A call for global action to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects worldwide

The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) is calling for urgent action demanding universal mandatory food fortification with vitamin B9 (folic acid) to reduce the risk of Spina Bifida, Anencephaly, or Encephalocele, also called Neural Tube Defects (NTDs).

IF calls on all relevant stakeholders to support a global action that includes the following recommendations:

- To develop and implement mandatory fortification programs of vitamin B9 in staple foods for the prevention of NTDs

- To make mandatory fortification of staple foods with vitamin B9 a global priority

- To raise awareness of NTDs, combat stigma associated with them and of effective rights-based prevention strategies which respect the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities among all relevant stakeholders including government officials, health professionals, civil society and the public

- To ensure that mandatory fortification programs adhere to international standards and guidelines

- To promote and strengthen primary prevention of NTDs through food fortification by involving all relevant actors. In particular, ensuring that the development of the policies are done in accordance with article 4(3) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by consulting persons with disabilities, including persons with NTDs, and their representative organisations in the development of policies relevant to them, including policies for the primary prevention of NTDs

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