



## **Pakistan launches an awareness campaign on iodine deficiency**

Universal iodisation of salt is the most inexpensive way of preventing iodine deficiency disorders.

An awareness campaign on iodine deficiency disorders has been launched in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in recognition of the importance of iodized salt to prevent irreversible intellectual impairment. The campaign was launched by the Network for Consumer Protection in collaboration with UNICEF, and it primarily targets women of reproductive age, children, and parents.

Executive Coordinator of The Network, Nadeem Iqbal, said that the perception of the health complications resulting from iodine deficiency is still limited to goiter. Only 4% of the population are aware of its most severe health impact: irreversible mental impairment and loss of 10 to 15 IQ points.

Unicef's nutrition Officer Dr. Saeed Qadir termed iodine deficiency as the single most common yet preventable cause of mental handicap worldwide. He dismissed the misconception that iodine affects fertility among consumers and called for bringing all stakeholders on board and utilizing all components of corporate social responsibility to highlight the significance of iodised salt for health. He also recommended the need for large consumers to display posters at outlets to build public awareness of the benefits of iodised salt.

According to NNS 2011, iodine deficiency impacts 52.3% women of child-bearing age and 23% schoolchildren, and 37% mothers are severely iodine deficient.