

150th Session of the WHO Executive Board

Agenda Item 17: Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (Ref Doc: EB150/23)

Thank you, Moderator, thank you Chair

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Rwanda has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 47 Member States of the Africa Region, on **Agenda Item 17 related to Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition.**
2. WHO African Region is very concerned about the modest progress made on the implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition endorsed by the 65th Session of the World Health Assembly. Progress on the global nutrition indicators has been variable across regions.
3. There is limited real-time data in the WHO African Region for tracking low birth weight and anaemia in women of reproductive age.
4. Whereas child undernutrition remains high in our Region, exclusive breastfeeding rates are higher than world averages.
5. Unfortunately, the observed disruption in essential nutrition and health services as well as increased food insecurity in most vulnerable communities around the world due to covid19 pandemic will cause many negative effects;
6. The Code monitoring report of 2020 found that only four countries in the African Region had national legislations aligned with the International Code, compared to 12 that had moderately aligned and 16 that had no legal measures;
7. The African region needs support to control the marketing of breast milk substitutes, including digital marketing, thus protecting this important intervention for child survival and maternal health.
8. The WHO African Region supports pertinent actions proposed in the report to address this public health concern;
9. It is imperative that Member States' commitments to shifting food systems towards sustainable and healthy consumption patterns to reduce malnutritional risk factors be translated into concrete actionable policies and subsequent financial commitments.
10. All Member States are recommended to ensure availability of reliable nutrition data from health information systems for planning, monitoring, informed-administrative decision and interventions.
11. In this regard, the African Region underlines the need for technical assistance to enable countries to improve their nutrition information systems.

12. WHO Africa Region appreciates the summarized report on progress in implementing the international code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes and guidance on ending the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children and supports proposed decision for consideration by the Executive Board.
13. In conclusion, the WHO Africa Region takes note of the progress report, supports the decision on this item and looks forward to a recommendation for Member States to develop and implement accelerated action plans to achieve the nutrition targets as outlined in the comprehensive implementation plan on maternal and young child nutrition.
14. I thank you for your kind attention.