

Statement by Myanmar Delegation
73rd World Health Assembly (Resumed Session)
(9-14 November 2020, Geneva)

Pillar 3 (Item 15.2: Maternal, infant and young child nutrition)

Intervention: Promoting optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in the community

To increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) up to at least 50% and reduction of stunting by 40% of baseline prevalence are of global nutrition targets (to be achieved by 2025) endorsed at the 65th World Health Assembly (WHA). By 2010, multiple indicators cluster survey showed only 23.6% of infants under the age of 6 months in Myanmar obtained exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) and 35.1% children under 5-years were stunted.

To tackle these problems, National Nutrition Centre (NNC) of Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS), Myanmar has initiated the community infant and young child feeding (CIYCF) counseling by end of 2016. As of September 2020, a total of 8,528 basic health service professionals and 2,742 volunteers have been trained for CIYCF counseling and the counseling activities are in place in Kayin, Magway, Rakhine, Chin, Kayah, Kachin and northern Shan states and remaining states/regions are to be rolled out. In addition, since 2014, MoHS Myanmar has released the Order of Marketing of Formulated Food for Infant and Young Child (adopted from the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes) together with expansion of paid maternity leave for women from public sectors up to 6 months.

Progress has been made by increase in exclusive breastfeeding rate up to 67.4% and decline in stunting rate to 26.7% according to Myanmar Micronutrient and Food Consumption Survey (MMFCS 2017-18). However, the violations of the breastmilk substitutes (BMS) order are still happening in the country and one in ten children under 2-years are still receiving bottle feeding (MMFCS 2017-18) which is not the recommended practice. Therefore, MoHS in coordination with related departments including Attorney General Office, Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs as well as the development partners are trying to strengthen the law enforcement of the BMS order.

Moreover, in coordination with related sectors, MoHS is now in hand with final draft of Maternal, Infant and Child Nutrition implementation plan (MICN 2021-2025) with the specific objectives of 1) increasing prevalence of optimal breastfeeding and complementary

feeding practices, 2) promoting dietary diversity among pregnant and lactating women, infants, children and adolescents and 3) preventing double burden of malnutrition for pregnant and lactating women, infants, children and adolescents. Promoting optimal IYCF practices and strengthening BMS order by law enforcement are among the key interventions under MICN 2021-2025. In addition, Myanmar is also involving in the development of ASEAN guidelines and minimum standards for the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Improving optimal IYCF practices and protection of infants and young children from breast milk substitutes will improve their growth and development and finally the development of the country.
