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DRAFT EAST AFRICAN STANDARD

Guidelines on Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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Foreword

Development of the East African Standards has been necessitated by the need for harmonizing requirements governing quality of products and services in the East African Community. It is envisaged that through harmonized standardization, trade barriers that are encountered when goods and services are exchanged within the Community will be removed.

The Community has established an East African Standards Committee (EASC) mandated to develop and issue East African Standards (EAS). The Committee is composed of representatives of the National Standards Bodies in Partner States, together with the representatives from the public and private sector organizations in the community.

East African Standards are developed through Technical Committees that are representative of key stakeholders including government, academia, consumer groups, private sector and other interested parties. Draft East African Standards are circulated to stakeholders through the National Standards Bodies in the Partner States. The comments received are discussed and incorporated before finalization of standards, in accordance with the Principles and procedures for development of East African Standards.

East African Standards are subject to review, to keep pace with technological advances. Users of the East African Standards are therefore expected to ensure that they always have the latest versions of the standards they are implementing.

The committee responsible for this document is Technical Committee EASC/TC 009, *Food packaging and labelling*.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be subject of patent rights. EAC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

INTRODUCTION

This guideline provide general guidance to assist in the development of front-of-pack nutrition labelling, a form of supplementary nutrition information, as a tool to facilitate the consumer's understanding of the nutritional value of the food and their choice of food, consistent with the national dietary guidance or health and nutrition policy of the country or region of implementation.

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Guidelines on Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling

1 Scope

These Guidelines apply to front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) to be used on pre-packaged foods including in the case where simplified nutrition information is displayed near the food (e.g. shelf – tags or food service), for unpackaged foods or for foods sold via online (e.g. information available at point of purchase on websites)

These guidelines exclude the alcoholic beverages, food for special dietary uses, foods in small units and products with nutritional or dietary insignificance.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

DEAS 38: Labelling of pre-packaged foods — General requirements

EAS 803: Guidelines on Nutrition labelling

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1.

Front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL)

any system that presents simplified nutrition information on the front-of-pack of pre-packaged foods. It can include symbols/graphics, text or a combination thereof, that provide information on the overall nutritional value of the food and/ or on the nutrients to be included in FOPNL as described in these guidelines.

3.2

Food in small units

packages where the largest surface area is less than 10 cm²

3.3

Foods with low nutritional significance

foods with low nutritional significance in terms of both its composition and the quantities consumed: e.g. herbs, spices, plain tea and plain coffee to which no other ingredients have been added.

4. Principles for the establishment of FOPNL systems

In addition to the general principles in the Labelling of pre-packaged foods — General requirements (DEAS 38, a FOPNL should be based on the following principles:

4.1. Only one FOPNL system should be recommended by government in each country. However, if multiple FOPNL systems coexist, these should be complementary, not contradictory to each other.

4.2. FOPNL should be applied to the food in a manner consistent with the corresponding nutrient declaration for that food.

4.3 FOPNL should only be provided in addition to and not in place of the nutrient declaration subject to the section 7 of EAS 803

4.4. FOPNL should align with evidence-based national or regional dietary guidance or, in its absence, health and nutrition policies. Consideration should be given to the nutrients and/or the food groups which are discouraged and/or encouraged by these documents.

4.5. FOPNL should present information in a way that is easy to understand and use by consumers in the country or region of implementation. The format of the FOPNL should be supported by scientifically valid consumer research

4.6 FOPNL should be clearly visible on the package/packaging at the point of purchase under normal conditions.

4.7 FOPNL should help consumers to make appropriate comparisons between foods

4.8. FOPNL should be government led but developed in consultation with all interested parties including private sector, consumers, academia, and public health associations among others.

4.9. FOPNL should be implemented in a way that facilitates the broad availability of FOPNL for consumer use.

4.10. FOPNL should be accompanied by a consumer education/ information program to increase consumer understanding and use of FOPNL in line with government recommendations

4.11. FOPNL should be monitored and evaluated to determine effectiveness and impact.

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