1. Session Title

A decade of large-scale food fortification in the developing world: emerging evidence and lessons learned.

2. Session Chair(s) Contact Information

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3. When and Where

Symposia number: M3-04; M4-04
Date: Monday, June 2; Monday, June 2
Time: 12:30-14:00; 14:00-15:30
Room: Small conference room

4. General Description of Session

A broad range of programs and technologies are implemented to tackle malnutrition. Micronutrient fortification of staples and condiments is a valid population-based intervention for reducing micronutrient malnutrition as part of a food-based approach where and when existing food supplies fail to deliver adequate levels of nutrients in the diet.¹

The nutritional impact of food fortification has been researched primarily in the Western world and in some countries in Latin America, where fortification of major staple foods and condiments such as margarine, milk, wheat flour, oil, sugar, and salt has been practiced at scale since the early 1940s (much of Latin America from the 1970s). Additionally, it has been recognized as one of the most cost-effective nutrition interventions.² However, despite this evidence and the introduction of fortification of staple foods in the developing world in the 1990s, much research is still needed to quantify its impact in Africa and Asia.³,⁴

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the Flour Fortification Initiative (FFI), HKI and others, have been engaged in large-scale food fortification advocacy, implementation and technical assistance for over a decade on national programs in Africa and Asia. There is emerging evidence on the impact of these programs on nutritional status of populations and target groups. In addition, there are critical lessons which have been learned which need dissemination to ensure effective program delivery going forward.

This symposium will provide a conceptual framework to define and quantify the potential contribution of large-scale food fortification. It will present new evidence of the efficacy and effectiveness and some novel approaches to data collection and use for improving program implementation. It will showcase progress in countries and discuss challenges -- including legislation and quality assurance -- and approaches for overcoming such barriers based on experience across the African and Asian regions.

¹ WHO Guideline on Food Fortification with Micronutrients, 2006
Moderators, presenters and panelists include leading academics, program managers, donors, civil servants and civil society leaders from GAIN, FFI, ETH, UNICEF, Emory University, USAID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, BRAC, and relevant representatives from Ministries of Health and other government institutions.

5. Specific objectives for this session

- Evidence:
  - Define large-scale food fortification’s potential contribution and health impact
  - Provide state-of-the-art updates on the science of food fortification
  - Offer new models for measuring effective reach
- Enabling Environment: demonstrate key factors which enable success of large scale food fortification programs
- Program Experience: provide an overview of the status of current large scale programs in Africa and Asia, key lesson learned and summarize gaps in program delivery.

6. Presentation Titles and Proposed Speakers

Opening: Opening and overview of objectives of Symposium. Marc van Ameringen, GAIN, Switzerland

Session 1: Emerging Evidence

Moderator: Rafael Flores-Ayala, CDC, USA

“A Conceptual Framework for Large-Scale Food Fortification: defining expectations, effective coverage and its potential contribution” (10 minutes) Lynette Neufeld, GAIN, Switzerland

“Large scale food fortification, the period of preconception and the 1,000 day window” (15 minutes) Michael Zimmermann, ETH, Switzerland

“Review of effectiveness of wheat and maize flour fortification programs on iron status and anemia outcomes in developing countries” (10 minutes). Helena Pachón, FFI, USA.

“Measuring effective coverage in Senegal and Rajasthan” (15 minutes). Grant Aaron, GAIN, Switzerland

Session 2: Lessons learned

Moderator: Arnold Timmer, UNICEF, Ethiopia

“The enabling environment: partnerships and mandatory legislation for flour fortification in Africa and their relevance for program outcomes” (10 minutes). Scott Montgomery, FFI, USA

“Enabling compliance and building regulatory monitoring systems for food fortification” (10 minutes) Greg S. Garrett, GAIN, Switzerland

“Regional Considerations for Food Fortification in Africa: The role of the public and private sector, civil society, and regional bodies” (10 minutes) Fred Grant, HKI, Senegal

“Leveraging fortified foods for increased impact in public distribution programs: school feeding case study in Bangladesh” (10 minutes) Dr Safiqul Islam, BRAC, Bangladesh

“Using research and evaluation to increase program impact: Vitamin A Fortified Cooking Oil in Indonesia” (15 minutes), Dr. Abas Basuna Jahari, MOH, Indonesia
25 minute expert panel on evidence and lessons learned in food fortification with questions from audience
(Panelists TBD. Likely from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, FFI, HKI, WHO, USAID, ETH, PATH, MI, Industry)

Issues to be discussed may include:

- What recommendations need to be taken forward to improve the effectiveness of iron fortification and which countries would be appropriate candidates for demonstrating effectiveness?
- How do the findings from FACT presented in Session 1 compare with the current global assumptions about the impact of food fortification, and what are the implications for programs?
- Appropriate strategies to deal with safety/toxicity concerns.
- How can donors and agencies better support regulatory monitoring and enforcement in a mandatory environment?