

## **UNESDA Statement: Soft drinks are not responsible for obesity**

Soft drinks are not responsible for obesity. Soft drinks contribute less than 3% of calories to the average daily diet in Europe and no and low-calorie drinks account for 30% of sales in many countries.

To tackle obesity successfully needs a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach working with governments, industry, the healthcare community and civil society to change behaviour, and show people how to eat a balanced diet and lead healthy lifestyles.

Experts, from the World Health Organisation to the European Commission, acknowledge that rising obesity levels are due to a range of factors:

- Modern lifestyles which expend less energy than in the past – more cars, less walking, labour saving household appliances, more sedentary employment, less active leisure time.
- A reduction in physical exercise over the past 30 years - including in children, who spend less time outside, exploring – and more time inside and under supervision.
- Unbalanced diets: Humans need a balance of nutrients to stay healthy, including fats, sugars, proteins, fibre etc. However, when certain nutrients are over-consumed and others eaten in insufficient quantities then this constitutes a bad diet.
- Lack of nutrition knowledge: Education in optimal nutrition is key to ensure that people know how to feed themselves and their families.