Inappropriate Promotion of Infant Foods in Myanmar

By

Dr. Aye Aye Thaw
Dr. Khin Thant Sin
Erecting of bill board in public place near entrance of Zoo
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Abbott Loyalty Campaign သာ ကြန်စွားကြည်
Brand Ambassador ရောက်ရှိပါတယ်

Managing as Brand Ambassador to celebrity family from milk product company

Actor and his wife
Manager
Advertising milk product by using children of age groups
Advertising milk product by using children of age groups (another style)
Using super star vocalist

Vocalist R-Zani (Myanmar language)
FAMOUS ACTRESS AND HER DAUGHTER
ATTRACTING PARENTS TO GET CHILDREN WITH HIGH IQ
Actor and vocalist family
Medical doctor the company giving nutrition lecture at Nursing training school
Water fountain donated by milk product company
Health talks in school, milk powder to mothers of twins and triplets
Dear Sir

Re: Promotion of breastfeeding substitutes to the public

Our organisation focuses on the implementation of the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* which aims to provide safe and adequate nutrition for infants by protecting breastfeeding. We also conduct surveys on marketing practices of all baby food companies and monitor the status of the International Code in all countries. We are the publishers of the periodic global monitoring report, *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules*.

We draw your attention to two advertisements placed by United Pharma in a popular weekly tabloid in Myanmar. These ads promote infant formula and follow-up formula, two products which come under the scope of the *International Code*. The promotional thrust of these ads are further accentuated by the endorsement of two popular Myanmar celebrities and their babies, and slogans like *A good start to have sure end results and for highest development of Brain & Body*. In the face of such claims, the small print statement on the superiority of breastfeeding is rendered insignificant.

Take note that Article 5 of the *International Code* clearly prohibits the promotion of infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes, stating that *there should be no advertising or other form of promotion to the general public of products within the scope of this Code*. Therefore, your ads clearly violate the Code.

In the light of this complaint, we also wish to remind you of the statement on safe infant feeding that the Ministry of Health of Myanmar made on 30 Sept 2008, jointly with UNICEF and WHO. This statement recommends that all infants be fed exclusively with breastmilk for the first six months of life and continue up to two years of age or beyond. No other liquid or food, not even water, is needed during the first six months.

The promotion of infant formula clearly goes against the objective of the Myanmar government to actively support promotion of safe feeding for infants through breastfeeding. We shall publicise your violations and urge that you refrain from any further promotion of such products.

Thank you.

Raja Abdul Razak
Code Monitoring support

International code documentation center/ cc to WHO