

INNOCENTI DECLARATION

On the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding



1 August, 1990
Florence, Italy

PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS

Professor Dr. M.Q.K. Talukder
Bangladesh
Dr. Marcos Candau
Brazil
Hon. Dr. Patricio Silva Rojas
Chile
Dr. Wang Feng-Lan
China
Dr. Guan Yuan Zi
China
Dr. Daniel Arenas Reyes
Colombia
Hon. Dr. Plutarco Naranjo Vargas
Ecuador
Hon. Col. Dr. Getachew Tadesse
Ethiopia
Dr. Ruth de Arango
Guatemala
Hon. Teofilo Martel Cruz
Honduras
Mr. Jagdish C. Jetli
India
Ms. Mira Seth
India
Hon. Mrs. A. Sulasikin Murpratomo
Indonesia
Dr. Soepardan Soerjohoedjo
Indonesia
Dr. Widiasuti Wibisana
Indonesia
Professor Dr. Su Haryono
Indonesia
Dr. Alireza Marandi
Iran
Hon. Ivo Butini
Italy
Professor Dr. Joseph Andoh
Ivory Coast
Dr. Mámoun Máabreh
Jordan

Dr. Samir Awamleh
Jordan
Professor Joseph S. Oliech
Kenya
Dr. Suzanne Bocoum
Mali
Dr. Mrs. J. Ramphul
Mauritius
Dr. Yolanda Senties
Mexico
*Hon. Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti
Nigeria
Dr. Adenike Grange
Nigeria
Hon. S. A. H. Kazmi
Pakistan
Dr. Syed Tariq Sohail
Pakistan
Hon. Piotr Mierzewski
Poland
Hon. Dr. Fanny Friedman
Swaziland
Dr. Qhing Qhing Dlamini
Swaziland
Dr. J.W. Temba
Tanzania
Dr. Dhatchai Mungkandi
Thailand
Professor Dr. Tomris Turmen
Turkey
Dr. Petronella Clarke
United Kingdom
Ms. Dora Henschel
United Kingdom
Dr. Audrey Hart Nora
United States of America
Dr. Ngandu-Kabeya Dibandala
Zaire
Hon. Dr. Timothy Stamps
Zimbabwe

*(Meeting Chairman)

UNICEF

Mr. James P. Grant
Dr. Nyi Nyi
Dr. James Himes
Dr. Urban Jonsson
Dr. J. Peter Greaves
Ms. Margaret Kyenkya-Isabirye
Ms. Agnes Aidoo

US A.I.D.

Dr. Nancy Pielemeier
Dr. Mary Ann Anderson
Dr. Nina Schlossman
Dr. James Shelton
Dr. Janet Tognetti
Dr. Miriam Labbok

UNFPA

Dr. Nafis Sadik

UNDP

Mr. Aldo Ajello

UNICEF NATIONAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Arnaldo Farina

WHO

Dr. Hu Ching-Li (on behalf of
Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima)
Dr. Angèle Pétros-Barvazian
Dr. Mark Belsey
Dr. Elisabet Helsing
Ms. Randa Saadeh
Dr. Djamil Benbouzid
Dr. Jim Tulloch
Dr. Marina Rea

SIDA

Mr. Nils Öström
Mr. Ted Greiner
Professor Göran Sterky

UK ODA

Ms. Margaret Pollock

FAO

Mr. Paul Lunven

WFP

Ms. Judit Katona-Apte

WORLD BANK

Mr. Alan Berg

Further information may be obtained from
UNICEF, Nutrition Cluster (H-8F), 3 United
Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

INNOCENTI DECLARATION

On the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding

RECOGNISING that

Breastfeeding is a unique process that:

- provides ideal nutrition for infants and contributes to their healthy growth and development;
- reduces incidence and severity of infectious diseases, thereby lowering infant morbidity and mortality;
- contributes to women's health by reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and by increasing the spacing between pregnancies;
- provides social and economic benefits to the family and the nation;
- provides most women with a sense of satisfaction when successfully carried out; and that

Recent research has found that:

- these benefits increase with increased exclusiveness¹ of breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and thereafter with increased duration of breastfeeding with complementary foods, and
- programme interventions can result in positive changes in breastfeeding behaviour;

WE THEREFORE DECLARE that

As a global goal for optimal maternal and child health and nutrition, all women should be enabled to practise exclusive breastfeeding and all infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk from birth to 4-6 months of age. Thereafter, children should continue to be breastfed, while receiving appropriate and adequate complementary foods, for up to two years of age or beyond. This child-feeding ideal is to be achieved by creating an appropriate environment of awareness and support so that women can breastfeed in this manner.

Attainment of the goal requires, in many countries, the reinforcement of a "breastfeeding culture" and its vigorous defence against incursions of a "bottle-feeding culture." This requires commitment and advocacy for social mobilization, utilizing to the full the prestige and authority of acknowledged leaders of society in all walks of life.

Efforts should be made to increase women's confidence in their ability to breastfeed. Such empowerment involves the removal of constraints and influences that manipulate perceptions and behaviour towards breastfeeding, often by subtle and indirect means. This requires sensitivity, continued vigilance, and a responsive and comprehensive communications strategy involving all media and addressed to all levels of society. Furthermore, obstacles to breastfeeding within the health system, the workplace and the community must be eliminated.

Measures should be taken to ensure that women are adequately nourished for their optimal health and that of their families. Furthermore, ensuring that all women also have access to family planning information and services allows them to sustain breastfeeding and avoid shortened birth intervals that may compromise their health and nutritional status, and that of their children.

All governments should develop national breastfeeding policies and set appropriate national targets for the 1990s. They should establish a national system for monitoring the attainment of their targets, and they should develop indicators such as the prevalence of exclusively breastfed infants at discharge from maternity services, and the prevalence of exclusively breastfed infants at four months of age.

National authorities are further urged to integrate their breastfeeding policies into their overall health and development policies. In so doing they should reinforce all actions that protect, promote and support breastfeeding within complementary programmes such as prenatal and perinatal care, nutrition, family planning services, and prevention and treatment of common maternal and childhood diseases. All healthcare staff should be trained in the skills necessary to implement these breastfeeding policies.

¹Exclusive breastfeeding means that no other drink or food is given to the infant; the infant should feed frequently and for unrestricted periods.

²World Health Organisation, Geneva, 1989.

OPERATIONAL TARGETS:

All governments by the year 1995 should have:

- appointed a national breastfeeding coordinator of appropriate authority, and established a multisectoral national breastfeeding committee composed of representatives from relevant government departments, non-governmental organizations, and health professional associations;
- ensured that every facility providing maternity services fully practises all ten of the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* set out in the joint WHO/UNICEF statement² "Protecting, promoting and supporting breast-feeding: the special role of maternity services";
- taken action to give effect to the principles and aim of all Articles of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety; and
- enacted imaginative legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women and established means for its enforcement.

We also call upon international organizations to:

- draw up action strategies for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding, including global monitoring and evaluation of their strategies;
- support national situation analyses and surveys and the development of national goals and targets for action; and
- encourage and support national authorities in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their breastfeeding policies.

The Innocenti Declaration was produced and adopted by participants at the WHO/UNICEF policymakers' meeting on "Breastfeeding in the 1990s: A Global Initiative", co-sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), held at the Spedale degli Innocenti, Florence, Italy, on 30 July - 1 August 1990. The Declaration reflects the content of the original background document for the meeting and the views expressed in group and plenary sessions.