



April 20, 2016

Mr. Muhtar Kent, CEO  
The Coca-Cola Co.  
Coca-Cola Plaza  
Atlanta, GA 30313

Dear Mr. Kent:

The undersigned organizations are deeply concerned about the high rates of morbidity and mortality due to heavy consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) in some countries. In addition, we are troubled by the potential for future high rates in countries

that are not yet major SSB consumers but are being subjected to intensive marketing campaigns by Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and many local and regional brands.

Over the past 15 years, numerous clinical and epidemiology trials and studies have shown that frequent consumption of SSBs contributes to overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease, and earlier research had linked SSBs to tooth decay. One recent study estimated that SSBs are linked to about 184,000 deaths per year globally due to elevated rates of adiposity-related cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and type 2 diabetes mellitus. The harm to individuals and the costs imposed on individuals and health-care systems are staggering.

Those findings have led international health authorities, such as the World Health Organization, World Heart Federation, International Diabetes Federation, World Obesity Federation, and World Cancer Research Fund International, along with many national governments and nonprofit lay and professional health organizations, to recommend that individuals limit their consumption of SSBs and that governments implement measures, such as taxes, clear labeling of added sugars, and marketing restrictions, to limit SSB consumption.

As summarized in *Carbonating the World*, a recent report by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, while SSB consumption in the United States and Europe has been declining, your company and others are investing billions of dollars annually to increase sales in low/middle-income countries Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Much of the marketing is directed at or affects children and adolescents. Euromonitor predicts steady increases in consumption. And as sure as night follows day, those increases in consumption will lead to increases in chronic diseases and health-care costs.

We would like to emphasize that many countries have the right to health enshrined in their constitutions and the treaties they have signed. They have a legal obligation, as well, to defend their citizens' health. But massive marketing campaigns—in the form of advertising and ubiquitous availability—undermine the public health.

Your company is partially responsible for illnesses that can be attributed to sugar drinks. Lower-income countries, in particular, can ill afford increases in the prevalence of illnesses and related costs. In other words, this is a moral issue, as well as a health issue.

We urge your company to exercise its social responsibility to the global community by:

- Acknowledging that heavy consumption of its full-calorie soft drinks contributes to obesity and other health problems;

- Adopting and enforcing a policy of not marketing sugar drinks to children so that it covers children 16 and under and lowering the action level for children in audiences from 35 percent to 25 percent;
- Reducing container sizes (for instance, no container larger than 1.5 liters, with smaller containers reduced in size);
- Including a notice on SSB containers disclosing the adverse health effects that consumption of the drinks may cause;
- Reducing the calorie content of SSBs to no more than 40 calories per 355 ml (12 ounces);
- Ceasing your company's opposition to governmental measures, such as beverage taxes, warning labels, and marketing restrictions, aimed at reducing the harm from sugar drinks;
- Discontinue advertising and indirect promotions (such as sponsorships that feature brand names) of full-calorie beverages, but rather promote unsweetened beverages.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss what steps your company will take to help protect the public's health and national health-care systems throughout the world.

Sincerely,

ACT+ Alliance for the Control of Tobacco Use and Health Promotion (Brazil)  
Alianza por la Salud Alimentaria (The Nutritional Health Alliance)(Mexico)  
Australia & New Zealand Obesity Society  
Center for Science in the Public Interest\* (United States of America)  
Centre for Science and Environment (India)  
Coalición Latinoamérica Saludable (CLAS; Healthy Latin America Coalition) (Latin America)  
Consumers International (Global)  
The George Institute for Global Health (Australia, China, India, UK)  
Instituto Brasileiro de Defesa do Consumidor (IDEC) (Brazil)  
InterAmerican Heart Foundation (Americas)  
International Baby Food Action Network (Global)  
El Poder del Consumidor (Mexico)  
World Obesity Federation (Global)  
World Public Health Nutrition Association (Global)

\* Please reply via Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., Center for Science in the Public Interest, [mjacobson@cspinet.org](mailto:mjacobson@cspinet.org).

cc: Mr. Sandy Douglas