

Philipp Navratil, CEO
Nestlé
Avenue Nestlé 55
1800 Vevey
Switzerland

November 17, 2025

Re: Nestlé's double standard over added sugar in baby foods

Dear Philipp Navratil,

We, the undersigned civil society, consumer protection, and research organisations from Africa, are writing to express our deep concern regarding Nestlé's double standard over added sugar in baby foods sold in African countries.

A new Public Eye investigation has revealed that Cerelac baby cereals sold in African countries contain high amounts of added sugar, while such products are sold with no added sugar in Switzerland, where the company is headquartered, and in key European markets.

These findings come from an analysis of around 100 Cerelac products sold in 20 African countries conducted by INOVALYS, a leading French public laboratory specialising in the agri-food sector. 90% of the products contained added sugar- nearly 6 grams per serving on average.

In India, after the publication of a previous Public Eye investigation led to a major controversy over high sugar levels in Cerelac, Nestlé announced that it would replace its entire portfolio. But Nestlé keeps adding high levels of sugar to its most popular baby cereal brand sold in Africa.

The amount of added sugar is, in most cases, not even disclosed by Nestlé. Yet, you promote Cerelac as specially designed to meet the nutritional needs of babies and offering an optimal level of vitamins and minerals for their proper growth, leading consumers to believe that the products are healthy.

World Health Organization's guidelines recommend no added sugar in baby foods, as exposure to sugar early in life can create a life-long preference for sugary products and is a major risk factor for developing obesity. Nestlé is well aware of these risks. And you know how to do things differently. But you made a deliberate decision to feed children in Africa with less healthy options.

Nestlé's belated commitment to introduce no-added-sugar Cerelac variants in all markets, including in Africa, is too little, too late. This half-measure is wholly inadequate and insults the intelligence of African parents. Nestlé must immediately issue a public apology for these shocking regional discrepancies and stop adding sugar to all its baby foods sold in Africa.

Let us be clear: By adding sugar to infant cereals, Nestlé is deliberately putting the health of African babies at risk for profit. You are the architects of a preventable public health

catastrophe and fueling an epidemic of diet-related non-communicable diseases across the continent.

This must end - now. If added sugar is not suitable for Swiss and European children, it is not suitable for children in Africa and beyond. All babies have an equal right to healthy nutrition - regardless of their nationality or skin color.

Do the right thing. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Today! The world is watching, and your compliance is not optional.

Sincerely.

League for Consumer Defence in Benin (LDCB), Benin

Benin Health and Consumers' Survival (BSSC), Benin

Consumers Association of Burundi (ABUCO), Burundi

Centre for Research and Education for Development (CREPD), Cameroon

Ivorian Consumers' Association (AIC), Ivory Coast

Moroccan Society for Nutrition, Health and the Environment (SMNSE), Morocco

Moroccan League for the Fight Against Diabetes (LMLCD), Morocco

Justiça Ambiental (JA!), Mozambique

Nutrition and Food Security Alliance of Namibia (NAFSAN), Namibia

Consumer Advocacy and Empowerment Foundation (CADEF), Nigeria

Association for the Defence of the Environment and Consumers (ADEC), Senegal

groundWork, Friends of the Earth South Africa, South Africa

Healthy Living Alliance (HEALA), South Africa

PRICELESS SA - SAMRC/Wits Centre for Health Economics and Decision Science, South Africa

Grow Great, South Africa

Children's Institute, South Africa

Togolese Consumers Association (ATC), Togo

HANEN Association for the Promotion of Breastfeeding, Tunisia

Safe Food, Zimbabwe

International Babyfood Action Network (IBFAN), Africa