
South Africa proposal to introduce a tax on SSBs is open for comments until 22 August



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South Africa's Minister of Finance announced in February 2016 a proposal to introduce a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) effective from 1 April 2017 to address the country's high prevalence in obesity and diet-related NCDs.

The problem of obesity has grown over the past 30 years in South Africa resulting in the country being ranked as the most obese country in sub-Saharan Africa. The introduction of a tax on SSBs is one of the measures identified by the Department of Health to help achieve its ambitious target of a 10% reduction in obesity prevalence by 2020.

Fiscal interventions such as taxes are increasingly recognised as effective complementary tools to help tackle the problem of negative externalities associated with pollution, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and also the obesity epidemic at a population level.

Countries such as Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Mauritius and Norway have all levied taxes on SSBs whereas other countries such as the United Kingdom, Thailand and Australia have recently announced their intention to introduce such taxes as part of a package of measures to help deal with the excessive intake of added sugars.

The South African proposal can be accessed on the website of the [National Treasury](#) [1] and is open for comments until 22 August 2016.

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