortification, identify potential barriers, legislative gaps and loopholes as well as to recommend improvements in legislation and policy. This presentation informed workshop participants about identified gaps and opportunities in the fortification legislation and policies specific to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

To advance wheat flour fortification, all countries need to have: mandatory laws for production and import; a regulatory framework including fortification standards; an effective system for quality monitoring and law enforcement; an entity at government level to provide strategic direction for the program.

Lessons from the Past Food Fortification Programs in the Central Asian Region

Dr Vokhidov, Deputy Director of State Clinical Research Centre for Pediatrics and Children’s Surgery

Micronutrient deficiencies have been prevalent across Central Asia Republics since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. A series of regional projects have attempted to reduce the burden of micronutrient deficiencies.

1. UNICEF regional salt iodization projects during the 1990s.
2. UNICEF wheat flour fortification projects during the 1990s in Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan.
3. ADB and JICA regional salt and wheat flour fortification initiatives in 2001 and 2005.
5. 2008 GAIN/UNICEF social mobilization project to scale up wheat flour fortification in Kazakhstan.

Following the completion of these projects around food fortification, GAIN undertook an analysis and evaluation of efforts. This led to a series of lessons learned which are helpful in designing and implementing food fortification programs. The 6 main lessons learned are as follows: 1) understanding the nature of regional trade; 2) constantly renewing political support; 3) building regulatory and enforcement capacity; 4) engaging with stakeholders from multiple sectors; 5) incentivizing industrial partners; and 6) communicating to create demand.

National Action Plan on Wheat Flour Fortification

Dr. Navruz Jafarov, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population of RT

The National Action Plan on Wheat Flour Fortification was developed by a group of experts representing the Ministry of Health Social Protection of Population (MoHSPP), the State Sanitary Epidemiological Service (SES), Institute of Preventive Medicine, Association of Pediatricians, and Wheat Corporation. The primary beneficiaries are children under five years of age (1,150,000), and WRA (2,110,000 million people). The aim for developing the national action plan was to establish a sustainable flour fortification program in Tajikistan. To achieve this, the following should be accomplished:
• establish a national flour fortification advisory council to lead the program;
• ratify mandatory fortification law
• secure Government funding to enforce law and donor funding to support other aspects of the program (to be gradually reduced over a period of several years)
• establish a system for regulatory monitoring and enforcement for both domestically produced and imported flour and strengthen enforcing capabilities of Government;
• establish a sustainable supply of premix through a revolving fund or other mechanism
• provide training to flour millers in fortification and QC procedures
• optimize taxation and customs rules to stimulate local production of fortified flour and import of critical materials
• educate consumers, millers, health practitioners and other stakeholders on fortification benefits, and
• develop information management system to support the program (supply chain, production, compliance monitoring).

National Flour Fortification Advisory Council, consisting from representatives of MOHSP, SES, Institute of Preventative Medicine, Tojikstandart agency, and Ghalla (Wheat) Corporation.

The adoption of the legislation on wheat flour fortification is priority number one. The plan suggests a phased approach to fortification: 25% in Year 1, and 100% by Year 4. Fundraising will be required for external support during the initial years. The price of the end product for the consumer should not change. Improved legislation, increased production of fortified flour, increased stakeholder knowledge and consumer demand, smarter programming will increase consumption of fortified wheat flour and improved nutritional status of the Tajik population.

**Break Out Sessions**

**Group 1. Mandatory Legislation and Proposed Changes in the Policy and Regulatory Framework**

**Facilitators: Dr. Ashurova, Parliament of Tajikistan and Mrs. Panagides, GAIN Geneva**

Firstly, participants discussed whether mandatory legislation is required to implement fortified flour in Tajikistan. All participants have agreed that mandatory legislation is required. They highlighted that previously there was no government support for flour fortification due to the economic crisis and due to the fear that flour fortification would increase the price of flour.

It was advised to organize a roundtable including Ministry of Finance to have their support and gain their recognition of the importance of flour fortification for the country. Some participants had advised to have a one-week session to discuss the law. Others underlined the importance of sharing the information with the consumers on what the government is going to do. It was also noted that population isn't informed sufficiently, therefore, information should be shared on the public health issues, and to raise awareness on the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies in the country and to raise awareness on the need for fortification as an effective solution to tackle micronutrient deficiencies. This will enable the program to mobilize key stakeholders to ensure that mandatory law is ratified by Parliament and to avoid misconceptions when implemented.
If the legislation is lobbied correctly, it could be adopted by December 2015, however, there are several bottlenecks identified towards the ratification of the law. Resources required for the ratification need to be identified. For instance, if the Government is going to pay or subsidize, then resource allocation should be provided for to cover these costs. The Government has made commitments for SUN, but donors should also be involved to share the costs. The Wheat Corporation would be the best agency to promote the legislation.

As the SES and Tojikstandart Agency are to monitor the implementation of food fortification, they would need capacity building. The GoRT would also require support towards the regional harmonization of standards.

**Group 2. Supply of Premix**

**Facilitators: Mr. Randall, International Consultant**

After adoption of mandatory legislation on wheat flour fortification, supply of premix will become one of the priority tasks. After the completion of ADB project, supplies of premix were stopped. It is important to ensure that millers have sustainable access to certified premix. Also, the GoRT will need to review at VAT and customs fee reduction or elimination for import of premix into the country to support millers and increase access to fortified flour.

There were long discussions on the development of revolving funds, particularly around which organization would be responsible for monitoring of premix stocks. The group was not able to reach a consensus on which organization should lead the development of the premix revolving fund and this will require further discussion.

**Group 3. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC)**

**Facilitators: Mr. Johnson, International Consultant and Mr. Kandakov, SES**

To improve QA/QC of fortified flour, appropriate frameworks should be developed for mandatory legislation and for regulatory monitoring. Tojikstandart agency and SES are responsible for QA/QC. They should have fair practice and be transparent. The inspectors aren’t sufficiently trained to ensure compliance. Therefore, there is a need to increase laboratory capacity for the QA/QC both in terms of equipment and training. The laboratory technical assistance would improve their quality of work and improve compliance. The use of handheld devices - iChecks should be encouraged. It was advised to have iChecks for better QA/QC.

**Group 4. Demand Creation for Fortified Foods**

**Facilitators: Dr. Mukhtorova, Republican Healthy Life Style Centre and Ms. Manus, GAIN London**

The participants first of all highlighted the huge gap in legislation and implementation. One of the applied approaches to raise social marketing of fortified foods advised was through printed
materials and posters, however, it was also noted that people in Tajikistan don’t tend to read, therefore, other approaches should be applied.

TV ads were considered one of the best ways to reach remote areas and those who don’t tend to read. Talk shows on local TV were also advised as another approach. It was discussed that the approaches might be effective, but expensive. To address social marketing of fortified foods some new mechanisms were also suggested. It could be done through the involvement of health workers, related to family medicine, who are responsible for the home visits. Educating health workers on the benefits of food fortification would influence not only them, but also the households they are responsible for. This might also reduce the resistance of population to fortified foods. All interventions should address and focus not only the adults, but children as well, as they can influence generations further.

A logo may not contribute to increasing public awareness, according to participants. Food certification and food safety should be considered. Communities should be mobilized, through community gathering and parental meetings and parents and teachers association.

**Day 1. Conclusions and Next Steps**

At the end of Day 1 of the national workshop, Dr. Jafarov, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population presented the Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification (Appendix 2) and encouraged all key stakeholders, including Ministry of Health, milling companies, SES, Tojikistandart agency and all other participants, to sign it by demonstrating their commitment to food fortification, particularly wheat flour fortification as a key strategy to combat micronutrient malnutrition in Tajikistan.
The following action points were proposed by the Government of Tajikistan to advance fortification of wheat flour as the result of the national workshop:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Action Points</th>
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| Mandatory legislation for wheat flour fortification                    | o MoHSPP to prepare a letter of justification to the relevant ministries.  
|                                                                        | o Organize a special meeting with Ministry of Finance to advocate for flour fortification  
|                                                                        | o Organize sessions with key stakeholders to discuss the law  
|                                                                        | o Submit the results of a cross-sectoral discussion of the draft of the law on wheat flour fortification to the GoRT in the form of a letter of appeal.  
|                                                                        | o Conduct a cost benefit analysis workshop with involvement of GoRT.  |
| Strengthen regulatory and quality control agencies                      | o Strengthen and build capacity of quality control and agencies                                                                                                                                             |
| Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification                              | o Send Dushanbe Declaration adopted at the National Workshop to the GoRT and Tajikistan Parliament                                                                                                       |
| Establishment of the national registry for birth defects                | o MoHSPP issue an order of establishment of the national registry for birth defects and creation of approved National Flour Fortification Advisory Council members.  
|                                                                        | o Seek additional funding for this activity.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Establishment of the National Flour Fortification Advisory Council      | o Reinforce the group by bringing together technical experts from Legislation national center, Ministry of Justice, etc.  
|                                                                        | o Continue the National Flour Fortification Advisory Council, which will discuss the follow-up to a national seminar and start promoting a healthy diet and the prevention of anemia.  
|                                                                        | o The existing Expert National Flour Fortification Advisory Council should meet regularly and become Permanent National Flour Fortification Advisory Council.  
|                                                                        | o Approve the Terms of Reference for the National Flour Fortification Advisory Council.                                                                                                                                 |
| Implementation of the recommended concept for Tajikistan National Plan on Wheat Flour Fortification | o Review the national plan with the National Flour Fortification Advisory Council and prioritize activities for 2016.  
|                                                                        | o Inclusion of the fortification agenda into the National Development Strategy for 2016 to 2030.  
|                                                                        | o Assist the GoRT in endorsing the National Plan with appropriate decrees and decision mechanisms.                                                                                                                                 |
Incentive creation for producers

- Involve producers at the preliminary stage and hold a consultative meeting with the producers of wheat flour.
- To incentivize producers, discussions are needed with the GoRT to review tax reductions for premix, including premix into the list of essential drugs to reduce VAT on imports.

Creation of consumer demand

- Creation of TV programs to address the lack of knowledge about fortified foods.
- Develop activities towards changing population’s behavior towards diet.
Presentations

On Day 2, the presentations and discussions were focused on the SUN Movement Business Network with the role of the private sector in nutrition and the Universal Salt Iodization program.

**Business Network under SUN Movement and the Role of the Private Sector in Improving Nutrition and Food Fortification, Greg Garrett, Director of Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN**

Scaling-Up Nutrition, or SUN, is a unique Movement founded on the principle that all people have a right to food and good nutrition. It unites people—from governments, civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses and researchers—in a collective effort to improve nutrition. Within the SUN Movement, national leaders are prioritizing efforts to address malnutrition. Countries put the right policies in place, collaborating with partners to implement programs with shared nutrition goals, and mobilizing resources to effectively scale up nutrition, with a core focus on empowering women.

The SUN Networks are at the forefront of catalyzing momentum amongst the SUN Movement. At the country level, members of the SUN networks support their respective national governments by participating in multi-stakeholder platforms and aligning their activities behind national objectives through common results frameworks. The main purpose of the networks at the global level (Civil Society, Donor, United Nations System and Business) is to increase the capacity of their members for supporting SUN countries as they scale up nutrition.

**The Role of Private Sector in Improving Nutrition**

The public sector is responsible for targeted provision of supplements and services to the poorest-of-the-poor.

- The private sector is where most people access most products and services to meet most of their needs. Including private sector in the SUN efforts acknowledges how people live and offers major opportunities to improve nutrition sustainably and at scale.
- Private sector engagement in Scaling Up Nutrition will bring specific capabilities and expertise and innovative approaches and technologies to nutrition efforts.
- Responsible market-based approaches are needed to provide sustained access to effective and affordable nutritious products and services at scale to entire populations. Appropriate consumer education and promotion of nutritious products will help caretakers make informed choices when providing nutrition, hygiene, and health to their families.

It is the first, and the only, coordinated global platform for business commitments to nutrition where 51 companies have made commitments to scaling up nutrition and aiming to involve 99 companies.
by the end of 2015. It is mostly multinationals, mostly food sector, but with growing number of ICT companies and national companies from SUN countries.

Global and Region Progress in Elimination of Iodine Deficiency in Nutrition of Different Population Groups (1993-2014)

Presenter: Dr. Safina Adbulloeva, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF Tajikistan

Iodine deficiency is widespread, while salt iodization costs just $0.05/person per year. **$100 million USD is therefore sufficient to eliminate iodine deficiency in 1.8 billion people.**

The number of iodine deficient countries has decreased in the last 2 decades from 110 in 1990 to 31 in 2011. Universal salt iodization remains the key strategy for the prevention of iodine deficiency among populations. Salt iodization must cover salt used both in households and in the food processing industry.

According to WHO, excessive salt intake (more than 5 g/day) exists in 181 out of 184 countries across the globe for which direct or estimated data on sodium/salt intake are available. Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia consume high intakes of salt per day, estimated at between 10-15g per day and more. There is no evidence that the use of iodized salt instead of none fortified salt increases its consumption. It will be possible to increase iodine content in salt as its consumption decreases.

There has been a steady progress through Central Asia with increased iodine intake.

- **Adequate iodine nutrition**: Turkmenistan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan
- **Significant progress achieved**: Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Moldova
- **Slow progress**: Russia and Ukraine.

Salt Iodization Efforts in Tajikistan and Implementation of RTK Strategy

Dr. Azonov Jahon, Former Program Coordinator, Nutrition Institute

It is known that micronutrient deficiency diseases are found in almost every country. Tajikistan faces almost all types of deficiencies (in particular Vitamin A, iron, folic acid, and iodine). Iodine deficiency prevalence increased during the 90s due to civil war which resulted in no salt production.

In collaboration with UNICEF, the national government salt iodization program started in Tajikistan. The first steps of the program had focused on providing salt producers with necessary equipment and potassium iodate. During the Soviet Union there was a highly functional centralized system of potassium iodate supply but this system is no longer functional. Additionally, the laboratories of SES were equipped and the regulatory documents were developed leading to the ratification of Law on Salt Iodization in 2002. Public awareness activities were also carried out in collaboration with NGOs.

Between 2013 to 2015, UNICEF and GAIN in collaboration with the Institute of Nutrition implemented a Universal Salt Iodization Project that deployed a new approach using “Rapid Test Kits”. The Rapid Test Kits (RTKs) strategy has been successfully scaled up in Kyrgyzstan resulting in displacement of non-iodized salt from the market. The project worked with existing community
structures, government agencies and nutrition institutes as well as supported salt producers within Khatlon to build quality assurance and control capacity and enable access to affordable fortificants for salt iodization. The project completed the following activities:

- **60 lab workers** of the salt producing companies, representatives of inspection agencies of Tajikistan improved their capacity on quality assurance and quality control through various trainings.
- Promoted the agenda of availability of adequately iodized salt through several round-table discussions on the critical issues around salt iodization.
- Trained 1,100 village heads and local self-government (*Jamoat*) representatives in 26 districts and towns of Khatlon Province and introduced RTK strategy. As a result, **14,000 test kits** and **2,000 copies** of the RT law “on Iodized salt” were distributed.
- Provided **12 sets of lab equipment for titration** to conduct quantitative chemical analysis to the salt producers and inspection agencies.
- Trained more than 100 district-level primary health care workers of Khatlon province on generating community awareness about salt iodization and iodine deficiency disorders.
- Distributed **38,500 test kits** among government agencies, village and community heads, shop owners, primary health care workers and households.

**Findings of the End-line Assessment on Household Coverage with Iodized Salt in Khatlon Province**  
**Presenter: Dr. Guli Bogodyrova, Consultant on Health Care System of Health Policy**  
**Department of the Institute of Preventative Medicine**

The end-line assessment on household coverage with iodized salt in Khatlon Province was designed to assess the progress made by the USI project by measuring the change in the public’s knowledge, salt purchase practices, population coverage with iodized salt and quality of iodized salt in the households. The objective of the assessment was to answer the following questions:

- how accessible is iodized salt for population of Khatlon *Oblast*?
- what is the quality of iodized salt used by households in Khatlon *Oblast*?
- have rapid test kits (RTKs) been made available to all heads of jamoats (municipalities or communes) and mahallas (formal councils runs by committee and regulated by the Government) and retailers in Khatlon *Oblast*?
- what are the main reasons/barriers preventing universal salt iodization in Khatlon *Oblast*?

The survey covered 600 households in 24 Districts of Khatlon Oblast, community leaders (heads of jamoats and mahallas) and shop owners from 60 clusters. The salt samples collected in households were sent for lab analysis in the testing laboratory. Of the 600 salt samples collected, only 2 samples (0.3%) were found to meet the iodine standard; 594 (99.0%) of the salt samples were inadequately iodized. The overall mean iodine content of all samples was very low at 3.37 mg/kg. The proportion of salt samples with “zero” level of iodine decreased to 5% in 2015 from 21% in 2013. There was no significant difference in salt iodine (SI) content between rural and urban households.

SI content was significantly higher in those households where the respondents knew about iodized salt. There was no statistically significant difference in SI content between households where salt had been (or not) tested with RTK by health professionals.
RTK strategy contributed to raising public awareness, resulting in an increased demand for iodized salt among retail chains and consumers but it did not affect the quality (iodine content) of supplied salt. Salt producers may have simply added a small amount of potassium iodate to salt in the effort that it would stain blue or purple on RTK testing.

Salt producers in Khatlon oblast are still experiencing problems with the supply of potassium iodate in needed quantities and for a reasonable price. This problem could not be solved by another set of communication activities, supply of analytical equipment to producers and SES, and/or by the training of lab personnel. Future progress depends on the establishment (introduction and training) of a rigorous internal quality management system by the major salt producers and the external quality control authorities Tojikstandart and SES.

During the survey, some jamoat representatives and sellers also came up with recommendations of their own:

- conduct training events at the local level for heads of jamoats and mahallas, shop sellers and PHC staff;
- raise public awareness through social mobilization;
- distribute RTKs to enable salt testing for iodine; and
- regulatory authorities should focus more on monitoring of salt producing facilities that supply salt to the national market.

**Break Out Sessions**

**Group 1 - Supply of Potassium Iodate**

*Facilitator: Mr. Greg Garrett, GAIN Geneva*

Presently, each company is procuring the potassium iodate on an individual basis. This leads to an ineffective supply of potassium iodate with higher final prices. Taxation and duties should be reduced or removed completely so as to promote the use of potassium iodate. Proposed solutions in the short term were for salt companies to share data on their annual potassium iodate demand, which will allow a competitive tendering process to be initiated, so as to get the best competitive rate for salt companies. Identification of the leading organization responsible for the supply of potassium iodate at the national level is required. The salt companies already had started doing that. GAIN could do the competitive tendering process, but in the long term, it is very important that the national pertinent agency to coordinate the supply is identified. Several options are possible: 1) one of the salt companies could take a lead, 2) the Salt Association could be reinstated; 3) a company could be identified that is already distributing potassium iodate. There was also a robust discussion on the next order. In total the companies want to order around 600 kilograms of supply which is lower than the quantity of salt produced. Based on an estimated order of 600 kilograms including the taxation and the duties the total cost would be estimated at 24,000 USD. GAIN is going to work on this, as it is a key driver, to make sure what the demand is and where to find a good quality suppliers. One participant highlighted that in Tajikistan there is an identified norm of 40 grams of potassium iodate per ton of salt.
Greg discussed that salt producers should be paying 50% of costs for potassium iodate upfront and the rest upon arrival of shipment. Therefore it is important to ensure that accurate orders for potassium iodate are made dependent on production and requirement, to avoid excess order of potassium iodate that may not be used before expiry. Exact orders will need to be made with formal signed agreements. The shelf life for potassium iodate is 2 years.

**Group 2 – Quality Assurance/Quality Control**

**Facilitators: Mr. Philip Randall, International Consultant and Mrs. Saidova, Tojikstandart Agency**

The participants highlighted that one of the main reasons for a lack of adequate iodization of salt is that producers aren’t following the technologies of iodization properly. Therefore, the quantity of iodine is low in the salt. Another reason that was mentioned is the lack of knowledge of specialists on iodization technology.

To ensure quality and compliance with the standards several items will be required, such as:

- quality potassium iodate supply;
- new equipment for producers;
- efforts to stop non-compliant competition;
- decreased costs of transport;
- awareness raising among consumers and sellers on iodine salt storage; and,
- better control from relevant government bodies.

**Group 3- Demand Creation**

**Facilitators: Ms. Caroline Manus, GAIN London**

The participants of the group discussed that the significance of a logo is not fully understood by Tajiks. A logo might become significant if it is a well-known one. It should be nice, with the logo being shaped like an animal. Government should provide/advertise for one logo and standardize it.

The importance of raising public awareness around salt iodization through mass media and creating social ads was discussed. Considering that this approach is costly for the salt producers, government should pay or support the media coverage of iodized salt, as televised media covers highly remote areas. Another approach to raise awareness would be via government clinics, health care services, radio, schools and teachers and religious leaders. This could be done through studying cases of children with iodine deficiency disorders. Involving elders in the community could be another approach suggested by the group. The message should be tailored in accordance with the target age group.

The barriers identified towards behavior change is that salt found in retail outlets is marketed as iodized when in fact it is not. Producers should be fined for non-compliance so as to reassure customers. Blind testing of salt at the markets and publishing or sharing of the results nationally could be another way to address these barriers. Alternative testing methods could be introduced to quantify the level of iodine in salt, instead of the current positive/negative testing methods. Price will make a difference; price of iodized salt has to be the same as non-iodized salt at the market level.
Economic benefits of using iodized salt should be investigated and results should be disseminated more widely. Reaching out to journalists could also be a novel way of appropriately raising awareness depending on the audience. Training should be provided to journalists so that they are able to effectively disseminate information on food fortification.

**Day 2. Conclusions and Next Steps**

The participants highlighted the importance and usefulness of the two days sessions. UNICEF’s representative thanked all participants for fruitful discussions and confirmed that UNICEF would continue providing support to further the food fortification agenda and she encouraged everyone to actively participate.

Director Large Scale Fortification Food from GAIN highlighted that Tajikistan is a new country for GAIN with lots of opportunities to improve the health of the population, through iodized salt and through flour fortification. Political will and industry’s involvement are crucial to improve the health and nutritional status of mothers and their children. He thanked all participants for their participation in this 2-day workshop and looks forward to a continued collaboration. USAID’s representative also thanked all participants for this very informative workshop. Food fortification is the most cost-effective approach to improve the health of the Tajik population and this required joint collaboration and efforts.

Government representatives expressed their appreciation for the organization of this workshop and have expressed their keen interest for future collaboration to bring fortified foods to the Tajik population.

A representative of the local and TV station interviewed several key stakeholders and a press release was published at the end of the workshop (Appendix 3).

**Next Steps**

Overall, the RTK strategy improve knowledge and increased overall demand for iodized salt, but this did not improve the quality and thus the content of iodine in salt. Thus, it is recommended that future activities should focus on supporting salt producers to establish effective internal quality management system. Salt producers should have easy, guaranteed quality, and fairly priced access to KIO3 supplies. Following the establishment of reliable national potassium iodate stocks, focus should then be directed towards strengthening of inspection procedures by Tojikstandard agency and/or SES officials.
## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Workshop Program

**TAJIKISTAN WORKSHOP ON FOOD FORTIFICATION: FROM FOOD POLICY TO HEALTH IMPACT**  
*July 1-2, 2015, Sheraton, Dushanbe*

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<tr>
<td>8.30-9.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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</table>
| 9.00-9.20      | Welcoming remarks | Dr. Jafarov Navruz, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population  
Mrs. Kathleen McDonald, USAID Tajikistan, Mission Director  
Mrs. Lucia Elmi, UNICEF Representative  
Mr. Greg Garrett, Director, Large Scale Fortification Food, GAIN |
| 9.20-9.30      | Workshop Objectives and Overview | Dr. Sherali Rahmatulloev, Head of MCH Department, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population (MoHSP) |

**Sessions on Nutrition and SUN Movement**

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<th>Facilitators</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>Status of Nutrition in Tajikistan and Government policies on health and nutrition</td>
<td>Dr. Sherali Rahmatulloev, Head of Maternal and Child Health Department, MoHSP</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00-10.30</td>
<td>Scaling up Nutrition Movement, Achievements and results in Tajikistan</td>
<td>Rahmatulloev, MCH Department</td>
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<td>10.30-10.45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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**Food Fortification**

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<tr>
<th>Scheduled Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.45-11.15</td>
<td>Why Fortify, Benefits, Global Evidence on its impact</td>
<td>Mr. Greg Garrett, Director, Large Scale Fortification Food, GAIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.15-11.45</td>
<td>Fortification Initiatives in Tajikistan: Past, Present, and Future</td>
<td>Dr. Vohidov, Deputy Director, State Clinical Research Centre For Pediatrics and Children’s Surgery, MOHSP</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45-12.15</td>
<td>State of the flour milling industry in</td>
<td>Dr. Philip Randall, Consultant, GAIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Presenter/ Speakers</td>
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<td>12.15-13.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch Break</strong></td>
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<td>13.00-13.30</td>
<td><strong>Regional Harmonization</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Anton Luchitsky, Regional Manager- Central Asia, GAIN</td>
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<td>13.30-14.00</td>
<td>Regional analysis of legislation and policy</td>
<td>Mr. Anton Luchitsky, Regional Manager- Central Asia, GAIN</td>
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<td>14:00-15.00</td>
<td>Lessons from past food fortification programs</td>
<td>Dr. Vohidov, Deputy Director, State Clinical Research Centre for Paediatrics and Children’s Surgery, MOHSP</td>
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<td>15.00-15.15</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Dr. Quentin Johnson, Consultant, GAIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.15-15.45</td>
<td><strong>Break out Discussion Groups:</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Ashurova, MP Mrs.Dora Panagides, Senior Manager, Food Fortification Initiative, GAIN</td>
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<td>Group 1: Mandatory legislation and proposed changes in the policy and regulatory framework</td>
<td>Dr. Ashurova, MP Mrs.Dora Panagides, Senior Manager, Food Fortification Initiative, GAIN</td>
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<td>Group 2: Supply of premix</td>
<td>Dr. Philip Randall, Consultant, GAIN</td>
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<td>Group 3: Quality Assurance /Quality Control</td>
<td>Dr. Quentin Johnson, Consultant, GAIN</td>
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<td>Group 4: Demand Creation for fortified foods</td>
<td>Dr. Mukhtorova Parvina, Director of Republican Healthy Life Style Center Mr. Khabibov, Executive Director of the Consumer’s Union</td>
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<td>Group 5: Management of information systems on fortification and micronutrient deficiencies, birth defects registry</td>
<td>Dr. Vohidov, Deputy Director, State Clinical Research Centre for Paediatrics and Children’s Surgery, MOHSPPP</td>
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<td>Group 6: Tajikistan SUN Business Network; Production, challenges and bottlenecks</td>
<td>Dr. Sherali Rahmatulloev, Head of MCH Department, MoHSSPP Mr. Greg Garrett, Director Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN</td>
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<td>15.45-16.45</td>
<td>Presentation of groups</td>
<td>Dr. Quentin Johnson, Consultant, GAIN</td>
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<td>16.45-17.15</td>
<td>How do we go forward: National Plan for Flour Fortification</td>
<td>Dr. Jafarov Navruz, Deputy Minister, MoHSSPP</td>
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<td>17.15-17.30</td>
<td>Day 1 Concluding Remarks and Adoption of Dushanbe Declaration</td>
<td>Dr. Jafarov Navruz, Deputy Minister, MoHSSPP</td>
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**Day 2: July 2, 2015**

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<td>9.00-9.15</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>Dr. Jafarov Navruz, Deputy Minister, MoHSPPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.15-9.30</td>
<td>Recap from previous day</td>
<td>Dr. Vohidov, Deputy Director, State Clinical Research Centre for Paediatrics and Children’s Surgery, MOHSPPP</td>
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<td>9.30-10.00</td>
<td>SUN Movement Business Network and the role of the private sector in nutrition and fortification</td>
<td>Dr. Sherali Rahmatulloev, Head of MCH Department, MoHSPPP Mr. Greg Garrett, Director Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN</td>
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<td><strong>Salt Iodization</strong></td>
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<td>10.00-10.30</td>
<td>Salt Iodization- Global Perspective</td>
<td>Dr. Safina Abdulloeva, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF</td>
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<td>10.30-10.45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45-11.15</td>
<td>Salt Iodization Efforts in Tajikistan and Implementation of RTK Strategy</td>
<td>Dr. Jahon Azonov, Program Coordinator, Nutrition Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.15-12.00</td>
<td>Results of Household Coverage Assessment</td>
<td>Dr. Guli Bogodyrova, Consultant on Health Care System of Health Policy Department of Institute of Preventative Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.00-12.30</td>
<td>Q&amp;A - with future recommendations</td>
<td>Dr. Sherali Rahmatulloev, Head of MCH Department, MoHSPPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30-13.15</td>
<td><strong>Lunch Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.15-13.45</td>
<td><strong>Group Discussions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group 1: Supply of potassium iodate</td>
<td>Mr. Greg Garrett, Director Large Scale Food Fortification, GAIN Mr. Saidov, Deputy Head of Food Corporation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group 2: QA/QC</td>
<td>Dr. Philip Randall, Consultant, GAIN Mrs. Saidova, Deputy Director, Agency for Standardization, Certification, Metrology, Accreditation and Trade Inspection under the Government of Tajikistan Mr. Kandakov, Head of Food Safety Control Department, SES, MoHSPPP</td>
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<td>Group 3: Creation of demand</td>
<td>Dr. Mukhtorova Parvina, Director of Republican Healthy Life Style Center Mr. Khabibov, Executive Director of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Presenter/Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.45-14.15</td>
<td>Presentations of Group Work</td>
<td>Dr. Safina Abdulloeva, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 14.15-15.00  | Final Remarks and A Call to Action | Dr. Jafarov Navruz, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Population  
 |              |                               | Mrs. Lucia Elmi, UNICEF Representative                                           |
|              |                               | Mr. Greg Garrett, Director, Large Scale Fortification Food, GAIN                 |
Appendix 2. Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification
Эъломияи Душанбе оид ба гангиардонни маводи озукаАр заминъа тачилии “Соли 2015 — соли оила”, аз чониби Президенти Чумхурии Точикистон

Қабул шудааст дар таърихи 2 июли соли 2015; шахри Душанбе, Точикистон

Мо, намояндагон аз вазоратҳо, кумитаҳо, очонсий, созмонҳои донории байналмиллалӣ, асоссийатсияҳои маҳаллӣ, Васоити ахбори омма, саноат, Академияи илмҳои Чумхурии, палатаҳо ва иттиходияҳо, иштирокчиёнини Семинари Точикистоний оид ба гангиардонни маводи озукаЁб сиёсат то таъсисот ба вазъи тандурустӣ, бо дар назар гирфтане нарасанги наригоэлиесо микарит, бо сабабгори он дар қатори омилоҳи дигар аз чумла, нокофӣ қабул шудани витаминҳо ва минералҳо аз гизо мебошад. Норасогии микроэлементҳо, ки иллати рушди когнитив, нуксони сироатнозири, иллатҳои метаболикӣ, ва дарознокии умри дар зери ҳатар қарорёбанд бурда мерасонад, аз чониби Хукумати Чумхурии Точикистон, чомеанои донорон ва шариқон аз соҳаи рушди байналмиллалӣ зъитроф карда шудаанд.

Дар саросари чахон, миллионҳо нафар одамон аз нарасоии маводи гизои микроэлементҳои шакли "гурунсоғи пинҳой" азияят мекашанд (Мутахаиъа ва дигарон, соли 2013). Дар дунё шаклоҳо аз ҳама бештар пахшудаи нарасоии микроэлементҳо охан, рух ва қалтсий мебошанд. Норасогии йод тавассути истифода карданамаи йодноккардашуда ва витамини А дар байни қудакони синни томактаби ба воситаи додани гизои иловай дар шаш моҳ як маротиба таҳти назорат қарор дода мешавад, ваҳ далер як сатҳ нигоҳ доштане чунин вазияят ва мавҷуд будан ва ироиши хуби ин гуна барномаҳо вобаста мебошад. Норасогии микроэлементҳои дигар метавонад ҳамзамон ба вуқъо оид ба менанди фолат, витамини B12, B1, B2 ва витамини D ба табиати речай истеъмоли гизо ва урфу одаатҳои мардумий рабт дорад. Норасогихои микроэлементҳо таҳминан 7% бори чахонии беморири дар бар мегиранд (Мутахаиъа ва дигарон, соли 2013).

Бехтаргардонии вазъияти тандурустӣ ва гизои аҳолии Точикистон масъалал ва хеле муҳим мебошад. Гизои нокофӣ аз муъккилиҳои чиддии тандурустии чомеавии Точикистон ба хисоб меравад.

Окибатҳои манфӣ ва одатан якмуроя марбут ба нарасогии гизо барои саломатӣ, сабзиси, амалкардҳои сироатнозири ва қобили таваллуқ, маҳсулуқ ва рушди ақл ҳаробиои мебошанд. Норасогихои микроэлементҳо ба ҳамаи ғурўҳхои синну соли таъсир ҳудро мегузоранд, ваље қудакони хурдсол ва зандои синнусоли қобили таваллуқ дар мавриди амалӣ намудани кутрати пураан худ ҳамчун доштмода, волидай, когарон ва шахрвандон маъсусан осеблазир мебошанд. Агарчанде микроэлементҳо дар тули умри инсон макоми муҳимро мебошанд, ҳошия имконият барои бехтар намудани қатҳи гизо хеле хурд (нокофӣ) мебошад - иборатан заз даврони то ҳомилдорой ва дар тули ду соли аввали ҳаёт — ҳазор руз козуқро дар бар мегирад, бино ба сабаби расидани осеб ба рушди чисмонӣ, рушди ақлӣ ва ташаккулёнб, ки дар давоми ин давра сурат мегирад, хеле васеъ ва одатан бебозгашт мебошад.
National Workshop on Food Fortification in Tajikistan: from Policy to Health Impact
1-2 July 2015, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Илова бар чалбсозихои чиддӣ барои рушд ва саломатии афоди алоҳида, барои норасогии гизо дар Тоҷикистон таъминат маблаъги 41 миллион доллари ИМА масраф карда мешавад. Дар чамъяйте, ки дар он ҳам хурдволо ва ҳам калонсоло ба гизо дастраси дароанд, ки боиси таъмини ниёҳои онҳо ба гизо мегардад, метавонад сифати зиндагии мардум ва иктисолои миллиро қуладан дигарргун созад. Ин дигаргун ба амалкарди бехтараштаи таҳсил дар байни бачагони синин мактабӣ ва тевъоди бештар калонсоло созанда ва масулии боиси мегардад. Боррои гарони беморӣ ҳамчунин метавонад сабук карда шавад, ки боиси паст намудани харохтоҳои марбут ба тандурустӣ барои ҳукumatҳо гарданд.

Дар мохи сентябри соли 2013 Ҳукumatи Чумхурии Тоҷикистон ба ҳаракати Афзоиш додан андозаи озуқа (SUN) пайваст шуд ва айни замон яке аз 55 аъзо - кишварҳо ба шумор меравад. Ҳаракати Афзоиш додани андозаи озуқа (SUN) алаиҳи ғурнагӣ ва норасогии гизо дар асоси принсили ҳамаи одамон ба таъмини маводи озуқа ва гизо боисфат хукку доранд, мубориза мебарар. Ҳаракати мазкур дар худ мардум (ҳукumatҳо, ҷомеаи шаҳрвандӣ, Соҳимони Миллалӣ Муттаҳид, доморон, шириктаҳои тичоратӣ ва пажҳишгаронро) барои мубориза бурдан баҳри бехбудди гизо сарчамъ мемонадд. Давлатҳои биои қарорҳои муносиби сиёсӣ қабул кунанд ва захираҳоро барои афзоиш додани муҳофизҳои саамарони мушаххас ба масоли гизо ва равишҳои муашххасан ба гизо ва ҳамчунин равишҳои ҳассоси гизой сафарбар намоанд.

Мо эътироф менамоем, ки Ҳукumatи Чумхурии Тоҷикистон чӣ дар сатҳҳо маҳаллӣ, ва чӣ дар сатҳҳо миъли мақомӣ пешбарандараро боизида, дар ҳамкори бо ҳарикон аз соҳаи рушди байналмиллалӣ муассисаҳои доморӣ, ҷомеаи шаҳрвандӣ ва баҳши хусусий ҳамкорӣ менамоида, бо мақсади бехтар намудани вазъияти бехтарии озуқа ва давстраҳо ба маводи ғизой ва зизматораҳои тавассути такъия намудани сиёсатҳо ва конунҳо, таъмини ичроиши он ва огоҳии мардум.

Мо сипошҳо ба Ҳукumatи Чумхурии Тоҷикистон, Вазорати тандурустӣ ва ҳифзи ичтимоии аҳолӣ, Вазорати саноат ва технологияҳои нав, Парламонии Чумхурии Тоҷикистон ва Оциони ИМА оид ба рушди байналмиллалӣ (ЮСАІД). Соҳимони чашоний оид ба бехбудди озуқа (GAIN), Хазинаи кўдакон (ЮНИСЕФ) ва дигар соҳимонҳои байналмиллалӣ ибров менамоида, ки дар омадасозии раванди мазкур саҳми худро гузоштанд ва ҳамчунин дар кори семинари миллир ширкат варзишанд.

Мо, ишториквони Семинари Тоҷикистон оид ба ганигардонии маводи озуқа: Аз сиёсат то таъсирот ба вазъи тандурустӣ, ки дар таърихи 1-ум ва 2- юлии соли 2015 дар шаҳри Душанбе, Чумхурии Тоҷикистон баргузор гардида, принисихои Ҳаракати Афзоиш додани андозаи озуқа (SUN) дар бобати ҳукуқи баробар доштан ҳамаи одамон ба маводи озуқа ва озуқа боисфатро эътироф менамоем.

Мо қарор қабул менамоем, ки тавассути принисихо ва андешиндан қораҳои зерин, талошҳои худро барои бошувафтақона амалӣ намудани барномаҳои ганигардонии маводи озуқа тақвият хоҳе мадд:

- Таъсис додани чорчубаи мантиқӣ ва ҳамачониба сиёсӣ ва қонунгузорӣ оид ба ганигардонии ҳатми гизо аз қабили Қарори Президенти кишвар барои таъмини давстраси ба маводи озуқа ба таври дуруст ганигардонда шуда, муҳим мебошад.
Бунёд фазои муносиб барои таъмини ворид намудани сиёсат ва конунгузори марбур ба ганигардонии маводи озукъа. Дар ин равия мо пешнокд менамсем, ки соҳтори маъкусу ҳамохангоной — Иттифоқи миллӣ оид ба ганигардонии маводи озукъа таъсис дода шавад, ки дар он вақоратҳои дархоъор, очонсиҳо, баштҳо ҳусус, очонсиҳои давлат ва ташкилотҳои гайридавлат шомил бошанд;

Тақвият бахшидан ба равиши бисёрсоҳавӣ, ҳамачониба ва ҳамбастагӣ берун аз миқтадари тандурусии ҷомеаён бо максади дурüst ҳал намудани норасогиҳ он ки микрозелементлари васеъ пахшуда. Раъвиши маъкур боъд дар зери қатри ҳарқати Афзоиш додаи андоозаи озукъа (SUN) дар Тоҷикистон амалӣ карда шавад, ва

Мо ҳаммаи ҷонибҳои манфиятдорро барои фашлозина пуштибой ва дасттири намудани ташаббусҳо дар самти ганигардонии маводи озукъа, ки ҳамчун қиқмати Эъламияи Душанбе оид ба ганигардонии маводи озукъа метавонад амалӣ карда шавад, дъават мекунем.

Мо ҳамчуин қатъи қарор мекунем ҳаддамикон қўиш багар ҳарч ҳикъом, то ин қи ваъийи нозёр ҳоҳтар гардад ва мо барои таъмин намудани табақахои аз ҳама боштар осеобазари тамъият — маъкусан закон ва қўдакон — дар дастрасии онъо ба микрозелементҳои кофий барои нигҳдории рушди мунтазам ва қобилияти рушди онъо зарур ёст, ҳудада мебошуем.

Эъламияи Душанбе барои таломои ҷонибҳои манфиятдорр барои ба он шомил шудани онъо кўишада ёст.

Имзо карда шуд
Text in English

DUSHANBE DECLARATION ON FOOD FORTIFICATION

Preamble

The Government of Tajikistan, in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and UNICEF, organized a two-day national workshop, entitled “Food Fortification: From Policy to Health Impact” from July 01 to 02, 2015 in Dushanbe. This national workshop brought together all key partners. This event is aimed at advancing the ongoing fortification advocacy efforts, identify champions, strengthen partner relationships, and build coalitions.

The overall key objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Present and discuss the latest international evidence on the benefits and impact of food fortification.
- Present and discuss key findings and recommendations of recent national and regional wheat flour fortification-related analyses.
- Present and discuss the latest food fortification efforts in Tajikistan including the national wheat flour fortification plan, universal salt iodization, the birth defects registry, and the ratification of the food fortification law.
- Strengthen Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) efforts in Tajikistan and help in initiating the SUN Business Network.

The expected outcomes of the workshop are as follows:

- improved understanding of the benefits/impact of food fortification;
- shared knowledge of the recent assessment findings and the national fortification efforts;
- stakeholder perceptions of the regional harmonization initiative, and the associated benefits and challenges;
- stronger national fortification partnerships; and recommendations and next steps for advancing food fortification efforts in the country and in the region.
Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification

in the context of “2015 as the Year of Family” declared by the President of Tajikistan

adopted on 2 July, 2015; Dushanbe, Tajikistan

We, representatives of various ministries, committees, agencies, international donor organizations, local associations, media, industry, academia, chambers and unions, participants of Tajikistan Workshop on Food Fortification: From Policy to Health Impact, taking into consideration that micronutrient deficiency, caused – among other factors, by inadequate intake of vitamins and minerals from the diet. Micronutrient deficiencies that lead to impaired cognitive development, impaired immunity, metabolic abnormalities, and compromised life expectancy, are fully recognized by the government of Tajikistan, donor community and international developing partners.

Globally, millions of people are affected by micronutrient malnutrition or ‘hidden hunger’. Worldwide, the most prevalent micronutrient deficiencies are iron, zinc, and calcium. Iodine deficiency is kept under control through the use of iodized salt, and vitamin A in pre-school age children through the every 6-months supplementation, but maintaining this situation depends on the permanent presence and good performance of these programs. Other micronutrient deficiencies may occur simultaneously, such as folate, vitamin B12, B1, B2, and vitamin D depending on the nature of the diet and the population habits. Micronutrient deficiencies account for approximately 7% of the global burden of disease (Muthayya et al., 2013).

Improving the health and nutritional status of the Tajik population are critical. Inadequate nutrition is a serious public health problem in Tajikistan.

The negative and often lifelong consequences of micronutrient malnutrition for health, growth, immune and reproductive functions, productivity and mental development are devastating. Micronutrient deficiencies affect all age groups, but young children and women of reproductive age are particularly vulnerable preventing them from achieving their, full potential as students, parents, workers, and citizens. Although micronutrients are important through the course of the human life, the window of opportunity for improving nutrition is small — from before pregnancy through the first two years of life – a thousand critical days because the damage to physical growth, brain development and formation that occurs during this period is extensive and largely irreversible.

In addition to serious implications for the development and wellbeing of individuals, it is estimated that under-nutrition in Tajikistan costs the economy US$41 million annually. A society in which both children and adults have access to diets that fulfills their nutritional requirements could radically transform the quality of peoples’ lives and national economies. This leads to improved academic performance in school age children and more productive adults. Disease burdens could also be alleviated, leading to lower health care costs for governments.

In September 2013 the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan acceded to the SUN movement, and it is now one of its 55 member countries. The SUN movement fights malnutrition, based on the principle that all people have a right to food and good nutrition. This movement combines people (governments, civil society, the UN, donors, commercial companies and research organizations) in a common fight for improved nutrition. Countries need to make the necessary
political decisions, cooperate with partners, and mobilize resources for scaling up cost-effective interventions, both nutrition-specific as well as nutrition-sensitive approaches.

We acknowledge that the Government of Tajikistan is taking leadership at both the local and national level, in collaboration with international developing partners, donor institutions, the civil society and the private sector, to improve food safety and accessibility nutrition products and services, through developing policies and laws, ensuring their enforcement, and educating the public.

*We express our gratitude* to the Government of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population, the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, the Parliament of Tajikistan, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), GAIN, UNICEF, and other international organizations that contributed to the preparatory process and are taking part in the national workshop.

We, participants of the *Tajikistan Workshop on Food Fortification: From Policy to Health Impact* held on July 1-2, 2015 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan acknowledge the principles of the SUN Movement that all people have a right to food provision and quality food.

We resolve to enhance our efforts for the successful implementation of food fortification programs in Tajikistan through the following principles and measures:

- Establishment of a coherent and comprehensive policy and legislation framework on mandatory food fortification, such as Presidential Resolution, is critical to ensure universal access to adequately fortified foods among population;
- Creation of a favorable environment to ensure the enforcement of the food fortification policy and legislation. To this end, we propose to establish a special coordination structure - the National Alliance for Food Fortification, which will involve relevant ministries, agencies, private sector, Government agencies and non-governmental organizations;
- Promotion of a multi-sectoral, comprehensive and integrated approach beyond the domain of public health to adequately address the prevalent micronutrient deficiencies. This approach should be implemented under the umbrella of SUN movement in Tajikistan; and

We call upon all stakeholders to actively promote and support food fortification initiatives that can be implemented as part of Dushanbe Declaration on Food Fortification.

We are firmly resolved to make all possible efforts to improve the nutritional status and we are dedicated to ensuring that the most vulnerable populations – especially women and children receive adequate micronutrients to sustain appropriate growth and development to thrive.

*Dushanbe Declaration is open for all stakeholders to join.*

Signed
Appendix 3. Press Release

FOOD FORTIFICATION PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN IMPROVING HEALTH

Dushanbe, Tajikistan. July 1-2, 2015. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Tajikistan in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and UNICEF hosted a two-day National Workshop on Food Fortification: From Policy to Health Impact. The event was opened by Dr. Navruz Jafarov, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection and Kathleen McDonald, USAID Tajikistan Country Director.

Bringing together leading policymakers, industry representatives, and national and international partners, the workshop highlighted and explored how wheat flour and salt fortification can bridge Tajikistan’s micronutrient gap and reduce the high levels of micronutrient malnutrition currently prevalent within the country, especially within Khatlon Province. Khatlon is a key target area for the U.S. Government’s global hunger and food security initiative – Feed the Future – which emphasizes improving the nutritional status of women and children within Tajikistan.

Micronutrient malnutrition is a substantial challenge for many countries in the region, including Tajikistan, and can have severe consequences for both the health of individuals and the prosperity of the country. For example, a 2012 World Bank-UNICEF report found 53% of children and 58.6% of women in Tajikistan were iodine deficient. Iodine deficiency disorders are the leading causes of preventable intellectual disability and other growth and development difficulties within Tajikistan. These types of health problems, of course, have serious consequences for a country’s long-term social and economic development.

GAIN’s Director of Large Scale Food Fortification, Greg Garrett, highlighted that: “Micronutrient fortification of staple foods is one of the most effective, least costly ways to prevent micronutrient malnutrition. The Government of Tajikistan, USAID and GAIN hope to facilitate scaling up proven nutrition interventions, with a focus on wheat flour fortification in Tajikistan working with industry and other partners.”

To address the micronutrient malnutrition challenge, GAIN with support from USAID, is working with the Government of Tajikistan and other partners on a sustainable national wheat flour fortification program. When implemented, this program will substantially increase micronutrient intake among women, children, and the general population – improving overall nutrition levels for Tajik citizens and with it, creating a brighter future for Tajikistan.

USAID Food Fortification Projects implemented by GAIN and UNICEF are part of many assistance projects made possible by the American people. Since 1992, USAID has invested over $360 million in programs that support Tajikistan’s democratic institutions, health care, education, and economic growth.

GAIN acts as a catalyst – building alliances of governments, business, and civil society – to find and deliver solutions to the complex problem of malnutrition. Today, GAIN programs are on track to reach over a billion people with improved nutrition by 2015.