

## **STATEMENT OF THE ASIA-OCEANIA THYROID ASSOCIATION (AOTA) ON UNIVERSAL SALT IODIZATION**

Iodine as a micronutrient is needed by the body for its optimal growth & development, efficient function and structural integrity. Its effect in the body can be critical from some 3 weeks from the conception to the frail elderly.

The problem of iodine nutrition can be seen at the two ends of the spectrum: from excess to deficiency. However, it is in the iodine deficiency states where most of the health issues arise: from the most visible (goiter) to the most vicious (mental retardation & physical deformities).

The 2019 country scorecard put up by the Iodine Global Network shows the great majority of countries in the Asian land mass and in Oceania having adequate iodine nutrition in the general population based on school-age children. There were only 2 countries with iodine excess while 7 countries have insufficient iodine nutrition. This is a significant achievement from previous years and underscores the effectiveness of universal salt iodization (USI) programs resulting to the availability of, and access to, adequately-iodized salt.

The Asia-Oceania Thyroid Association (AOTA) supports efforts to urge governments to put in place – and sustain – national legislation and law-enforcement prescribing USI. Moreover, AOTA wants to see governments, international organizations and civil societies to adopt persuading & convincing communication messages & optics to the public about iodized salt use. Furthermore, AOTA wishes that routine assessment of the extent of IDD, and its prevention and control be integrated into the educational & health systems of every country.

On its part, AOTA shall ventilate critical issues on iodine nutrition which impact on human health during its congresses and the scientific meetings of national thyroid associations. It shall lead in capacity-building of various health professionals to recognize deranged iodine nutrition that distorts thyroid function and impairs human health.

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