



A WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF LACTATION PROFESSIONALS

## **126th Session of the EB Provisional Agenda Item 4.6**

***Statement by Maryse Arendt, Representative of the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), an international NGO in official relations with WHO***

Director General, members of the EB, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The International Lactation Consultant Association, ILCA, is an international association of a wide range of health care professionals interested in human lactation. We welcome the EB document 126/9 with the quadrennial progress report on Infant and Young Child Nutrition.

We are pleased with the progress of the BFHI and the new momentum stimulated by the revised materials. However, considerable efforts are still required by Member states in order to make all maternity facilities baby-friendly.

ILCA welcomes that WHO is drawing up norms and standards for use in emergency nutrition response. We hope they will also include response to emergencies brought on by climate change. ILCA as a cosponsor of the Operational Guidance on Infant and Young Child feeding has currently issued a press release asking for breastfeeding support as a vital part of disaster relief and humanitarian aid efforts after the earthquake in Haiti.

We welcome the recommendation contained in para 15 for a wider application of the principles of the International Code and are convinced, like the Secretariat, that this would improve breastfeeding rates worldwide. Working in hospitals and in private practice ILCA can confirm that products that have emerged on the market after the Code's adoption in 1981 are promoted to breastfeeding mothers and, using claims like 'fortified with iron', 'enhances brain capacity', 'makes your baby sleep through the night', undermine mothers' confidence in breastmilk. This is of great concern to my organisation. Therefore the European branch of ILCA decided to monitor these promotional marketing practices and submit violations to IBFAN for their report. Related to para 16 of the Secretariat report, we call on Member States to ensure sufficient funding in the budget lines needed to intensify WHO's support implementation of the International Code.

We will welcome specific recommendations from WHO and UNICEF relative to the marketing of complementary foods, as without binding marketing regulations heavily promoted commercial complementary foods will continue displacing both continued breastfeeding and fresh home made complementary food. Similarly, a strong regulation is needed to ensure that helpful new products known as RUTFs are used for the purpose for which they are designed, the treatment of severe malnutrition and only for infant older than 6 months. Their use as complementary foods to prevent malnutrition would be detrimental to sustainable nutrition strategies and would risk contributing to the overweight and obesity problem. While addressing the treatment of severe and moderate malnutrition, it is important not to forget that breastfeeding is today the single most effective preventive intervention for improving the survival and health of children.

Finally, considering the urgency to act expressed in the quadrennial progress report we urge the distinguished delegates to propose a resolution to the next WHA.

Thank you

INTERNATIONAL LACTATION CONSULTANT ASSOCIATION

2501 AERIAL CENTER PARKWAY, SUITE 103 • MORRISVILLE, NC • 27560 • USA  
PHONE: 919.861.5577 • FAX: 919.459.2075 • E-MAIL: INFO@ILCA.ORG • WEB: WWW.ILCA.ORG