

## WHA RESOLUTION 61.20 - 2008

The Sixty-first World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on infant and young child nutrition: biennial progress report; 1

Reaffirming the significance of the adoption by the Health Assembly of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (resolution WHA34.22), and resolutions WHA35.26, WHA37.30, WHA39.28, WHA41.11, WHA43.3, WHA45.34, WHA47.5, WHA49.15, WHA54.2, WHA55.25, WHA58.32 and WHA59.21 on infant and young child nutrition;

Reaffirming, in particular, resolutions WHA54.2, WHA55.25 and WHA58.32, which recognize the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, and the evidence-based public health risks of intrinsic contamination of powdered infant formula, the potential for introduced contamination and the need for safe preparation, handling and storage of prepared infant formula;

Recalling resolution WHA49.15 on infant and young child nutrition, which recognizes the need to ensure that the commitment and support for breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child nutrition are not undermined by conflicts of interest;

Affirming that early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding is the natural and optimal means to achieve food security and optimal health for infants and young children, and concerned that the rates have remained low;

Welcoming the biennial progress report and noting the salient points that need further consideration, specifically persistent malnutrition – one of the most severe public health problems, as indicated by the alarmingly high rates of under-five mortality;

Noting further the need to improve implementation and monitoring of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes;

Aware that powdered infant formula is not a sterile product and that it can contain pathogenic bacteria, and welcoming the WHO/FAO guidelines on safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula;2

Encouraged by the work of FAO and WHO through the Codex Alimentarius Commission on the revised proposed draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Powdered Formulae for Infants and Young Children,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to strengthen implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions by scaling up efforts to monitor and enforce national measures in order to protect breastfeeding while keeping in mind the Health Assembly resolutions to avoid conflicts of interest;

(2) to continue action on the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding and the Innocenti Declaration of 2005 on infant and young child feeding and to increase support for early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, in order to reduce the scourge of malnutrition and its associated high rates of under-five morbidity and mortality;

(3) to implement, through application and wide dissemination, the WHO/FAO guidelines on safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula in order to minimize the risk of bacterial infection and, in particular, ensure that the labelling of powdered formula conforms with the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and taking into account resolution WHA58.32;

(4) to investigate, as a risk-reduction strategy, the possible use and, in accordance with national regulations, the safe use of donor milk through human milk banks for vulnerable infants, in particular premature, low-birth-weight and immunocompromised infants, and to promote appropriate hygienic measures for storage, conservation, and use of human milk;

(5) to take action through food-safety measures, including appropriate regulatory measures, to reduce the risk of intrinsic contamination of powdered infant formula by *Enterobacter sakazakii* and other pathogenic microorganisms during the manufacturing process as well as the risk of contamination during storage, preparation and handling, and monitor the effectiveness of these measures;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to continue monitoring progress through reports to the Health Assembly each even year, along with the report on the status of implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and the relevant resolutions of the Health Assembly, on progress in the consideration of matters referred to the Codex Alimentarius for its action;

(2) to continue to promote breastfeeding and infant and young child nutrition as essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those relating to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and to the reduction of child mortality;

(3) to intensify support for the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes;

(4) to provide support urgently for research on the safe use of expressed and donated breast milk, given the current challenges facing countries in the implementation of safe infant feeding practices, mindful of the national rules and regulations and cultural and religious beliefs;

(5) to provide support for strengthening of national information systems in order to improve the evidence base for policies in this area;

(6) to review the global current situation of infant and child nutrition including nutrition and HIV, and report to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly.

Eighth plenary meeting, 24 May 2008 - A61/VR/8

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1 Document A61/17 Add.1.

1 World Health Organization in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2007.