

Under the Patronage of H.H. Sheikha Shamsa Bint Suhail Al-Mazrouei wife of the President, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al/Nahayan

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 2009)

We, the participants in the 2nd Regional Conference on Human Lactation (13-14 November 2009) Al Ain, (United Arab Emirates) recommend the following:

1. All Governments of the Arab World should implement the WHA (World Health Assembly) Global Strategy on Infant & Young Child Feeding (GSIYCF) and be assessed by monitoring tools such as the World Breastfeeding Trends initiative (WBTi) in the framework of the global Breastfeeding Initiative for child Survival (gBICS).
2. The countries in the region should initiate and/or reinforce the implementation of their breastfeeding policy: 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding, followed by the introduction of complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding for 2 years or more, Commercial foods should be avoided as complementary foods. Natural, traditional, home-made complementary foods should be promoted.
3. All Governments should adopt 2006 World Health Organization (WHO) Growth Charts as the physiological norm for the monitoring of growth and development of infants.
4. Breastfeeding protection, promotion and support should be incorporated in preventive health policies, as breastfeeding reduces the prevalence of obesity and the risk of developing diabetes in children and adults as well.
5. The *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (IC) and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions should be adopted as national legislation in order to eliminate unethical marketing practices.
6. Health and nutrition claims of the baby food industry are clear violations of the IC and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions and should be stopped in order to avoid misleading physicians, other health professionals and the general public.
7. All Hospitals should be accredited as Baby-Friendly Hospitals, including those in the private sector, so that all mothers can be assisted and helped in a mother/baby-friendly environment.

8. Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) and Skin to Skin Contact (SSC) should become common practice for all newborns.
9. Voluntary mother-support groups should be developed in the community in order to assist all lactating mothers.
10. All health workers should be trained on how to support infant feeding in emergencies to avoid improper feeding practices and the consequences of disaster conditions.
11. All powdered infant formulas can be contaminated with bacteria. Warnings, as well as clear instructions for correct use should be indicated on the formula tin labels – as recommended by WHO.
12. Paid maternity leave should be at least 14 weeks as recommended by ILO C183, 2000; maternity protection legislation should also include 2 hours per day of breastfeeding breaks during working hours to make the workplace mother/baby-friendly.