



IBFAN comments on Draft Outcome Document of the High-level Meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

IBFAN wholeheartedly supports WHO's aim to raise the profile of NCDs and is pleased that the Outcome document contains several important recommendations. However it also has glaring omissions which will give the industries that are causing chronic diseases more power and influence over policy setting.

Recommendation 1: Paras 44,45, 50 and 51. Throughout the document there is much talk of partnership, but a lack of any reference to conflicts of interest, with no clarity regarding the appropriate roles for private sector and civil society actors. In their joint *Statement of concern on lack of clarity on role of industry*¹ the 115 endorsers propose the development of a 'code of conduct' that sets out a clear framework for engaging the food and beverage industry and the need to effectively manage and minimise conflicts of interest. The NGOs also call for a differentiation between policy development and implementation so that public health policy is protected from commercial interests.

The Outcomes Document must follow the recommendations of the NGO statement and in the interests of transparency the text needs to make a distinction between NGOs that are set up by businesses or represent business purposes, and public-interest NGOs.

Recommendation 2: Para 29: The Outcomes Document must acknowledge that many NCDs are corporate driven diseases. The current draft treats these corporations the same as public interest NGOs - calling on Member States to "*Acknowledge the important role to be played by civil society, academia, industry, the private sector and other stakeholders.*"

Recommendation 3 Para 5, 25: The Outcomes Document must refer to the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding* (WHO 2002) and the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions.² This is a serious omission considering that WHO's 2010 *Global Status report on NCDs*³ states on P53 that: "*There is evidence linking nutrition during pregnancy and early life to the predisposition to NCDs later in life. Individuals who were breastfed experienced lower mean blood pressure and total cholesterol, higher performance in intelligence tests, and lower risk of overweight/obesity and type 2 diabetes.*" WHO's *Action Plan on Prevention and Control of NCDs 2008-2013* also lists breastfeeding as a key intervention in the strategy to promote healthy diets yet.

¹ <http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/458>

² http://www.ibfan.org/issue-international_code-full.html

³ http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240686458_eng.pdf

Recommendation 4 The Outcomes Document must recommend that Member States establish regulatory frameworks that protect child rights, such as the UN recommendations for controls on the marketing of infant foods. Independent monitoring and evaluation of marketing and of interventions must underpin all interventions and actions.

Recommendation 5 The Outcomes Document must call on the UN/FAO global standard setting body, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, to set standards and guidelines that support rather than undermine the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. For example, Codex must 'fix the Standard for Cereal Based Foods for infants and young children, which allows products to contain 30% sugar.'⁴

Recommendation 5 Para 39 The Outcomes Document must emphasise the importance of the WHO *Recommendations on the Marketing of foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children*. These specifically call on governments to take the lead in policy setting, to restrict marketing, including in 'settings where children gather' (e.g. schools) and to 'avoid conflicts of interest.' This is not only another serious omission but Para 43 of the Zero draft makes recommendations that are in direct contradiction to it by calling on the private sector to "Ensure responsible and accountable marketing and advertising" The objective of the WHO Recommendations is NOT "responsible marketing" but reduction in exposure.

Recommendation 6 The Outcomes Document must contain a warning about inappropriateness of sponsorship of education by food and beverage and other for profit industries. See briefing: *Tackling Obesity: how companies use education to build Trust* <http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/412>

Recommendation 7 Para 34 i "Protect and develop the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and protection of their traditional medicine to maintain their health practices, including conservation of medicinal plants, animals and minerals."

This is an interesting addition but it should not refer to medicines only. The Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child feeding and the WHA Resolution 55.25 on infant and Young Child Nutrition (2002) highlighted the importance of "nutritionally adequate and safe complementary feeding through introduction of safe and adequate amounts of indigenous foodstuffs and local foods..."

On this link <http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/466> there are several papers from Australia, Canada and the USA that provide evidence of the long term ineffectiveness of voluntary controls on advertising to children. IBFAN's monitoring reports *Breaking the Rules* (<http://www.ibfan.org/icdc/>) provide further evidence of the need for comprehensive regulation. Harmful marketing is rampant in countries that have not yet implemented the UN requirements as law. The attached graphs from Euromonitor International, 2008 (Global Packaged Foods: Market Opportunities for Baby Food to 2013) shows the effectiveness of regulation in India and the ongoing struggle in the Philippines where "companies are fighting a rearguard action against regulation on a country-by-country basis."

For the Zero Draft Outcome Document: http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2011/introduction_doc.pdf

For the UN and WHO websites.

www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/ncdiseases.shtml

www.who.int/nmh/events/un_ncd_summit2011/en/

For other background papers and webcasts: <http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/461>

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⁴ EU and US block Thailand's proposal to reduce sugar in baby foods, 2006 IBFAN Press Release: http://www.ibfan.org/news-2006-eu_us.html