

ATNi Launches 5th Global Access to Nutrition Index as Industry and Policy Makers Grapple with Food Polycrisis

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UTRECHT, Netherlands: Today, ATNi launches the 5th edition of the Global Access to Nutrition Index, the largest yet, assessing the world's 30 largest food and beverage manufacturers and over 52,000 products, representing 23% of the global market share.

One in five deaths globally is associated with a poor diet. One out of eight adults are obese, 150 million children are too short for their age because of poor nutrition, and close to a third of women of reproductive age, and half of children, consume inadequate micronutrients.

The Index reveals some important progress. More companies are setting targets to improve their portfolio healthiness, now using internationally recognized Nutrient Profiling Models (NPMs) to classify products as 'healthier'.

However, overall, there has been little to no improvement in key metrics such as healthiness of product portfolios. At the same time, the estimated sales values of company's healthier products have increased, showing consumers are increasingly purchasing healthier products. Worryingly, product portfolio healthiness was found to be lowest in low-income countries, highlighting disparities in product offerings across different markets and income groups.

"Families around the world are struggling with poor nutrition and the food industry's role is critical. We support the Access to Nutrition initiative as they help the sector improve the healthiness of its products and make nutritious foods accessible to all."

Anneliese Dodds, UK Minister for Development at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Global Index 2024 Key Findings

Product Healthiness

Among the 52,414 products analyzed from 30 companies using the Health Star Rating (HSR) system, 31%—a total of 16,467 products—met the healthier threshold (3.5 stars and above out of 5), representing an estimated 34% of the companies' combined sales in 2022. ATNi challenges companies to derive at least half their sales from healthy products by 2030. Today only 30% of companies are meeting this target.

Differences by market and income

Overall food product healthiness in low- and lower middle-income countries scored much lower (mean HSR 1.8) than in high-income countries (mean HSR 2.3). At the aggregate level, the share of 'less healthy' products which industry (30 assessed companies) is marketing is higher in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.

Reporting and disclosures

30% of the companies assessed have taken the important step to use an internationally recognized Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) to annually report on portfolio healthiness, with 20% doing so to report on overall percentages of global sales. While the quality, coverage, and transparency of this reporting varies significantly, this shift reflects the growing appetite for reporting against standards among leading food and beverage manufacturers and shareholders.

Marketing

No company has a comprehensive policy to fully prohibit marketing unhealthy foods to children under 18 across all marketing channels and techniques, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Four companies have taken positive steps by raising their age thresholds to 16 years of age while only two are marketing 'healthier' products defined by a government-endorsed model, although no companies use a WHO Model, which was developed specifically for this purpose.

ATNi calls on

- **Companies** to voluntarily stop marketing to children under 18, improve product portfolio healthiness and fully disclose sales from healthy and unhealthy products using an internationally recognised Nutrient Profiling Model.
- **Governments** to regulate and build an enabling environment that drives the business case helping companies become agents which help protect public health. Well-designed fiscal policies are one important way to build this business case.
- **Responsible investors** to help hold the companies to account by investing in those acting responsibly, considering the financial costs of long-term ill health caused by unhealthy products and irresponsible marketing practices.

"Health is wealth." We know this is true, but most food companies have not yet placed nutrition as core to their business. ATNi's latest Global Index assesses the world's 30 largest food and beverage manufacturers on their contributions to addressing malnutrition in all its forms. There is progress to be celebrated. But our findings show overall subpar performance and weaknesses in the market. The report outlines actions food companies, investors and policymakers should take to transform markets so that healthy food is more available and affordable for all."

Greg S Garrett, Executive Director, ATNi

"The 30 largest food manufacturers, responsible for up to a quarter of all sales of packaged foods, are marketing their products with flawed standards. Some companies have made progress in terms of restricting marketing unhealthy foods to children under 16. But none of the companies assessed for ATNi's Global Access to Nutrition Index 2024 fully comply with responsible marketing standards of the World Health Organization not to market unhealthy products to children under 18. A healthy food environment for all requires more restrictions by policy makers on the marketing of unhealthy food."

Mark Wijne, Research Director, ATNi

“Healthy diets cost much more than unhealthy diets. Few companies have policies in place to support people to access affordable, healthy foods. Policy actions are needed to make healthier options more affordable. Fiscal policies which increase the costs of unhealthy foods, combined with those which make healthy food more affordable have been shown to be effective. Well-designed fiscal policies are needed to enable consumers to make healthier choices.”

Katherine Pittore, Policy and Communications Lead, ATNi

About ATNi

ATNi (Access to Nutrition initiative) is a global foundation actively challenging the food industry, investors and policymakers to shape healthier food systems. We analyse and translate data into actionable insights, driving partnerships and innovations for market transformation so that all people have access to nutritious and sustainable food. For more information see our website:

www.atni.org