

**Statement on Provisional Agenda Item 4.6
Infant and young child nutrition
on behalf of Save the Children UK**

Chairperson, Director General, Honourable delegates

Thank you for giving Save the Children the opportunity to speak on this very important topic, which we do as a strong partner of both Baby Milk Action and IBFAN.

Like everyone here, we want every possible help for Haiti but can be easy to lose focus and assume that all donations are the correct way forward.

National and international response plans must continue to follow the guidance which aims to minimise the risks of artificial feeding and support optimal breastfeeding wherever possible. Breastmilk substitutes should be purchased via normal procurement channels. Donations - either from companies, who certainly want to promote their corporate social responsibility image, or from other bodies and individuals - should be avoided. Once bought, BMS must also be distributed and used according to strict criteria and used only for those who need them.

Save the Children UK is involved in the provision of Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods for the treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition in infants and children over 6 months, but the use of these and other products (which should be of high quality) should not spill over into inappropriate use for the prevention of malnutrition generally, and should not be used as an opportunity for commercial exploitation of the poor or the undermining of continued breastfeeding.

In all settings, mothers should get support from truly independent sources to improve complementary feeding with preference for safe and appropriate locally-available ingredients, alongside continued breastfeeding. This is a much more sustainable solution than encouraging dependence on imported processed foods. While fortified foods can play a role alongside a range of measures tackling malnutrition we are concerned that the market for fortified foods can be fuelled by irresponsible health and nutrition claims, which distort parents understanding of good nutrition and affect taste palettes, and, we fear, lead to an increase of the double burden of malnutrition – both over and under nutrition. There is an urgent need to regulate the marketing of these products.

We all know that infants who are breastfed for the recommended time have fewer micronutrient deficiencies, suffer fewer respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases and are at much lower risk of malnutrition. This is not just a result of exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months, but the fact that breastmilk can provide about half an infant's energy needs between 6 and 12 months, and one-third of energy needs between 12 and 24 months, as well as a high proportion of their Vitamins A and C needs and 50% of iron.

So we warmly welcome the proposed Resolution and the call to scale up support for breastfeeding, and call for greater control on the marketing of complementary foods. Thank you Mr Chairman