

75th World Health Assembly

Bangladesh Statement on Agenda Items 18.1 and 18.2

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bangladesh speaks on behalf of eleven Member States of South East Asia. At the outset, we thank the Secretariat for preparing the technical brief and a comprehensive report on “MIYCN”.

2. Breastfeeding is a socio-cultural component of human heritage binding the newborn with the mother after their birth through skin-to-skin contact. Breastfeeding is a proven passage to supply nourishment to our children, both in the present and past, and will remain so in the future as well.

3. No more scientific research is needed to justify the usefulness of breastfeeding for the health of the newborn in terms of its adequacy as a food for new born. Rather the alternatives to breastfeeding can have negative and long-term impacts on the human health. South East Asia believes in continuing breastfeeding through promotion, protection and support which includes better enforcement of BMS Code legislation.

4. We appreciate WHO’s support for the market research on the impact of formula milk marketing practices, industry’s tactics, and experiences from a consumer perspective. WHO ‘s Strategic Action Plan to address the double burden of malnutrition for the SEAR countries has been vital for our region.

5. SEAR Member States have started focusing on policy measures and implementing population-based measures including regulatory actions to promote healthy diets and reduce obesity and dietary risk of NCDs. But we are suffering from setbacks owing to capacity gaps and commercial determinants.

6. Several countries in the SEA Region have the potential to contribute to Universal Salt Iodization. But there are challenges in ensuring proper implementation of Universal Salt Iodization (USI) remain obvious.

7. In view of the foregoing, South East Asia proposes following five recommendations to the Director General:

- a. To encourage the Member States to enforce BMS legislation.
- b. To support the Member States to be resilient in addressing the marketing campaigns for BMS products including digital marketing strategies;
- c. To undertake advocacy efforts and external assessment of USI programmes at regional level to support the countries with a view to achieving optimum iodine status;
- d. To strengthen monitoring and surveillance system for salt iodization through integrating them in the national M&E system for ensuring sustainable USI activities;

e. To provide sustainable funding to scale up implementation of the Comprehensive Implementation Plan on MIYCN and USI.

8. The SEAR countries support the recommendations and report.

Chair,

With your permission, I would like to deliver few sentences on behalf of my country Bangladesh.

Bangladesh would urge upon the Director General to put in place the following:

First, to mobilize global support using its existing resources to address trading and export standards, guidelines and regulations in compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent WHA Resolutions;

Second, to promote gradual phasing out of the cross branded products that function as breastmilk substitutes within the Codex Alimentarius revision of the draft standard for Follow-up Formula;

And finally, encourage the Member States in ensuring compliance with the WHO UNICEF Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

I thank you, Chair.