

## **HLSG 8 - Discussion paper: Pledges, and continuing activity, in support of collective pledges.**

1. This paper outlines for discussion two potentially important areas of activity by partners which have been raised with us. We need to decide how the best fit with existing pledges can be achieved. The two areas are:

- (a) proposed pledges which support an existing pledge: we have received a proposed individual pledge from a catering supplier (3663) with the intention of (i) supporting signatories of the out of home calorie labelling pledge through provision of calorie information on supplied goods and (ii) acting as an advocate for the pledge including among small businesses. Other suppliers may be willing to make or sign up to a similar pledge. This is one instance of a broader issue which also applies to the salt and trans fats pledges and includes buying consortia as well as suppliers

- (b) activity which pre-dates the Responsibility Deal, or activity which achieves the same effect as a collective pledge but is not 'captured' by it. For example the pledge on artificial trans fats envisages their removal by the end of 2011, and does not recognise or "reward" businesses who had avoided the use of artificial trans fats and intend to continue not using artificial trans fats in the future.

2. On the first issue, the question is **should individual pledges in support of collective pledges be opened up to other potential signatories – i.e. effectively becoming collective pledges themselves?**

On the one hand an individual pledge gives companies maximum ability to be innovative and to shape proposals creatively and radically. On the other hand, a number of broadly similar individual pledges could be confusing and harder to assess in terms of impact than a single pledge.

3. The second issue raises the question of **how to draw a line between actions which predate the launch of the Responsibility Deal but have a continuing effect into the future, and actions which do not have continuing effect.** Removal of trans fats and provision of out of home calorie labelling are examples of activity which have a continuing effect. On the one hand greater recognition of actions commensurate with a collective pledge may help stimulate further efforts and bring a wider range of business 'into the tent'. However, unless carefully framed there is a risk of simply recording activity which is largely historic. It would be possible (as we have proposed in relation to calorie reduction) to record pre-existing activity as a 'one-off' exercise by completing the relevant monitoring template at the outset of signing up to the pledge – or this could be done on an ongoing annual basis. It might also be possible to frame a "companion" pledge – for example for those companies avoiding the use of artificial trans fats in the future.

4. Our approach clearly needs to –

- maintain the credibility of the pledging process
  - provide recognition for activity which can legitimately be included under the Responsibility Deal “label”
  - encourage the greatest number of businesses to take appropriate action and make commitments
  - preserve the clarity of purpose and relative simplicity of our current structure of pledges.
5. The views of HLSG members on the above questions and issues would be most welcome. If appropriate we will then frame and circulate firm proposals. It should also be noted that any significant changes to the ‘pledging architecture’ would be subject to discussion and agreement by the Responsibility Deal Plenary Group in order to ensure consistency across the Deal as a whole.