

International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD)

Statement by Chair of ICCIDD, Dr. G N Burrow on 4 September 2010, Opening Session.

Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to speak to the Executive Board. I speak as Chair of ICCIDD, the only international NGO or other agency uniquely and totally dedicated to sustained elimination of IDD and also as a Member of the Network on Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency. For the past 25 years, ICCIDD has had a productive working relationship with UNICEF including commitment to the goal of IDD Elimination by Member States of the UN at the Global Summit for Children in 1990. As an accredited NGO to the WHA, ICCIDD was instrumental in obtaining support to require reporting from Member States on the status of iodine nutrition every three years.

UNICEF has invested heavily in salt iodization with good results. Global estimates of households with access to iodized salt have risen from 20% to 70% during this period. Iodine as a component of thyroid hormone plays an important part role in fetal brain development. Consumption of iodized salt in iodine deficient population may raise the average IQ of offspring by as much as 13 points. Achieving iodine sufficiency is commendable but not enough.

Unless iodine nutrition is maintained, signs and symptoms of iodine deficiency recur with a short period of time. The goal, therefore, is the sustainable elimination of iodine deficiency. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of programs to eliminate IDD are critical to ensure the interventions are both effective and safe in protecting the developing fetal brain. The program will not be sustained without solid information and knowledge about the values of iodine in the daily diet and the dangers of its absence.

More must be done to share knowledge and information and sustain local demand for daily access to dietary iodine. This successful strategy also demonstrates the effectiveness of collaboration among private sector, public sector, and civil society all underpinned by solid science and technical support, a development model that bears study and replication. In order to assure continued sustained collaboration of agencies and organizations committee to this work, ICCIDD among others helped to found the

Global Network for Sustained Elimination of IDD, chaired by UNICEF since its inception in 2000.

As experience has clearly demonstrated, the strategy to provide optimal iodine on a daily basis has major implications for success of at least 4 of the Millennium Goals. The improvement in brain development that occurs with the introduction of adequate iodine in a population and the resulting increase in IQ has an impact on early childhood and primary education, while failure to achieve optimal intellectual development has important implications for human and economic development.

In, conclusion, Mister President, ICCIDD and the Global Network ask UNICEF to take the lead to assure sustained achievement by helping build national coalitions for that purpose, and by investing in national monitoring systems and also to assure sustained leadership in the Global Network Board. We appeal also to UNICEF once again to take the lead to (a) assure sustained achievement by helping to build national coalitions for that purpose; (b) assure sustained achievement by investing in national monitoring systems on priority; (c) sustained leadership in the Global Network Board and improved information sharing and communications through the vast network represented by those Members.

Finally, increased attention should be given to iodine dietary needs of women in child bearing ages.

Thank you.