

Committee: Health committee

Question: Obesity

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Nutrition is the process by which a living organism assimilates food and uses it for growth and for replacement of tissues. Good nutrition prevents people from diseases and helps the organism function correctly. In the same way, poor nutrition not only increases the risk of developing some illnesses, but it prevents people from leading an enjoyable and active life. The latter can lead to obesity, which is an abnormal accumulation of body fat of 20% or more over an individual's ideal weight.

Madagascar acknowledges that this medical condition has become a global issue over the last years, as obesity has more than doubled since 1980 all over the world, and that it is a problem that can not be longer ignored. However, obesity is not the main problem in Madagascar. In fact, Madagascar's obesity rate was in 2008 of 1.7%, while our main problem is underweight, with 29.7% of our country's population undernourished. In 2014, 47.3% of Madagascar's children were stunting due to chronic malnutrition, a datum that shows how deep the issue of hunger is.

Madagascar has been trying to solve this problem for years, but it has proven almost impossible, as only about 5% of our land is cultivable, and natural disasters such as droughts, floods and cyclones frequently strike our country, problem that has been aggravated by climatic change. Madagascar's population is decimated each year by hunger, and Madagascar believes that this issue is related to obesity, as they are both problems derived from malnutrition.

Madagascar acknowledges that undernourishment might not be an issue for developed countries, but in our country and all underdeveloped African countries, obesity doesn't almost exist. In the same way, for developed countries, it's undernourishment that which is not a problem anymore. This should not be an inconvenient, as Madagascar believes that all countries can cooperate in order to find a solution to both problems.

Madagascar wants to help reduce obesity, and we firmly believe that the solution should not only be a diminution of obesity, but an improvement of food security all over the world, which has been proven to be one of the main reasons why obesity is increasing in African countries, as the most food-insecure countries, which are often the poorest, do not have sufficient access to quality food, meaning they are more prone to buy cheap, energy-dense food.

Madagascar thinks that the developed countries should financially help the poorest ones so that both, richest and poorest, can invest in food quality. Madagascar will support an international action plan founded on the improvement of the quality of crops and the stimulus of organic agriculture. Likewise, genetically modified food should be regulated in order to allow all countries to use it, so they can boost their agriculture, which in most cases is farming and cattle raising. Also, stricter measures should be taken in order to regulate the quality of the food.

Madagascar believes that obesity and undernourishment are the two sides of the same coin, as they can both be eradicated at the same time. To achieve the total disparition of these two conditions, Madagascar thinks the only way to get to the bottom of this issue is by cooperating, and we are willing to do so. Madagascar is open to any suggestions and will try to arrive to a compromise by diplomacy and dialogue.