

## International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

Meeting: Executive Board 138<sup>th</sup> session

Agenda Item:

6.1 Maternal, infant and young child nutrition

Statement:

IBFAN participated in the consultative process of the development of the *Guidance* and appreciates a range of good suggestions it contains. For example, the much needed clarity that formulas for older babies (up to 36 months) are covered by the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and Resolutions is a timely guidance for Codex. This joint WHO/FAO program is to start work on the scope and labelling provisions of the Follow up Formula standard under review. However, the reference to Codex in Op2d of the Resolution must be changed as the poor Conflict of Interest rules in Codex lead to compromised standards, which are often not coherent with WHA Resolutions and guidelines.

We wish to alert the Board that Recommendation 4 seems to run counter the aim of the Guidance as it legitimizes advertising, promotion, sponsorship and would undermine national laws already banning such practices.

Furthermore, the exceptions in Rec6 regarding emergencies and officially sanctioned health programs contradict earlier WHA resolutions, notably:

- WHA 47.5 which provides a set of conditions for MS when planning, implementing and supporting emergency relief operations.
- WHA 63.23 which, with the reference to the *Operational Guidance on Infant Feeding in Emergencies*, highlights the need to minimize the risks of artificial feeding by ensuring that any required breastmilk substitutes are purchased, distributed and used according to strict criteria;
- WHA 47.5. which calls on MS to ensure no donations of free or subsidized supplies of breastmilk substitutes and other products covered by the International Code in **any part of the health care system.**

Unless these exceptions are removed, the governing bodies undermine their own previous decisions and the Guidance risks to provide direct access of companies to the most vulnerable.

We look forward to an improved version to ensure the Guidance becomes an effective tool to end inappropriate promotion of foods IYC.