

CALL TO ACTION ON BREASTFEEDING AND INFANT & YOUNG CHILD FEEDING

7th August 2018
New Delhi, India



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We, the participants, individuals and organizations in various capacities such as public health professionals, nutritionists, academicians, peoples movements, government representatives and global agencies, have come together at the launch of the report “Arrested Development”, the 5th report on assessment of India’s policy and programmes on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding are:

- *Aware* of the findings of the report “Arrested Development”, 5th report on assessment of India’s policy and programmes on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding;
- *Aware* of the fact that privatisation and commercialisation are overarching issues affecting infant feeding and weak implementation of the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003. (IMS Act) is detrimental to infant feeding;
- *Noting* with concern that the gaps in the policy and programmes are substantial requiring considerable inputs to support women to remove barriers to breastfeeding;
- *Expressing* concern that 3 out of 5 new-born babies are not able to begin breastfeeding within an hour, 1 out of 2 infants under 6 months of age are not exclusively breastfed; only 1 out of 10 infants after 6 months of age receives minimum acceptable diet, and infant formula is being used unnecessarily at the time of birth in health facilities;
- *Recognizing* that protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child feeding is critical to health, nutrition, and survival and development of children and women’s health, and contributes substantially to reduce obesity and type-2 diabetes;
- *Knowing* that improvements in breastfeeding would help achieve the SDG targets for health, food security, education, equity, development and the environment.
- *Reaffirming* that National Food Security Act 2013 recognises exclusive breastfeeding 0-6 months as a right to food, and Convention on the Right of the Child as a right to health;
- *Reaffirming* the vision and mission of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India “...ensuring development, care and protection of children through cross-cutting policies and programmes...”;
- *Reaffirming* the commitments of Government of India to promote optimal breastfeeding in the National Health Mission (NHM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission), through issuing National guidelines on infant and young child feeding);
- *Recalling* the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding to strengthen national efforts to protect, promote and support optimal infant and young child feeding practices;
- *Acknowledging* that increasing the rates of breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices requires sustainable and adequate technical and financial resources for implementing the legal frameworks, strengthening Mothers’ Absolute Affection (MAA) programme and ICDS to deliver skilled counselling in health facilities and communities;
- *Aware* that the World Bank’s Investment Framework on Nutrition provides an estimate of funding to be about INR 320 (4.7 US\$) per child born, additional costs being required for maternity protection;
- *Reaffirming* India’s commitment to the World Health Assembly resolution 71.9 (May 2018) on Infant and Young Child Feeding “to increase investment in development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes aimed at protection, promotion, including education and support of breastfeeding, including through multisectoral approaches and awareness raising;”

CALL UPON GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, STATE GOVERNMENTS, OTHERS CONCERNED TO INITIATE FOLLOWING TEN ACTIONS:

1. Develop and document a clear national policy with a national and state wise plan of action.
2. Allocate a dedicated budget for the plans, based on investment framework on nutrition and local costing, and demonstrate high level political will through launch of a Prime Minister's scheme.
3. Fix the targets and timelines for 2025 to implement the activities in all States and Districts, prioritising the Aspirational Districts.
4. Strengthen the coordination of infant and young child feeding issues both nationally and in the states.
5. Strengthen implementation of the MAA programme fully implementing the 'Ten steps'in public and private health facilities, including monitoring and accreditation.
6. Strengthen skilled human resources at block level to reach out to all families with skilled counselling.
7. Reduce aggressive promotion of baby foods, by effectively enforcing the IMS Act by authorising district officials to control illegal marketing activities.
8. Expand the maternity benefits to all women in the Maternity Benefit Act and universalise the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna (PMMVY) for every child born.
9. Build capacity in all the districts to ensure safe infant feeding during disasters.
10. Evaluate the programmes through annual independent sentinel surveys.

ALL PARTICIPANTS COMMIT THEMSELVES TO SUPPORT THE CALL TO ACTION ON BREASTFEEDING AND INFANT & YOUNG CHILD FEEDING.

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