

World Health Organisation (WHO): Seventy-third World Health Assembly (73rd WHA)

Agenda 15.2: Maternal, infant and young child nutrition



Thank you, Chair.

Adequate nutrition during infancy and early childhood is essential to ensure the growth, health, and development of children to their full potential. India remains committed to work towards the attainment of common goals envisioned in the SDGs and ensuring that women, children and adolescents continue to be at the centre of the health and well-being agenda.

Promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding practices including early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding along with timely and age appropriate complementary feeding has been one of the priority interventions of the Government of India for improving child survival and development. Under National Health Mission, a dedicated programme with a comprehensive set of activities is being implemented for promotion and support of breastfeeding and young child feeding through capacity building of the health care workers on lactation management to achieve higher breastfeeding rates.

The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN Abhiyaan), a multi-ministerial convergence mission envisages ensuring attainment of malnutrition-free-India. This mission also focuses on promotion of Infant and

Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices in a convergent manner. Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) – a convergence platform is being used for creating community awareness on importance of IYCF practices. The focus is also on the breastfeeding counseling services during antenatal period.

India has a national law - “the Infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles and infant foods (regulation of production, supply and distribution) Act, 1992 and the amendment Act 2003 (the IMS Act), which is substantially aligned to the International Code of Marketing of Breast milk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions and prohibits all kinds of promotions of foods marketed for infants and young children below 2 years of age.

Chair,

India would like to point out that the issue of digital marketing strategies for promotion of breast milk substitutes is of concern. Based on the available information, strategies such as e-advertisements, promotional events, incorrect labeling, incentivized sales and recently, vlogs are likely to undermine breastfeeding. Therefore, it is important to develop a modus operandi to tackle these harmful practices.

India appreciates the ongoing effort of the WHA for the biennial reporting on the status of implementation of the Code by the WHO Director-General. We believe that practice of biennial reporting should continue till more than 90% of Member States enact national laws and develop legal frameworks, which substantially align with the International Code and the relevant subsequent WHA resolutions.

Thank you.