

The global voice for consumers. La voix des consommateurs à travers le monde.
La voz global para la defensa de los consumidores



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Thank you, chairperson.

As Consumers International, the global federation of consumer organisations worldwide and an IBFAN founding member, we welcome the opportunity to address the Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition.

Poor infant and young child feeding practices are central to the problem of child malnutrition and survival and yet resources to protect, support and promote breastfeeding are far from commensurate with its importance and UNICEF warns that breastfeeding rates are stagnant or declining in many areas.

We are concerned that the overemphasis on micronutrient interventions in the current plan, neglects the underlying causes of childhood malnutrition, many of which are in the 2002 Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

We wish to raise the following points:

Firstly the implementation plan should include indicators for the periodic evaluation of policies and programmes, as well as the identification of gaps and action plans to bridge them.

Secondly we would like WHO to assist countries to end the inappropriate promotion of commercial complementary foods for infants and young children (WHA 63.23). In order to halt any further reappearance of promotional strategies that contravene the International Code on Marketing, the implementation plan should also include independent monitoring and reporting of such Code violations. This would be in line with Para 44 of the Global Strategy, which specifically obligates the infant feeding industry to provide safe products according to Codex Alimentarius and follow the Code and all its resolutions.

Third, the proposal in para 31 to establish adequate mechanisms to safeguard against potential conflicts of interest should also be addressed by WHO and international partners, and not limited to member states. These mechanisms should be established before initiatives such as SUN are promoted to member states.

We endorse the Resolution proposed by Swaziland and Uganda in Conference document 6.

Finally we invite Member States to join us for the World Breastfeeding Conference in New Delhi on 6-9th December, in partnership with Government of India, which focuses on the Global Strategy and with the objective of "Lets Protect Every Feeding Mother", and campaign line, "Babies Need Mom-made Not Man-made".

Thank you Chair.

Statement Read at World Health Assembly on 24 May , 2012, By Dr Arun Gupta regional coordinator International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia.