

Global Consultation on Oral Health Through Fluoride
17-19 November 2006, Geneva (Switzerland)/Ferney-Voltaire (France)



CALL TO ACTION TO PROMOTE DENTAL HEALTH BY USING FLUORIDE

Eighty experts from thirty countries gathered for a *Global Consultation on Oral Health through Fluoride*, jointly convened by the World Health Organization (WHO), the FDI World Dental Federation and the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) on 17-19 November 2006 in Geneva and Ferney Voltaire, expressed their deep concern about growing disparities in dental health and the lack of progress in tackling the worldwide burden of tooth decay (dental caries), particularly in disadvantaged populations.

The burden of tooth decay affects children, adults and the elderly, disrupts life and causes considerable pain, suffering and economic hardship. Much of the disease still remains untreated, particularly in low and middle-income populations. Prevention by using fluoride is the only realistic way of reducing this burden in populations.

Taking account of the scientific evidence, as well as several WHO World Health Assembly Resolutions¹ and other technical reports², the experts reaffirmed the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and safety of the daily use of optimal fluoride. They confirmed that universal access to fluoride for dental health is a part of the basic human right to health.

Recognising the magnitude of the problem, and in order to achieve this the experts convened by the WHO, FDI and IADR urge governments and other influential bodies to take the following actions:

- Develop effective legislation, necessary directives³ and programmes ensuring access to fluoride for dental health in all countries;
- Include fluoride in health communications, health promotion strategies and programmes;
- Include fluoride for dental health when promoting health through healthy diets; Encourage governments to reduce or remove taxation and tariffs on fluoride products for dental health; and
- Encourage suppliers to improve availability of effective affordable fluoride toothpaste for disadvantaged populations.

These actions will improve quality of life and enhance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by reducing the high dental disease burden of populations, especially children in disadvantaged populations.

The three convening organisations of this consultation offer advice and technical support on any aspect of these recommendations.

¹ Resolutions of the World Health Assembly related to fluoride (WHA 22.30/ WHA 28.64/WHA42.39/ WHA53.17/)

² WHO Technical reports related to fluoride use for dental health: WHO Technical Reports n 846 (1994) / 916 (2003); FDI Policy Statement *Fluoride and Dental Caries* (G2000); The York review--a systematic review of public water fluoridation (British Dental Journal, Volume 192, No. 9, 2002); Topical fluoride (toothpastes, mouthrinses, gels or varnishes) for preventing dental caries in children and adolescents, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006 Issue 4

³ WHO Essential Medicines List, 14th edition, March 2005