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International health policy trends and industry response in the GCC

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The International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA), is a group of twelve global food and soft drink companies - The Coca-Cola Company, Danone, Ferrero, General Mills, Grupo Bimbo, Kellogg, Mars, McDonald's, Mondelēz International, Nestlé, PepsiCo and Unilever - that share a common goal of helping people around the world achieve balanced diets and healthy lifestyles.

IFBA was formed in 2008 in response to a call for action contained in the 2004 WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Building on individual efforts already underway, IFBA came together and made a set of global commitments to the WHO:

- To develop products that help people eat healthy, balanced diets
- To provide clear, fact-based nutrition information to consumers
- To market responsibly to children
- And to promote healthy lifestyles in our workplaces and in communities around the world

In 2009 IFBA members based in the GCC came together with the objective of implementing the IFBA commitments across the GCC. Since then industry members implemented many voluntary initiatives to meet these commitments.

We believe that an effective response to the global burden of NCDs requires a “whole of society effort”, which includes the participation of the private sector. Furthermore we believe that food and non-alcoholic beverage companies have an important and unique role to play in helping to address NCDs. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and particularly obesity, are prevalent in the Middle East and have become an important public health issue and a major economic burden on the countries in the region. This presentation will provide an overview of global and regional policy trends, and industries voluntary pledges & initiatives implemented in the GCC.

Biography

Christine Greaves is the Corporate Affairs Director for Mars GCC with over 38 years in the food industry she has been based in the Gulf markets for close to 16 years, working for Mars Incorporated in a number of different capacities. In 2009, Christine led the formation of the GCC Food & Beverage Alliance (GCC FBA) and is currently the chairperson of the group. As with the International Food & Beverage Alliance, the GCC FBA is a forum for bringing together food and soft drinks companies based in the GCC, around a common goal of helping people to achieve balanced diets and healthy lifestyles.

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