

'Iodine deficiency serious health problem in Pakistan'

OUR STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is rated 6th amongst the countries where iodine deficiency has become a serious public health problem and according to UNICEF (1998), 70 percent of the total population in the country is at risk of IDD and around 50 million people are suffering from iodine deficiency, 6.5 million of whom are facing severe type of deficiency.

In the backdrop of above-mentioned facts, TheNetwork for Consumer Protection a non-profit organisation as part of its campaign for "Advocacy, Awareness and promotion of IDD legislation enforcement" organised a consultative meeting and formed a National Alliance of Large Consumers on IDD Control to develop an action plan in consultation with large consumers.

Representatives from Hotel industry, food chains, shopkeepers, food and beverage departments of universities/hospitals of twin cities participated in this meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Nutrition

Officer UNICEF Dr Shaid Awan discussed public health implications of IDDs in children and pregnant women and measures to control them and common causes of iodine deficiency.

Communication officer UNICEF Sheeba Afghani stressed the role of civil society for awareness raising campaign and urged the government to develop policies for universal salt iodization in order to eliminate the IDDs from Pakistan.

While Media Adviser Nutrition Wing, Yaqoob Qurshi explained the implementation of salt industries and status of IDDs legislation and the barriers in its implementation. According to National Nutrition survey only 17 percent of the population is using iodized salt and 50 percent of the population is on risk of developing IDDs.

Menaz Ajmal discussed action plan and took commitments and suggestions on use of iodized salt and consensus was taken from the large consumers for the follow up meeting in March.