

January 2014

IBFAN Briefing on upcoming issues at the WHO EB 134, 20-25th Jan 2014

1 EB 134/15 on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition¹

Since 2014 is a reporting year for infant and young child feeding and [WHA 65.6](#) called for “clarification and guidance on the inappropriate marketing of foods for infants and young children” a new Resolution is needed to:

- Recognize the work done regarding clarification on inappropriate marketing of foods for infants and young children and as per WHA65.6 request WHO to continue work on this issue and provide guidance;
- Recommend that Member States begin addressing this problem effectively at policy level by using the following 5 criteria in Annex 2 of the Secretariat Report, namely that promotion is inappropriate if:
 1. it undermines recommended breastfeeding practices;
 2. it contributes to childhood obesity and noncommunicable diseases;
 3. the product does not make an appropriate contribution to infant and young child nutrition in the country;
 4. it undermines the use of suitable home-prepared and/or local foods;
 5. it is misleading, confusing, or could lead to inappropriate use.

Promotional claims about micronutrient ingredients and other inappropriate marketing of baby foods contribute to poor rates of exclusive and continued breastfeeding and, when such products are high in sugar, salt or fat they can increase obesity and other underlying risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Such promotion can also undermine confidence in local foods and harm local food security. Formulas and supplements for nursing mothers, can also undermine confidence in breastfeeding.

- Request that WHO provides guidance on how to address Conflicts of Interest in nutrition. This is especially important since the report mentions Private Sector and the public-private partnership Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) 8 times. There is currently no over-arching WHO Policy on COI to provide such guidance

2 Standing Committee on NGOs: GAIN, ISDI etc

Entities such as ISDI² Croplife International,³ ILSI⁴ and the Industry Council for Development⁵ are currently in official relations with WHO⁶ even though they represent the private commercial sector and are guided by market profit-making logic (whose PRIMARY interest clashes inevitably with that of WHO). Conflating the ‘not-for profit’ status and the ‘not working in the interest of profit-making’ is one of the key reasons why such entities gained NGO status.

IBFAN welcomes the proposal in the paper EB 134/8 on Non-State Actors that the work of the Standing Committee on NGOs is made public. Because its currently confidential it is not known how many entities will be reviewed or considered in the EB 134 this week. However IBFAN is applying and the [Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition \(GAIN\)](#) will resubmit its application following the decision of the 132nd Executive Board to: *“...postpone consideration of the application for admission into official relations from The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition to the Executive Board's 134th session, and requested that the following information be provided to the Board through its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations: information concerning the nature and extent of the Alliance's links with the global food*

¹ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB134/B134_15-en.pdf

² International Special Dietary Foods Industries (ISDI) represents the baby feeding industry.

³ [Croplife International](#) represents companies such as BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow Agrosciences, DuPont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta

⁴ International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Board of Trustees includes Nestlé, Coca Cola, Kellogg, Pepsi, Monsanto, Ajinomoto, Danone, General Mills, http://www.ilsa.org/Documents/ILSI_AR_2012.pdf

⁵ The International Council for Development (ICD) consists of food companies such as Nestle, Mars, Unilever and Ajinomoto. <http://icd-online.org>

⁶ <http://www.who.int/civilsociety/relations/NGOs-in-Official-Relations-with-WHO.pdf>

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*industry, and the position of the Alliance with regard to its support and advocacy of WHO's nutrition policies, including infant feeding and marketing of complementary food"*⁷

With assets of \$61 million, GAIN claims to work with 600 companies and civil society organisations. "GAIN's goal is reach 1.5 billion people with fortified foods that have a sustainable nutritional impact."⁸ Following complaints from IBFAN GAIN has now 'divorced' from the baby food manufacturer Danone.⁹ However, because GAIN is focusing on the first '1000 days' many other global food companies who market foods and supplements for infants, young children and nursing mothers are members of GAIN. IBFAN considers that it is a misnomer for GAIN to be listed as an NGO and accepted into official relations with WHO when it has such a commercial objective. Indeed this would go against WHO's current valid NGO policy.¹⁰

The Standing Committee is composed of 5 member states: [Malaysia](#), [Myanmar](#), [Namibia](#), [Panama](#) and [Lebanon](#).¹¹

⁷ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB132/B132_R9-en.pdf

⁸ <http://www.gainhealth.org/sites/www.gainhealth.org/files/FINAL%20AUDITED%20FS%202011-12.pdf>

⁹ Personal communication with GAIN staff.

¹⁰ The NGO Policy defines NGOs as those groups whose main area of competence fall within the purview of WHO and whose aims and activities are in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Constitution of WHO). The NGO shall centre on development work in health or health-related fields, and shall be free from concerns that are primarily of a commercial or profit-making nature. (Basic Documents, 47th edition, 2009)

¹¹ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB133/B133_9Add1-en.pdf