



World Health Organization

20, AVENUE APPIA - CH-1211 GENEVA 27 - SWITZERLAND - TEL CENTRAL +41 22 791 2111 - FAX CENTRAL +41 22 791 3111 - WWW.WHO.INT

Tel. direct: +41 22 791 2909
Fax direct: +41 22 791 4853
E-mail :

In reply please
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This year the World Health Organization and partners around the world celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. I am particularly pleased to note that this year's World Breastfeeding Week is dedicated to the Code.

Breastfeeding remains the single most effective preventive intervention for improving the survival and health of children. WHO estimates that over 1 million deaths in children under the age of five could be prevented every year by improving breastfeeding practices.

The Code calls upon governments and all relevant stakeholders to ensure the appropriate marketing of breast-milk substitutes, and to favour the public health interest above commercial interest. Therefore, the Code and its subsequent relevant WHA resolutions are essential tools for strengthening national and international efforts to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

While many countries have made significant progress in adopting requisite national measures and establishing mechanisms for independent monitoring and enforcement of the Code, we must also acknowledge that its effective and sustained implementation is still far from universal. Too many countries do not yet give sufficient attention to furthering the Code's principles and aim. Therefore, more concerted action is needed.

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, the 2005 Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding, and the recently adopted WHA resolution 59.21 all reiterate the urgent need to ensure effective implementation of the Code and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions by all concerned parties, and have given new impetus to actions aimed at effective and sustained implementation of the Code.

WHO wishes WABA much success in its activities for this year's World Breastfeeding Week.

Yours sincerely,

Anders Nordström
Acting Director-General

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