

# Recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Diabetes and Nutrition

## Scientific Session on Trans Fatty Acids (TFA)

### Morocco 2026

The scientific session on Trans Fatty Acids was held as part of the 15th International Colloquium on Diabetes and Nutrition, “**Diabetes Morocco 2026**,” on May 8–9, 2026, at the International University of Rabat. The colloquium was organized by the Moroccan League for the Fight Against Diabetes in collaboration with:

- The Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation
- The WHO Morocco Office
- The International Diabetes Federation
- The Moroccan Society of Medical Sciences (SMSM)
- The Moroccan Society of Nutrition, Health and Environment (SMNSE)
- The Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center – American University of Beirut
- And the International University of Rabat.

At the conclusion of this scientific session, the participants — including representatives of public institutions, scientific experts, healthcare professionals, academics, industry stakeholders, civil society, and international partners — formulated the following recommendations:

### 1. Recognizing the Elimination of TFA as a National Public Health Priority

Participants emphasize that TFA constitute a major preventable risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and non-communicable diseases. Their elimination must be considered an urgent national priority and integrated into Moroccan strategies for the prevention of chronic diseases.

The available scientific evidence clearly demonstrates the link between TFA consumption and increased cardiovascular mortality and morbidity. Participants recall that TFA represent an “invisible risk” for consumers, particularly in ultra-processed foods and industrial bakery products.

## 2. Developing and Implementing a National Moroccan Strategy for TFA Elimination

Participants recommend the development of a multisectoral national strategy aimed at the progressive reduction and ultimate elimination of industrial TFA in Morocco.

This strategy should include:

- Advocacy and awareness-raising
- Regulation and law enforcement
- Monitoring and control
- Communication and behavior change
- Community mobilization
- Strengthening of technical and scientific capacities
- Coordinated involvement of all relevant sectors

## 3. Strengthening the Regulatory Framework in Line with WHO Recommendations

Participants recommend the adoption of strong and harmonized regulatory measures to ensure the sustainable elimination of industrial TFA.

In accordance with the World Health Organization's REPLACE framework, two priority options are recommended:

- Banning partially hydrogenated oils (PHO)
- Limiting TFA content in processed foods

Participants emphasize that voluntary industry approaches may complement regulatory measures but cannot substitute for them.

## 4. Strengthening Nutritional Labeling and Consumer Transparency

Participants recommend:

- The introduction of clear and simplified nutritional labeling
- The strengthening of front-of-pack nutritional information systems
- The explicit inclusion of TFA in labeling requirements

Discussions highlighted that consumers cannot make informed choices when harmful ingredients are not clearly identified.

The use of the Nutri-Score and other simplified labeling systems could contribute to improving consumer understanding and promoting healthier food choices.

## 5. Developing National Awareness and Communication Campaigns

Participants recommend the implementation of national communication campaigns targeting:

- Consumers
- Young people
- Families
- Bakeries
- Agri-food industries
- Economic operators
- Local communities

Campaigns should address:

- Understanding of TFA
- Their effects on health
- Healthier alternatives
- Ways to make informed food choices

Social media, mass media, and community-based approaches must be fully mobilized.

## 6. Strengthening Surveillance and Analytical Capacities

Participants recommend:

- Strengthening national TFA surveillance systems
- Developing the capacities of national laboratories
- Improving analytical methodologies for measuring TFA in foods
- Regular monitoring of cardiovascular mortality and morbidity indicators

Effective control and surveillance systems are necessary to ensure the enforcement of regulations and to measure the impact of interventions.

## 7. Ensuring a Coordinated Multisectoral Approach

Participants emphasize that the elimination of TFA requires an integrated approach involving:

- The Ministry of Health
- Relevant ministries
- Regulatory authorities
- Agri-food industries
- Universities and research centers

- Civil society
- The media
- Local authorities
- International partners

The Ministry of Health is called upon to ensure national leadership and coordination of the process.

## 8. Supporting Industry in Product Reformulation

Participants acknowledge the challenges that industry will face, including:

- Reformulation costs
- Technological adjustments
- Research and development investments
- Constraints related to taste, texture, and product preservation

They recommend:

- The development of affordable alternatives to TFA
- Strengthening collaboration between universities and industries
- Technical support for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Preserving the sensory quality of reformulated products

## 9. Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Participants recall that populations with low socioeconomic status are particularly exposed to TFA-rich foods due to their low cost and wide availability.

National strategies should prioritize:

- Vulnerable populations
- People living with obesity
- Children and adolescents
- Consumers heavily exposed to ultra-processed foods

## 10. Strengthening Controls on Imported Products

Participants recommend that regulatory measures also apply to imported products in order to avoid any market inconsistency.

They advocate for:

- Strengthening border controls

- Improving food inspection systems
- Harmonizing standards applicable to both local and imported products
- Applying labeling requirements to imported foods

Close collaboration between health, customs, trade, and regulatory authorities is deemed essential.

## 11. Promoting Research and Economic Analyses

Participants recommend:

- The development of scientific studies on TFA in Morocco
- The conduct of cost-effectiveness analyses of elimination policies
- The assessment of the health and economic impact of interventions
- Support for research on technological alternatives to TFA

They emphasize that investment in TFA elimination should be regarded as a sustainable investment that reduces the long-term costs of cardiovascular diseases.

## 12. Establishing an Action Plan Before the Next Meeting

Before the next scientific gathering, participants recommend:

- The development of a national advocacy plan
- The initiation of concrete regulatory discussions
- The launch of awareness-raising activities
- The official engagement of stakeholders
- The definition of a national roadmap for the progressive elimination of TFA

## Conclusion

The participants of the 15th International Symposium on Diabetes and Nutrition reaffirm that the elimination of industrial trans fatty acids is achievable and constitutes an effective, cost-efficient, and priority intervention to protect the health of the Moroccan population.

They call for a collective and urgent national mobilization in order to translate the available scientific knowledge into concrete, coordinated, and sustainable actions.

## SESSION: ELIMINATION OF TRANS FATTY ACIDS (TFAs)

# 12 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE TRANS FATTY ACIDS IN MOROCCO

For a healthier population and a reduction in cardiovascular diseases

### 01 STRENGTHEN THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK



Adopt ambitious legal measures: prohibit partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) and set strict limits on trans fatty acids in all foods. Harmonize standards for local and imported products.

### 02 ESTABLISH MONITORING AND EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT



Strengthen monitoring systems for TFAs in foods and laboratories nationwide. Ensure regular control of local and imported products and compliance with standards.

### 03 IMPROVE LABELLING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION

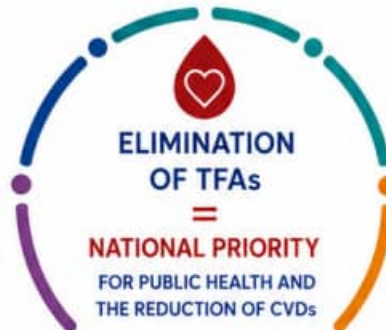


Make nutrition labelling mandatory, clear and easy to understand. Warn consumers about trans fats (TFAs) on labels (e.g., "may contain partially hydrogenated oils") to guide healthier food choices.

### 04 STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS



Implement nationwide multi-channel campaigns to raise awareness of the health risks of TFAs and promote healthier alternatives. Engage media, social networks and opinion leaders.



### 05 MOBILIZE COMMUNITIES AND PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Engage local communities, associations and health networks to promote healthier food choices, especially among the most vulnerable populations.

### 06 ENGAGE INDUSTRY IN REFORMULATION



Provide technical and financial support to the food industry, including SMEs, to reformulate products with healthier alternatives that are safe, affordable and acceptable in terms of taste, texture and accessibility.

### 07 PROMOTE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



Encourage research and the development of healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate alternatives in Morocco by strengthening partnerships between universities, research centers and industry.

### 08 INTEGRATE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



Assess the cost-effectiveness of TFA elimination policies and mobilize the necessary resources. Consider TFA elimination as a long-term investment to reduce the burden of cardiovascular diseases.

### 09 ENSURE MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION



Establish national multisectoral governance involving the sectors of Health, Industry, Agriculture, Trade, Education, Finance, Research, Civil Society and Territorial Authorities.

### 10 PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS



Develop targeted actions to reduce exposure among vulnerable populations and priority groups (low-income populations, people with overweight/obesity, children, people with diabetes, etc.).

### 11 MONITOR INDICATORS AND EVALUATE IMPACTS



Regularly monitor TFA consumption indicators and trends in cardiovascular diseases (mortality, morbidity) to measure progress and adjust interventions.

### 12 DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN



Define a clear national strategy to eliminate TFAs, with measurable objectives, a timeline and monitoring mechanisms, involving all relevant stakeholders and partners.

TFAs: Trans Fatty Acids | PHOs: Partially Hydrogenated Oils | CVDs: Cardiovascular Diseases | SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises