



RIO DE JANEIRO DECLARATION A CALL TO ACTION

We, citizens of the whole world, call on all governments, professionals, companies and everybody to respect the right of mothers and children to breastfeed. While mothers have the sovereign right over their own bodies to decide how they feed their babies, states have a duty to ensure that they do not face obstacles to breastfeeding nor healthy complementary feeding.

Breastfeeding is one of the most important resources to face the climate crisis and social inequalities and violence. It is part of the imperative need to protect the environment and give future generations the opportunity for a better and dignified life. Breastfeeding promotes healthy growth and empathy from the beginning of life and is the only antidote against violence.

This is the conclusion of the debates of the 3rd World Breastfeeding Conference, held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2019, in conjunction with the 15th Brazilian National Breastfeeding Conference (ENAM). For these events, 2400 mothers, professionals and experts from Brazil, and 60 other countries from Latin America and the rest of the world gathered to assess the progress made in the protection and promotion of breastfeeding since 1981, when the International Code was adopted.

Breastfeeding programs and incentives must be implemented to ensure that the human right to breastfeeding is respected. The consumption of ultraprocessed foods must be eliminated or limited. Breastfeeding for two years and beyond protects the environment and must be part of the ecological efforts to save the world.

There are international instruments that include this vision of breastfeeding and healthy complementary feeding, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (Code), the ILO conventions, the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi), the Innocenti Declaration and others. We must ensure that all policy setting processes are free from commercial influence.

Participants in the 3rd WBC / 15th ENAM / 5th ENACS / 1st WCFC declare their commitment to the following actions:

1. Continuation of policies for the **protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and healthy complementary feeding**: with a coordinating committee and the necessary funding secured.

2. **Protection of maternity** at work: 6 months minimum paid maternity leave for all women.

3. Protection **against unethical marketing** of products that replace breastfeeding: implementation of the International Code and national laws.

4. Support for **humanized childbirth** by strengthening the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, human milk banks, kangaroo mother care and mother-to-mother support groups through counseling practices.

5. Serious **emergencies** compromise the health of infants; in emergencies breastfeeding should be the first resource, implementing international guidelines.ⁱ

We, citizens of the world, will continue to work towards achieving these goals and fighting for compliance with these instruments and we call on all governments and citizens of the world to join this fight.

Rio de Janeiro, 15 November 2019

ⁱ [Operational Guidance for Emergency Relief Staff and Programme Managers](#), [IFE Core Group](#) Version 3 October 2017