



Ministry of Public Health



Kabul Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding

22nd November 2006

The South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum 3, held in Kabul, Afghanistan, from November 20-22, 2006, brought together over 70 participants from South Asia countries representing governments, public interest groups, professional bodies, media, United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The Forum 3 was organized with the theme "Breastmilk Save Lives, Saves Money" to find ways and means to scale up the coverage of early breastfeeding within one hour and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months in South Asia and also to protect, promote and support optimal infant and young child feeding.

Recalling the global commitments enshrined in the:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- Millennium Development Goal 4 to reduce child mortality;
- International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions;
- Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, 2002;
- Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding 2005.

Recognizing that:

- Artificial feeding of infants is dangerous to the health of infants and young children;
- Artificial feeding perpetuates poverty;
- Lack of optimal breastfeeding leads to malnutrition early in life, limits the survival, growth and development of infants and young children, leads to chronic diseases later in life, and is detrimental to sustainable human development and socio-economic development;
- If all mothers begin breastfeeding within one hour of birth, 22% of all newborn deaths can be prevented;
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months can save 13-15% of under-five child deaths; and that a further 6% can be prevented through timely introduction of adequate and appropriate complementary feeding;
- Women need gender-sensitive support and enabling environments at the time of birth to begin breastfeeding within one hour and later to maintain exclusive breastfeeding, and optimal feeding for their infants and young children;
- Capacity building from national level to family level is essential for providing such support;

- Irresponsible marketing of baby foods interferes with optimal infant and young child feeding practices;

The participants endorsed the Call for Action in the Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding 2005, and reaffirmed that breastfeeding is a life saving measure in whole of South Asia, and is the best investment for human development. The Forum Participants are convinced that early (within one hour) and exclusive breastfeeding (for the first six months) must be among the major outcomes of any development process, and call upon all concerned for the following 10 actions:

1. Recognize optimal infant and young child feeding with a focus on early and exclusive breastfeeding as the most critical intervention to save infant lives.
2. Establish a SAARC regional fund for infant nutrition and survival with a focus on early and exclusive breastfeeding.
3. All governments should commit to the Call for Action contained in the Innocenti Declaration 2005 and World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution 2006.
4. All governments should develop plans of action and commit clear budgets to implement such plans.
5. Revitalize and link the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) with community initiatives, including strengthening the pre-service curriculum at all levels, with an objective to implement the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding".
6. Strengthen national legislations or enact new ones to stop all kinds of commercial promotional practices including contacts of baby food industry with health providers.
7. Ensure that maternity entitlements to facilitate early breastfeeding within one hour and exclusive breastfeeding for six months are legalized.
8. Ensure that women receive skilled counseling and support to practice optimal infant and young child feeding, including in situations of HIV and disaster management.
9. Create national coordination and review processes to monitor these practices and programs on a regular basis.
10. Ensure that all policies and programs at national level do not violate the infants' right to survival through optimal infant and young child feeding.

All Participants Pledge to Support and Act on the 10 Actions

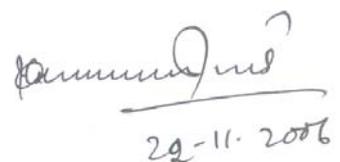
The South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum was organized by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Government of Afghanistan, Afghanistan Breastfeeding Promotion Partners (ABPP), and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia Pacific, with financial support from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation (DGIS), UNICEF, and WHO. The Forum also received technical and logistic support from Tech-Serve/USAID, ACF, WHO, UNICEF, World Food Program, IBFAN, and WABA.



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