

MERCOSUR/RMS/AGREEMENT No. 02/21

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRADITIONAL DIETS

OBSERVING: The Treaty of Assumption, the Protocol of Ouro Preto, Decisions No. 01/95, 03/95 and 10/97 of the Council of the Common Market and Agreement No. 02/2018 of the Mercosur Meeting of Ministers of Health.

CONSIDERING:

That the Region of the Americas has a high prevalence of overweight and obesity compared to other regions of the World Health Organization (WHO), with 62% of adults affected by this epidemic.

That this form of malnutrition has had a sustained increase in time, together with a high prevalence of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD), representing one of the largest public health problems in the region.

That one of the main risk factors for the occurrence of overweight / obesity and NCD is the increase in consumption of ultra-processed products, which, according to the Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO) are characterized by their excessive sugar, fat and sodium content and reduced consumption of fresh and minimally processed foods.

That healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate traditional diets have been devalued, composed especially of fresh, minimally processed foods and culinary preparations.

That among the benefits of traditional diets is their positive impact on the multiple burden of malnutrition, as well as on the well-being of the population, taking into account their relationship with culture, identity and the feeling of social belonging.

That the production of food commonly used in traditional diets could have positive impacts on the environment and boost the economy when the production of family farmers and small local producers is given priority.

That according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "Food-based Guides aim to serve as a basis for the formulation of national policies on food and nutrition, health and agriculture, as well as nutritional education programs (...)". Also, considering the importance in respecting and promoting local food crops and the food sovereignty of countries.

That it is essential for promoting healthy eating, strengthening food culture and a traditional diet with autoctose foods to promote and promote the adoption of healthier eating patterns.

That improving food systems is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3 and 13.

That the Voluntary Guidelines on food systems and nutrition state that it is important to take into account, establish, maintain and protect the variety and diversity of food crops, social norms, relationships and traditions that contribute to healthy diets through sustainable food systems without hindering progress on gender equality.

MINISTERS OF HEALTH AGREE:

Article 1 - Reiterate their interest in protecting traditional diets based on local food guides, promoting healthy healthy diets that are adequate to each country's food culture.

Article 2 - Especially value fresh and minimally processed regional foods that are a fundamental part of traditional diets.

Article 3 - Inform the Council of the Common Market of the approval of this Agreement at the Meeting of Ministers of Health.

Buenos Aires, 16/06/2021

Signatures of Ministers of Health of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia