



HEALTH PROGRAMS

Islamabad the 10th August, 2022

Subject: Protection and promotion of breastfeeding in Flood Emergencies.

Respected Dear Sir

Appropriate feeding practices are essential for growth, development and survival of infants and young children. Given the criticality of the issue and the considerable experiences gained since that time especially in relation to large scale emergencies, different guidelines have been developed for IYCF by Nutrition Wing MoNHSR&C with the support of UNICEF and WHO, including IYCF in Emergency guidelines.

2. Pakistan is hit by the floods now a days leading to huge catastrophes at many places in the country especially Balochistan, northern Sindh and South Punjab and KP. Not only hundreds of precious lives have been lost but hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced requiring support in the form of shelter, protection and food. Simultaneously there are dangers of spread of communicable diseases due to improper hygiene and sanitation and insufficient health services at different areas. So there is a need to adopt preventive health and nutrition measures. It is important to note that malnourished population especially women and children are already in an immune compromised state and if denied from malnutrition treatment or nutritious diet, they may develop severe life threatening condition.

3. I would like to commend your leadership to tackle the flood emergency in the country. The response to the devastating floods continues to be challenging with increasing number of people being displaced, deaths and scarcity of resources. Concerted efforts to roll out social protection measures through cash and non-cash assistance to mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of displacement are also welcomed.

4. The Nutrition Wing of Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination (MoNHSRC) would like to take this opportunity to further support your efforts in tackling the food and nutrition issues. Distribution of food rations provides a golden opportunity for disseminating messages on adequate nutrition practices, mainly targeting the most vulnerable (women and children). It is important to mention here that Breast Milk Substitutes are very dangerous for health and survival of Newborn and infants. WHO and UNICEF as well as guidelines developed by MoNHSR&C strongly recommend only and only breast feeding for children under 6 months of age, with continued breast feeding from 6 to 23 months along with age appropriate complementary feeding. Emergencies are a time of stress for the families especially parents and they are more likely to adopt unhealthy and dangerous practices of BMS use for infants and young children. It is therefore extremely important to protect these families from illegal promotion of BMS by the industry through free of cost donations but also safeguard the health and survival of the children by promoting and protecting breast feeding only.

Best regards

(Dr. Baseer Khan Achakzai)
Director Health Programs & Nutrition

**The Honorable Chairman
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
Prime Minister Secretariat, Islamabad
CC**

- Chairpersons Provincial Disaster Management Authorities, All Provinces
- SPS to the Secretary, Ministry of NHR&C, Islamabad
- SPS to the Director General Health, Ministry of NHR&C, Islamabad
- Director General Health Services, Director Nutrition Programs, all provinces and regions
- National Coordinator Nutrition & NFA, MoNHSR&C, Islamabad