



IBFAN Statements WHA76 2023

Agenda Items 14/15 - Emergencies

Thankyou chair. For 40 years IBFAN has worked with WHO to protect breastfeeding – a resilient practice that provides food, nurturing care and immune support. Breastfeeding is a lifeline in emergencies and prevents violence and malnutrition in all its forms.

IBFAN helped ensure safeguards in the Codex Guidelines for Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods – products that may be important as a last resort, but should only be used in programmes that support breastfeeding, skin-to-skin contact, wet-nursing, re-lactation and appropriate transition to nutritious family foods.

Worryingly, following the publication of the Guidelines we see an increase in humanitarian appeals that promote ultra-processed fortified products as magic bullets with no mention of breastfeeding. Donations of baby feeding products in violation of all recommendations continue, as well as unethical formula experiments on vulnerable babies – all in the guise of prevention of malnutrition.

In the absence of regulations to stop commercial exploitation, such approaches mislead the public, undermine parents' confidence in real food and put children's lives at risk. UN and humanitarian agencies should be using their considerable diplomatic influence to challenge the corporate-led food system that has done so much harm to health and the environment. Governments need courage to address power imbalances and safeguard breastfeeding, the ecosystem and bio-diverse sustainable foods.

The IFE Operational Guidance, sound Conflicts of Interest policies and a One Health approach are essential safeguards for disaster training of health workers and citizens in normal times, alongside Baby Friendly implementation. Thank you

Agenda item 12. Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030).
See paras 5,6,10,12, 22,23,

IBFAN and ILCA welcome the DG report, especially its highlighting of predatory marketing of baby feeding products - many unnecessary and ultra-processed – that undermine breastfeeding and harm families, health care systems, the economy and the environment. While 144 countries have at least some legislation based on the International code, only 32 have resisted the commercial lobbying that always, always weakens essential safeguards. To transform food systems, policy setting must be protected from commercial influence. Codex has at last agreed a new global standard for follow-on formulas, so now is the perfect time to strengthen laws without fear of costly challenges. There must be accountability for unethical exports into poorly resourced countries. WHO's Congress on Code implementation in June could help Member States ensure that healthy food takes priority over trade. Please attend this important event.

Agenda item 13.2 *Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and mental health: • Draft updated menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases*

IBFAN has supported WHO's work on NCDs since the start, highlighting the need for Conflicts of Interest safeguards, clear terminology and the protection of breastfeeding and sound child feeding – essential in preventing NCDs. FENSA has led to much confusion about identities and responsibilities. Corporations have no democratic accountability and in our experience 'multi-stakeholder' partnerships with health-harming corporations delay effective legislation, especially on labels and marketing. WHO must develop a global definition for Ultra Processed products. They are so often covered in claims about added micro-nutrients, yet do so much harm. Deaths from unhealthy food now exceed those of tobacco. We can say this because IBFAN is not a 'stakeholder' does not take corporate funding and has no financial 'stake' in this issue.

Agenda Item 16.5 United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) Draft decision EB 152/213: Accelerating efforts for preventing micronutrient deficiencies and their consequences, including spina bifida and other neural tube defects, through safe and effective food fortification

Thank you Chair. IBFAN welcomes WHO's attention to nutrition. However, the resolution on fortification is concerning for many reasons. Although the primary role of diverse diets is acknowledged, the Resolution implies that it is almost inevitable that fortification and supplements will be needed. There is no mention of cultural acceptability or that reliance on fortified supplements can undermine confidence in bio-diverse, minimally processed REAL foods. We call once again for WHO to urgently develop a global definition for the Ultra Processed products that are doing so much harm to human health and the environment. **The Resolution should not go forward without a new operative Paragraph 9, urging Member States to "adopt legally binding safeguards to protect policy setting and implementation from commercial influence and exploitation".**