

INNOCENTI DECLARATION 2005

On Infant and Young Child Feeding

In the 15 years since the adoption of the original Innocenti Declaration in 1990, remarkable progress has been made in improving infant and young child feeding practices worldwide.

Nevertheless, **inappropriate feeding practices – sub-optimal or no breastfeeding and inadequate complementary feeding – remain the greatest threat to child health and survival globally.** Improved breastfeeding alone could save the lives of more than 3,500 children every day, more than any other preventive intervention.

Guided by accepted human rights principles, especially those embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, our vision is of an environment that enables mothers, families and other caregivers to make informed decisions about optimal feeding, which is defined as exclusive breastfeeding¹ for six months followed by the introduction of appropriate complementary feeding and continuation of breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond. Achieving this vision requires skilled practical support to arrive at the highest attainable standard of health and development for infants and young children, which is the universally recognised right of every child.

We who are assembled in Florence, Italy, on this Twenty-Second Day of November 2005 to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding **declare that these actions are urgent and necessary to ensure the best start in life for our children, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and for the realisation of the human rights of present and future generations.**

Challenges remain: poverty, the HIV pandemic, natural and human-made emergencies, globalisation, environmental contamination, health systems investing primarily in curative rather than preventive services, gender inequities and women's increasing rates of employment outside the home, including in the non-formal sector. These challenges must be addressed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the aims of the Millennium Declaration and for the vision set out above to become reality for all children.

The targets of the 1990 Innocenti Declaration and the 2002 Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding remain the foundation for action. While remarkable progress has been made, much more needs to be done.

We therefore issue this Call for Action so that:

All parties

- Empower women in their own right, and as mothers and providers of breastfeeding support and information to other women.
- Support breastfeeding as the norm for feeding infants and young children.
- Highlight the risks of artificial feeding and the implications for health and development throughout the life course.
- Ensure the health and nutritional status of women throughout all stages of life.
- Protect breastfeeding in emergencies, including by supporting uninterrupted breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding, and avoiding general distribution of breast-milk substitutes.

1. Exclusive breastfeeding means that no other drink or food is given to the infant; the infant should feed frequently and for unrestricted periods.

- Implement the HIV and Infant Feeding – Framework for Priority Action, including protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding for the general population while providing counselling and support for HIV-positive women.

All governments

- Establish or strengthen national infant and young child feeding and breastfeeding authorities, coordinating committees and oversight groups that are free from commercial influence and other conflicts of interest.
- Revitalise the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), maintaining the Global Criteria as the minimum requirement for all facilities, expanding the Initiative's application to include maternity, neonatal and child health services and community-based support for lactating women and caregivers of young children.
- Implement all provisions of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety as a minimum requirement, and establish sustainable enforcement mechanisms to prevent and/or address non-compliance.
- Adopt maternity protection legislation and other measures that facilitate six months of exclusive breastfeeding for women employed in all sectors, with urgent attention to the non-formal sector.
- Ensure that appropriate guidelines and skill acquisition regarding infant and young child feeding are included in both pre-service and in-service training of all health care staff, to enable them to implement infant and young child feeding policies and to provide a high standard of breastfeeding management and counseling to support mothers to

practise optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding.

- Ensure that all mothers are aware of their rights and have access to support, information and counselling in breastfeeding and complementary feeding from health workers and peer groups.
- Establish sustainable systems for monitoring infant and young child feeding patterns and trends and use this information for advocacy and programming.
- Encourage the media to provide positive images of optimal infant and young child feeding, to support breastfeeding as the norm, and to participate in social mobilisation activities such as World Breastfeeding Week.
- Take measures to protect populations, especially pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, from environmental contaminants and chemical residues.
- Identify and allocate sufficient resources to fully implement actions called for in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
- Monitor progress in appropriate infant and young child feeding practices and report periodically, including as provided in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of the International Code

- Ensure full compliance with all provisions of the International Code and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions in all countries, independently of any other measures taken to implement the Code.
- Ensure that all processed foods for infants and young children meet applicable Codex Alimentarius standards.

Multilateral and bilateral organisations and international financial institutions

- Recognise that optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding are essential to achieving the long-term physical, intellectual and emotional health of all populations and therefore the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other development initiatives and that inappropriate feeding practices and their consequences are major obstacles to poverty reduction and sustainable socio-economic development.
- Identify and budget for sufficient financial resources and expertise to support governments in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their policies and programmes on optimal infant and young child feeding, including revitalising the BFHI.
- Increase technical guidance and support for national capacity building in all the target areas set forth in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
- Support operational research to fill information gaps and improve programming.
- Encourage the inclusion of programmes to improve breastfeeding and complementary feeding in poverty-reduction strategies and health sector development plans.

Public interest non-governmental organisations

- Give greater priority to protecting, promoting and supporting optimal feeding practices, including relevant training of health and community workers, and increase effectiveness through cooperation and mutual support.
- Draw attention to activities which are incompatible with the Code's principles and aim so that violations can be effectively addressed in accordance with national legislation, regulations or other suitable measures.

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding OPERATIONAL TARGETS

Four operational targets from the 1990

Innocenti Declaration:

1. Appoint a national breastfeeding coordinator with appropriate authority, and establish a multisectoral national breastfeeding committee composed of representatives from relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations, and health professional associations.
2. Ensure that every facility providing maternity services fully practises all the "Ten steps to successful breastfeeding" set out in the WHO/ UNICEF statement on breastfeeding and maternity services.
3. Give effect to the principles and aim of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety.
4. Enact imaginative legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women and establish means for its enforcement.

Five additional operational targets:

5. Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive policy on infant and young child feeding, in the context of national policies and programmes for nutrition, child and reproductive health, and poverty reduction.
6. Ensure that the health and other relevant sectors protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond, while providing women access to the support they require – in the family, community and workplace – to achieve this goal.
7. Promote timely, adequate, safe and appropriate complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding.
8. Provide guidance on feeding infants and young children in exceptionally difficult circumstances, and on the related support required by mothers, families and other caregivers.
9. Consider what new legislation or other suitable measures may be required, as part of a comprehensive policy on infant and young child feeding, to give effect to the principles and aim of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and to subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions.

The Innocenti Declaration 2005 was adopted by participants at the event, "Celebrating Innocenti 1990-2005: Achievements, Challenges and Future Imperatives", held on 22 November 2005, in Italy, co-organised by the following organisations:



The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine



International Lactation
Consultants Association



La Leche League
International

REGIONE TOSCANA



WELLSTART
INTERNATIONAL



World Alliance for
Breastfeeding Action



World Health
Organization

Further information can be obtained from:

- **Innocenti** +15 www.innocenti15.net • **ABM** www.bfmed.org
- **ILCA** www.ilca.org • **LLLI** www.llli.org
- **IBFAN** www.ibfan.org/site2005/ (Code Watch, The Reports)
- **UNICEF** UNICEF Adviser, Infant Feeding, smhossain@unicef.org
www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_breastfeeding.html
- **WHO** Department of Nutrition for Health and Development,
nutrition@who.int, <http://www.who.int/nutrition>
Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development,
cah@who.int, www.who.int/child.adolescent.health
- **WABA** www.waba.org.my/innocenti15.htm

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22 November 2005
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