

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

Meeting:

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

13.3 Update on the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity

Statement:

I speak on behalf of IBFAN - a global network of 273 organizations to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and optimal IYCF.

We thank the Commission for their report. It indicates that the global target for 2025 adopted by Resolution 65.6 - in which of “no increase in childhood overweight” may not be achievable without effective interventions. The policy brief calls on policy makers to ensure the “regulation of marketing of food and beverages to children, and complementary foods”.

Public policies thus need to:

- protect and promote safe and diversified healthy diets, and adequate complementary feeding emphasizing on locally-produced foods
- restrict promotion of commercial formula milks for older infants and young children

These growing-up milks, target children from 1 year on, are high in sugar, addictive, lead to higher energy intakes, and there is no regulation on their promotion. Yet, such regulation is necessary because:

- industry marketing misleads the public, presenting these products as necessary
- evidence clearly shows their consumption contributes to obesity
- the lack of restriction results in high sales and consumption
- And crucially, by exploiting loopholes in the International Code, industry uses promotion of these milks to indirectly promote infant formula by cross-branding tactics, undermining breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding

We urge Member States to ensure mechanisms to restrict promotion of growing-up milks and similar products, in order to give effect to the WHA resolution 65.6., or else by 2025, there will be 70 million obese children.

Such restrictions should include:

- no advertising to public
- provision of objective and consistent information and appropriate labeling
- prohibition of industry’s contact with parents
- prohibition of donations or low-cost sales to health care systems and of free samples
- prohibition of company sponsorship to health workers and programs

<https://apps.who.int/ngostatements/content/international-baby-food-action-network-ibfan-8?destination=node/1635>