

Delegation: Argentina
Commission: Health committee
Issue: Obesity

Obesity is an important matter to Argentina, especially since this issue is linked, in our country, to economic development.

In 2014, the World Health Organization estimated that worldwide obesity had doubled since 1980 and provided the figure of 600 million obese adults. This data is all the more alarming that obesity is the 5th cause of premature death in the world, with 2, 8 million people dying of it every year.

The delegation of Argentina is aware that obesity is an important health issue, especially for Central and South America which are particularly affected. The non-communicable diseases and among them obesity and overweight have been at the center of our health policy for ten years now.

However, we would like to remind that obesity and overweight affect disadvantaged people before anyone else. As Argentina is a developing country, the main cities have grown a lot these last fifty years, and the population has moved from the countryside to urban areas. Nowadays, 92, 5% of the Argentinians people live in an urban area. As a consequence of this drift from rural areas, people have changed their food diet and the poorest ones started eating cheap, fattening and low quality food. These findings show that our economic development is the first step in the fight against obesity.

In 2005, the Ministry of Health, managed by Ginés González García, launched the National Survey for Risk Factors, a study on non-communicable diseases based on a survey. According to this report, the overweight rate hit 34, 5% of the population and the obesity rate, 14, 6 %. The same year, the government created a tax on soda containing less than 10% fruit juice.

In September of 2008, our country approved a law which established a national policy with regard to obesity. It monitored the creation of specific health assistance systems within public institutions to fight against obesity; it also limited the advertising of food that contained excess fat, supervised nutrition information on labels, and ensured the right to healthy food in schools.

Nevertheless, the obesity rate continued to increase in Argentina, as the surveys of 2009 and 2013 showed; indeed, in 2009, 18% of the population was obese and in 2013, this rate had increased to 20, 8%. The third National Survey of 2013, added to those of 2005 and 2009, gave us even more information on this plague and, above all, the means to face it. The government was aware that the previous measures were not enough and decided to forbid fatty acids completely in December of 2014.

Nowadays, Argentina believes that the measures taken will show results within the next few months. The next step in the fight against obesity is to reach the target set by the World Health Organization, above all the 10% relative reduction of the prevalence of insufficient physical activity by the year 2025.

The delegation reaffirms its commitment in the fight against obesity and decides to remain seized of this issue.