

Strengthening the Maternal Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) Decision

(EB150//7 Agenda item 18.1 scheduled for Friday 27th May)

The Decision **EB150** (7) at present, only requests the DG to provide Guidance to MSs on digital marketing and to report back in 2024. This year WHO has published four new reports and briefings that all show the importance of strong marketing safeguards. (1)

The Director General can be asked to:

- (1) Assist MS in ensuring that trading and export standards, guidelines and regulations support full implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (i.e. “the Code) and subsequent WHA Resolutions. (2)
- (2) Assist MS to prohibit the promotion of cross branded products that function as breastmilk substitutes within The Codex Alimentarius revision of the draft standard for Follow-up Formula. (2)
- (3) Assist MS in adopting legal frameworks that cover all foods for infants and young children and related products, including commercial milk formulas for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- (4) Assist MS in consistently adopting and applying conflict of interest and transparency safeguards in policy setting in foods for infants and young children.
- (5) Assist MS in ensuring effective independent food safety regulations and standardized monitoring and enforcement for all feeding products for infants and young children.
- (6) Assist MS in ensuring compliance with the WHO UNICEF Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

Rationale: The International Code, and its 20 Resolutions, is a landmark document that protects breastfeeding’s crucial role in child survival as a safe, renewable natural food resource that contributes to food and water security. All Member States have an obligation to implement it and commercial companies must comply with it.

While 144 countries have implemented the Code to some degree, WHO’s recent reports expose many loopholes that allow digital and other forms of predatory marketing to flourish (1).

The above changes would help MS hold companies’ accountable for marketing practices in importing countries.

“Whereas it is considered very important that marketing practices in third countries should not discourage mothers from breastfeeding; Whereas the application of the International Code provides without doubt an excellent way to achieve this in these countries.” EU Council Resolution, June 1992 (2)

[1] “How marketing of formula milk influences our decisions on infant feeding,” “Scope and Impact of Digital Marketing Strategies for Promoting Breastmilk Substitutes,” “Marketing of breast-milk substitutes: National implementation of the international code, status report 2022,” “Ending Inappropriate Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and Foods for Infants and Young Children in the WHO European Region.” Links: [The 8 Country Marketing report](#), [Report on Digital Marketing](#) and [The 2022 State of the Code report – Effective regulatory Frameworks for ending inappropriate marketing](#) of BMS and baby foods in the WHO European Region

[2] The [1992 Export Directive \(92/52/EEC\)](#) and [Council Resolution of 18 June 1992](#) called for Code compliance by EU Based companies when marketing in ‘third countries’ along with monitoring and reporting and accountability proposals.

The Codex [CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD](#) requires Member States to “...They should also make sure that the international code of marketing of breast milk substitutes and relevant resolutions of the World Health Assembly (WHA) setting forth principles for the protection and promotion of breastfeeding be observed.”

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