

# Global Dump Soft Drinks Campaign



January 3, 2008

Mr. E. Neville Isdell  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Chief Executive Officer  
Coca-Cola Company  
One Coca-Cola Plaza  
Atlanta, GA 30313

Dear Mr. Isdell:

Rates of overweight and obesity, including childhood obesity, are rapidly rising throughout the world, leading to increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other diet-related illnesses. Consumption of sugary beverages produced by the Coca-Cola Company has been clearly implicated in this disturbing trend.<sup>1</sup> Increased marketing efforts for such products in Asia, Africa, and Latin America will only accelerate this problem.

The Coca-Cola Company proudly boasts of an international commitment to consumers that “encompasses adhering to the right policies in schools and the marketplace; encouraging physical activity and promoting nutrition education; and continuously meeting changing consumer needs through innovation.”<sup>2</sup> We recognize that your company has supported legislation to remove non-diet soft drinks from all American schools, is complying with new restrictions in the United Kingdom banning broadcast advertising of soft drinks to children under 16, supported front label disclosure of calorie content in Australia, and has pledged to reduce the sugar content of Fanta brand soft drinks in France. However, these steps should be taken on a consistent basis around the world in order to honor Coca-Cola’s pledge to support healthy diets and good nutrition on a global basis.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Ludwig, DS, Peterson, KE, and Gortmaker, SL. Relation Between Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Drinks and Childhood Obesity: a Prospective, Observational Analysis. *Lancet*. 2001; 357: 505-508; James, J, Thomas, P, Cavan, D, and Kerr, D. Preventing Childhood Obesity by Reducing Consumption of Carbonated Drinks: Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial. *British Medical Journal*. April 2004; Vol. 328; Malik, V, Schulze, MB, and Hu, FB. Intake of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Weight Gain: A Systematic Review. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2006; 84: 274-288; Ebbeling, CB, Feldman, HA, Osganian, SK, Chomitz, VR, Ellenbogen, SJ, Ludwig, DS. Effects of Decreasing Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption on Body Weight in Adolescents: A Randomized, Controlled Pilot Study. *Pediatrics*. 2006; 117: 673-680; Popkin, B. and S.J. Nielson. The Sweetening of the World’s Diet. *Obesity Research*. 2003; Vol. 11, No. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Coca-Cola Company. [http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/ourcompany/hal\\_yourhealth.html](http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/ourcompany/hal_yourhealth.html) (Accessed September 13, 2007).

The undersigned organizations representing consumers in all corners of the globe urge the Coca-Cola Company to live up to its commitments in a meaningful way by taking the following actions and requiring its subsidiaries and bottlers around the world to do the same:

1. Cease all marketing of sugar-laden and/or caffeinated beverages to children under 16, including print and broadcast advertising, product placement, Internet advertising, mobile phone messages, athletic event sponsorship, signage, packaging promotions, merchandising, and other means;
2. Stop selling sweetened beverages, including sports drinks, and non-carbonated fruit-flavored beverages, and teas, in all public and private elementary, middle, and high schools. Acceptable beverages in schools include water from drinking fountains and cafeteria taps, seltzer (carbonated) water, and fruit juice in container sizes of 250 ml (8 ounces) or less;
3. Prominently display the calorie content, per serving, on the front labels of containers along with the number of servings per bottle or can as part of a comprehensive labeling system utilizing simple and uniform symbols to convey nutritional value;
4. Include rotating consumer alerts on sugary beverages, such as “High sugar - drink only occasionally” or “For occasional consumption. Drink water to quench thirst;”
5. Limit sponsorships promoting physical activity and health to contributions to “blind” trusts overseen by government agencies that use such funds for programs that do not feature corporate logos, brands, or other proprietary information;
6. Do not interfere with government consideration of fiscal measures, such as a small sales or other tax on soft drinks that would be returned to consumers through the provision of physical activity and nutrition education programs, and through subsidies that reduce the costs of fruits and vegetables. As you know, soft drinks are already taxed in some jurisdictions in the United States and Canada.

In addition, Coca-Cola should focus its adult-oriented marketing primarily on lower-sugar products and should only promote the sale of traditional high-sugar products in reduced size containers. These steps are consistent with recommendations in the World Health Organization’s Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity, and Health and are necessary to facilitate healthy diets. By taking these steps, the Coca-Cola Company would demonstrate that it is serious about its commitment to the public and would help reverse dietary trends that are taking a tragic human and economic toll on consumers world-wide.

Sincerely,

ADELCO, Liga de Acción del Consumidor, Argentina  
Associazione Consumatori Utenti (ACU), Italy  
Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), United States and Canada

Center for Social Responsibility, Singapore  
Consumer Education and Research Center (CERC), India  
Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT), Uganda  
Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia  
Consumers Protection Center – KE.P.KA., Greece  
Corporate Accountability International  
El Poder del Consumidor, Mexico  
International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)  
Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society  
Japan Offspring Fund  
Lingue Pour la Défense du Consommateur au Benin  
National Action Against Obesity (NAAO), United States  
New York Children’s Health Project (NYCHP), United States  
Pro Teste, Brazil  
Sustain, United Kingdom  
Sveriges Konsumenter i Samverkan (Swedish Consumer Coalition), Sweden  
The Food Commission, United Kingdom  
Union for the Protection of Consumers’ Rights, Armenia  
Voluntary Organization in Interest of Consumer Education (VOICE), India  
Zambian Consumers Association