

World Breastfeeding Conference 2
December 11-14, Johannesburg, South Africa
Johannesburg Declaration/Call to Action

The 2nd World Breastfeeding Conference - brought together more than 500 participants from 68 countries. The participants represented civil society organisations, local and international NGOs, professionals and professional bodies, academia and breastfeeding advocates development partners, UN Agencies and governments.

The theme for the 2nd World Breastfeeding Conference 'Let's invest in Creating an Enabling Environment for Mothers and Babies' builds on the 1st World Breastfeeding Conference "Babies need mom-made NOT man-made". This Breastfeeding Conference hosted in Africa, reflected on the progress made globally, regionally and at country-level on policies and programmes to improve breastfeeding.

Efforts should be made by Governments to attain Sustainable Development Goals taking into account that breastfeeding is included in four of the goals.

Today, our world is threatened by multiple armed conflicts increasing violence, climate change, forced migrations, deepening social inequalities, and increased greed of corporations. Enabling mothers to exercise their right to give birth and breastfeed as they wish and need undoubtedly fosters more equal societies, prevents violence, and a more suitable use of natural resources, contributing to the preservation the life on the planet. Every breastfeeding mother is an important actor for change

The Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food and the Right to Health (November, 2016). Made the call for the recognition of breastfeeding as a human right. Taking note of the public health importance of breastfeeding and the need for multi-sectoral coordination, we recognize the need to heighten efforts to advocate and sensitize all levels of society, starting with mothers and their families, to accelerate efforts to build political commitment at all levels but especially at the community level in making breastfeeding the social norm.

Deeply concerned with fragmented and weak implementation of breastfeeding policies and programmes which undermine the efforts being undertaken by the national governments, we are concerned that implementation and lack of understanding at an individual and community level of International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk substitutes is far from satisfactory, leading to unrestricted promotional activities of the baby food manufacturers.

Acknowledging that the updated guidance on infant feeding in the context of HIV for the first time harmonises the breastfeeding recommendations for women with HIV and the general population and specifically recommends counselling and support, it provides an excellent opportunity to revitalise the protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding with a unified message.

Emergencies whether man-made or natural are becoming a growing concern globally. Noting that the recent WBTi report (2016) indicates that attention to infant and young child feeding in emergencies is inadequate, it is important that all countries and implementers should become

better aware of the Operational Guidance on infant feeding in emergencies, build capacity related to emergency preparedness, response and mitigation.

We the participants of the 2nd World Breastfeeding Conference 2016 call upon all concerned to take action and prioritize the following ten actions:

1. Implement a at all levels coordination mechanism to deliver effective Breastfeeding and infant and young children feeding plans through engagement with other sectors outside of health, especially involving mothers
2. Develop a legal framework that enables mother's to breastfeed their infants wherever and whenever.
3. Develop and strengthen implementation of guidelines and tools that determine policy and programme setting, establish regular public funded monitoring systems and protect research from undue commercial influence, to avoid and manage conflicts of interest.
4. Working towards the ratification of ILO Convention 183. Create child and women friendly workplaces and strengthen systems, to support working mothers and mothers returning to work or adolescent mothers returning to school.
5. Ensure that all settings where mothers and young children are cared for apply the principles of Mother-Baby Friendly practices, encouraging the involvement of partners.
6. Explore country level feasibility of establishing human milk banks as an intervention to reduce morbidity and mortality among neonates and reduce reliance on breastmilk substitutes, especially in circumstances where women are unable to breastfeed.
7. Advocate for increased budgetary allocations at all levels to ensure sustained efforts, based on costing analyses of breastfeeding promotion, protection and support including for maternity protection to make meaningful impact on early childhood nutrition and development.
8. Implement the code and subsequent WHA Resolutions in national laws. Raise awareness and ensure the involvement of communities in the monitoring of the Code in line WHA guidance on inappropriate marketing of Breastmilk substitutes.
9. Create demand for breastfeeding support through clear communication and social behaviour change strategies, which include the voices of mothers and communities and extend breastfeeding capacity beyond the health care system.
10. Implement policies and programmes that promote the use of safe feeding options that protect and support mothers and children in special circumstances, including HIV and emergencies.