



**Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul**

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item: 15.4	Maternal, infant and young child nutrition
Documents	Document A79/5
Requested action	Note the reports and provide guidance in respect of the questions set out below. ✓ In the light of global cuts to development assistance, how can countries accelerate the scaling of needed interventions to achieve the global nutrition operational and impact targets? ✓ What tools are needed to support country action to restrict digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes?
Time limit	2 minute

Thank you Chair,

On Agenda item 15.4, The Gambia commends the WHO Secretariat for the report on the implementation of strategies to improve Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN).

We welcome the progress achieved globally, particularly the adoption of legislation aligned with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes by 34 Member States.

The Gambia has an exclusive breastfeeding rate of 54 %, surpassing the global target of 50%. We are tackling Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition through a whole-of-government, multisectoral approach and strong collaboration across the health, agriculture, education, and social protection sectors. Key interventions include strengthening maternal nutrition services through antenatal and postnatal counselling, iron and folic acid supplementation, and the promotion of adequate maternal diets.

We have developed national Food-Based Dietary Guidelines to promote healthy diets across the life course and introduced community-level cooking demonstrations to encourage the use of nutritious, locally available foods. Nutrition education and counselling are increasingly integrated into primary health care services and schools, supported by continuous capacity building of frontline health workers.

The Gambia has strengthened nutrition surveillance which has improved early detection and referral of acute malnutrition.

Currently, The Gambia is reviewing its national protocol on the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition; revising the Breastfeeding Promotion Regulation of 2006 and strengthening its enforcement to better protect, promote, and support optimal infant and young child feeding practices.

Challenges include limited investment in nutrition programmes, gaps in Code enforcement, weak integration of nutrition into emergency responses, suboptimal complementary feeding, and the emerging burden of overweight and obesity.

We therefore support extending the Strategic Plan to 2030 to accelerate progress towards global nutrition targets.

Thank you