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Sveriges Konsumenter i Samverkan joins global day of action to save junk food generation

- **Consumer groups, health bodies and academics support call for global ban on junk food marketing to children**
- **\$13 billion food and soft drink ad spend seen as major contributor to 177 million overweight or obese children**
- **World Consumer Rights Day of action to highlight damage of junk food marketing on 15 March**

Sveriges Konsumenter i Samverkan joined Consumers International (CI), and the International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) who today launched proposals to drastically restrict the scope and scale of junk food marketing to children across the globe.

The coalition is calling for the *International Code on Marketing of Food to Children** to be adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and incorporated into national food marketing legislation.

Adoption of the Code would be major step in helping the 117 million children currently threatened by obesity related diseases**. The WHO currently predicts 2.3 billion people will be overweight by 2015.

The Code, which CI and IOTF will be taking to the World Health Assembly in May 2008, tackles the failures of the food industry to regulate itself. Current industry self-regulatory proposals are restricted to the EU and US and limited to marketing to the under 12s. CI, the IOTF and its partners believe these limitations do little to tackle the shocking increases in obesity seen in the developed and developing world.

The major food, soft drink and confectionery multinational companies spent US\$13 billion on advertising in 2006***; on top of undisclosed sums on online games and social networking sites, and on cartoon character and celebrity tie-ins.

CI and IOTF will urge WHO Member Governments to accept the recommendations in the Code when the organisation undertakes its consultation on recommendations covering the marketing food to children.

- A ban on radio or TV adverts promoting unhealthy food between 6am and 9pm
- No marketing of unhealthy foods using new media (such as websites, social networking sites and text messaging)
- No promotion of unhealthy foods in schools
- No inclusion of free gifts, toys or collectable items which appeal to children to promote unhealthy foods
- No use of celebrities, cartoon characters or competitions to market unhealthy food.

The Code is being launched worldwide on 15 March, to mark World Consumer Rights Day. Over 50 national consumer groups will be undertaking campaign activities to highlight the damage done by junk food marketing and to urge government ministers to support the code ahead of the WHA.

In connection with one of our campaigns, [Dumpa Läsken](#) (a part of Global Dump Soft Drinks Campaign) we are bringing the attention to the health impact on childrens health, marketing soft drinks aggressively and also forcing it into the schools. Soft drinks are a considerable source of the high intake of sugar and also artificial sweeteners, with an effect of triggering the need for more sweets.

Consumers International will also mark the occasion by launching a new campaign website: www.junkfoodgeneration.org

CI Director General, Richard Lloyd, said:

“It’s predicted that 2.3 billion people will be overweight by 2015, so we need to take action now if we want our children to grow up free from the threat of obesity-related health problems. This includes getting governments and the food industry to take immediate responsibility for the way junk food is promoted to under 16s; not just in rich countries, but across the world.”

Bengt Ingerstam, president of Swedish Consumer Coalition, said:

“It is scaring to notice how big and irresponsible companies make any effort to educate young consumers to prefer the companies junk products, using any possible mean as publicity, tastes, colours, well known persons, [internet sites](#), sms, social pressure and much more in their efforts to convert young consumers to prefer their products. Companies show no serious interest to help our children to take care of their health or economy, but have only their own profit in mind and do not give anything useful to our children, not caring at all for health or climate issues, only dividends to their shareholders. It is not satisfying that big companies show such a cynic lack of responsibility and respect. They are parasites on the market and we have to challenge them as consumer organisations, trying to protect our young and future responsible consumers.”

Media support material (NB documents are embargoed till 01 Saturday GMT)

* Download [Food Marketing Code fact sheet](#)

** Download [Obesity Figures fact sheet](#)

***Download [Marketing Spend fact sheet](#)

For an advance copy of the Code, support material and to arrange interviews, contact Luke Upchurch +44 796 894 9327 lupchurch@consint.org

Note to Editors

i. Sveriges Konsumenter i Samverkan/Konsument-Forum is a member of Consumers International. **Our work is focused on how to increase the consumers power and influence and highlighting the consumers rights, particularly the right to be informed and to make our own free choice and to be listened to.**

Our input to this celebration of the International Consumer day is focused on the consumption of Soft Drinks and to start local actions in schools around Sweden. See material on our website www.konsumentsamverkan.se

ii. Consumers International (CI) is the only independent global campaigning voice for consumers. With over 220 member organisations in 115 countries, we are building a powerful international consumer movement to help protect and empower consumers everywhere. For more information, visit www.consumersinternational.org

iii. The International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) is the policy section of the International Association for the Study of Obesity, which has over 10,000 members in more than 50 countries and regional associations around the world. These proposals take account of the IOTF's Sydney Principles, developed with the aim of achieving a substantial level of protection for children against the commercial promotion of foods and beverages.

iv. World Consumer Rights Day is an international day of action and awareness, observed by consumer organisations and civil rights groups around the world. 15 March marks the day President John F. Kennedy told the US congress: 'Consumers by definition, include us all. They are the largest economic group, affecting and affected by almost every public and private economic decision. Yet they are the only important group... whose views are often not heard.'