



Nurturing the Infant and Young Child

A Summary Guide to the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding



This document ‘Nurturing the Infant and Young Child-A Simple Guide to the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding’ provides comprehensive information of the contents of the Global Strategy. This has been developed by IBFAN Asia Pacific through a working group. The document is not meant to replace the main document but intends to highlight its key areas for advocacy. It is our intention that the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding is implemented by the Governments urgently.

The main document as endorsed by the World Health Assembly Resolution 55.25 is available on the website <http://www.who.int/gb>.

The Global Strategy on IYCF is a valuable framework for any nation to work on infant and young child feeding. It deals specifically with the principles of feeding children during their first two years. It calls for urgent action from all Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive policy on IYCF. It provides a stepping stone for urgent government actions.

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) has played an outstanding role in protecting, promoting and supporting infant and young child feeding globally, regionally and nationally. IBFAN’s participation here is essential to ensure the inclusion of Global Strategy in the countries’ political agendas, as well as being vigilant of the participation that baby food manufacturers may seek within this agenda to promote their commercial interests.

A flyer on Global Strategy on IYCF is also developed by IBFAN Asia Pacific and is available on the website www.ibfan-asiapacific.org.

Another related instrument is the ‘*APPAR Tool Kit*’ to assess the country status and monitor the progress of Global Strategy. Those interested to know more or be involved in the process, how to do it, may write to, IBFAN Asia Pacific Regional Coordinating Office.

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A Simple Guide to the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding



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The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) consists of more than 200 public interest groups working around the world to save lives of infants and young children by working together to bring lasting changes in infant feeding practices at all levels. IBFAN aims to promote the health and well-being of infants and young children and their mothers through protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding practices. IBFAN works for the universal and full implementation of 'International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes' and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.

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Dr. Arun Gupta

FOREWORD

It is shocking that in today's world, over 6 million children under five years of age die because of malnutrition. Two-thirds of them, about 4 million, die before they even complete their first year of life! By any standards, it is massive loss of life of the vulnerable young and it is both a tragedy and a scandal. It is also avoidable and therefore, unforgivable!

There is hope.

Recognising the sheer seriousness of the situation, the global community working through the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have recently launched a comprehensive long-term, workable and action-oriented strategy that has concrete suggestions for local, national and global action.

This booklet outlines in a popular format the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding. WHO and UNICEF have been at the vanguard of the change but no change will come without political will and there will be no political will without popular mobilisation. A partnership of UN with civil society seems an essential trigger and it is hoped that a booklet like this will help that process.

Two things make this new strategy particularly welcome – its human rights based approach and the poverty reduction framework. These twin dimensions give this strategy a structural strength. It is facilitated by very specific measures on infant and young child feeding that are practical and doable.

Experience has it that nothing much will happen of all these noble intentions if there is no understanding of the strategy. And action resulting in meaningful change will not take place unless the strategy has both national commitment and is rooted in the community.

This document in its humble way attempts to contribute to that process – it presents the key issues simply and strongly and the creative format makes it easy reading. It will, hopefully, inform and inspire the kind of popular actions that are necessary to make transformation changes in one's community.

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia Pacific and its team ably led by Drs' Arun and Rita Gupta, have done us all a valuable service by packaging the ideas for action into tools for hope, transferring theory into practice and practice into real change to reduce the horrendous killing of infants and young children worldwide.

Promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding is a primary and central foundation for this change to occur and we at the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), an umbrella network that brings together all the key players in civil society, look forward in working with WHO and UNICEF, national governments and civil groups everywhere.

It is urgent and necessary that we move on this with greater cooperation and seriousness.

Dato (Dr) Anwar Fazal
Chairperson Emeritus
WABA
Penang, Malaysia
5 September 2003

Introduction

This document is a summary of the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (GSIYCF) which is the most current and comprehensive global instrument aiming at protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding. It attempts to present the Global Strategy in a simple, easily understandable format and provides the background, highlights the key areas and outlines the role and responsibilities assigned to various stakeholders. It also provides key action ideas to raise awareness among people and policy makers on the Global Strategy and to stimulate national, regional and international action. It is hoped that it will help in development of national action plans on infant and young child feeding, which is the key component of the Global Strategy and a step forward in implementing the World Health Assembly Resolution of May 2002.

What is the Global Strategy?

The Global Strategy is a guide for countries to develop country specific programs. The Global Strategy was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2002 and the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2002. This urges Member States to take urgent action to improve IYCF practices in order to achieve optimal health and development of infants. The Global Strategy is predicated on a rights-based approach: nutrition is a crucial, universally recognised component of every child's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and women have the right to proper nutrition, to decide how to feed their children and to full information and appropriate conditions that will enable them to carry out their decisions. The Global strategy is situated within a poverty reduction framework. It calls for the development of comprehensive national policies on infant and young child feeding and provides guidance on how to protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for first six months, and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with adequate, appropriate and indigenous complementary feeding starting after the age of six months. It also provides guidance on challenging areas like infant feeding during emergencies and HIV. Finally, it defines the role of key partners and suggests a national framework for actions and interventions. The Global Strategy reaffirms the four Innocenti targets set in 1990, as well as sets additional targets for achievement in coming years.

“Inappropriate feeding practices and their consequences are major obstacle to sustainable socioeconomic development and poverty reduction. Governments will be unsuccessful in the efforts to accelerate economic development in any significant long-term sense until optimal child growth and development, especially through appropriate feeding practices, are ensured.

Policy Framework of the Global Strategy on IYCF as adopted at the World Health Assembly 2002.

Aims and Objectives of the Global Strategy on IYCF

To improve infant and young child feeding practices, the objectives of the Global Strategy are set to:

- ❑ Raise awareness on the problems affecting infant and young child feeding and identify approaches for overcoming these
- ❑ Increase commitment of governments, international organizations and other stakeholders towards optimal feeding practices for infants and young children
- ❑ Create an enabling environment for mothers, families and caregivers to make informed choices about optimal feeding practices

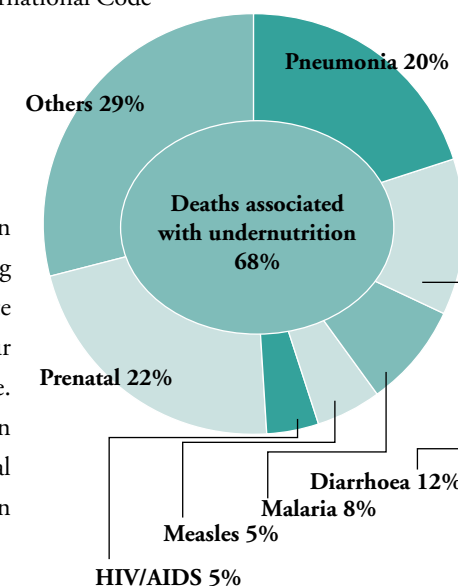
Historical Perspective

The concerned health workers on seeing the devastating effects of bottle-feeding started the breastfeeding movement as early as the 1970s and generated debate within a section of concerned UN forums. Subsequently, activists took an active role in the campaigning on the issue in the mid 1970s, which resulted in the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* in 1981. The movement gained momentum with “Breastfeeding in the 1990s: A Global Initiative”, spearheaded by WHO/UNICEF which led to the “*Innocenti Declaration*” in 1990 committing all the 32 signatories including governments and UN agencies. Both the World Health Assembly and UNICEF Executive Board adopted the *Innocenti Declaration* for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding. The Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding comes as a follow up to these events.

World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF have jointly developed the Global Strategy with inputs from all over the world. In an attempt to revitalize global commitment to appropriate infant and young child nutrition, and in particular breastfeeding, WHO and UNICEF initiated a number of consultations beginning in 1998 to assess infant and young child feeding policies and practices, review key interventions and formulate a comprehensive strategy for the next decade. The Global Strategy was based on review of available scientific literature and technical consultations, experiences of past and continuing achievements such as the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and the Innocenti Declaration.

Background

According to the Global Strategy on IYCF, “malnutrition is responsible for 60% of the 10.9 million deaths annually among children under the age of five”. Over two-thirds of these deaths occur during the first year of life. The high incidence of deaths in early childhood is associated with inappropriate feeding practices. Only about 35% of infants worldwide are exclusively breastfed during the first four months of life. Complementary feeding often begins too early or too late and is inadequate and unsafe. Inappropriate feeding is responsible for at least one third of malnutrition and malnourished children who survive are more frequently sick and display impaired development. The health and nutritional status of mothers and children are closely linked. Ensuring strong health and instilling awareness on good nutrition among women is a prerequisite for improving infant and young child feeding.



The Progress on IYCF

Past twenty years have shown progress on infant and young child feeding, however more action for improvement is needed. While some countries have taken action on the Innocenti Targets and have legislated the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes*, others have gone beyond it. But many countries are still waiting for any action to take place. Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) has also shown mixed progress. Many countries have taken action on the maternity protection campaign. Exclusive breastfeeding and timely complementary feeding rates are still far from being optimal, this is sufficient reason to move forward with renewed commitment.



Challenges

Several challenges face us as we plan to move forward to implement the Global Strategy on IYCF. These include:

1. Lack of political will and commitment
2. Mistaken beliefs of people and health workers
3. Inadequate training and lack of skills among health workers
4. Aggressive marketing practices by baby food manufactures
5. Less supportive work environments
6. Growing urbanization and rapid social and economic changes
7. Lack of clear guidelines for infant feeding during emergencies
8. Risk of mother to child transmission of HIV via breastfeeding

Two Critical Issues

Let's look at the two most crucial areas of the Global Strategy, which have a long term bearing on the success of the strategy as well health, development and survival of infants and young children.

1. The first is the development of comprehensive national policies and plan of action to protect, promote and support optimal infant and young child feeding to improve these practices so that infants and young children are able to develop to their full potential. The development of these policies will allow accurate information and communication targeted to families.

The World Health Assembly Resolution 55.25, calls for an urgent action with a sense of priority by all governments and international organizations.

"...2. URGES Member States, as matter of urgency: to adopt and implement the global strategy,

The WHA Resolution 55.25

2. The second critical issue is to keep the commercial sector away from implementing the infant and young child feeding programs and policies to avoid conflict of interest. In spite of the best intentions of the World Health Assembly (WHA) to keep commercial enterprise away, the International Association of Infant Food Manufactures (IFM) persisted in offering their partnership at all levels in order to weaken the implementation.

"....We are committed to being a part of the solution and support the development of strong public-private partnership in the area of nutrition....."

"As manufacturers of infant foods, we look forward to participating in the ongoing deliberation with WHO, national governments, healthcare professionals and the rest of civil society in advancing the objectives of the Strategy"
Contents of the IFM's letter to the Executive Director, Family and Community Health, WHO, 20 Feb. 2002

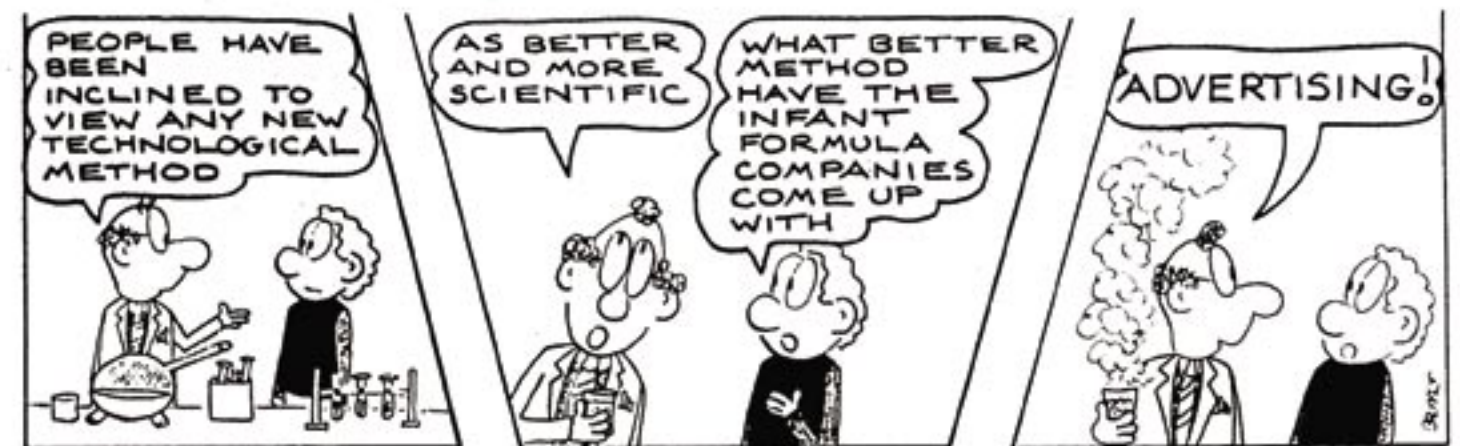
Both the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) groups and several governments played a major and effective role at the World Health Assembly to keep the commercial sector away. During the debate on the Global Strategy at the World Health Assembly 55 in May 2002, the key intervention came from the delegate of the Government of India.

"Commercial enterprises by definition are profit driven entities. It is neither appropriate nor realistic for the WHO to expect that commercial groups will work along with governments and other groups to protect, promote and support breastfeeding."

Part of statement by Government of India at WHA 55, May 2002, Geneva

And finally "Profits before Health" was reversed to "Health before Profits" and 'what is right' prevailed. The public interest was clearly put before profits by the World Health Assembly as the historic resolution 55.25 was endorsed and the Global Strategy was adopted. It urged Member States to work with partners where there would not be any conflict of interest.

Para 44 of the Global Strategy clearly spells out the role of commercial enterprises, that they have only two roles; one to ensure the quality of their products, and second, to fully implement the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions on infant and young child nutrition. The baby food industry is still trying to come back as a partner in the implementation of the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding and effectively do away with the Para 44. But the intention of World Health Assembly (WHA) was clear, it removed the commercial sector from influencing programs.



Source: Article 7 (Protecting Infant Guide)

National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding – A Suggested Framework

Based on the Global Strategy, a comprehensive national policy should include the following interventions:

- i. Adapting and monitoring maternity entitlements in accordance with relevant ILO Conventions and recommendations for protecting appropriate practices;
- ii. Implementing and monitoring existing measures to ensure full compliance to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions;
- iii. Ensuring that all communication to the general public provide accurate and complete information about optimal infant and young child feeding practices;
- iv. Providing 'skilled counseling' services for infant and young child feeding through the health / Nutrition care system;
- v. Promoting good nutrition for pregnant and lactating women;
- vi. Revitalizing the existing BFHI and linking it to community initiatives.
- vii. Promoting community based initiatives and involvement of women's groups, support networks such as mother to mother support groups;
- viii. Training health care providers in breastfeeding counseling skills and ensuring that they have access to up-to-date information on all aspects of breastfeeding and replacement feeding to counsel parents and caregivers, including HIV-positive women.

Strategies for Improving Optimal IYCF Practises

The Global Strategy identifies following strategies for

- ⊙ **Promotion of**
 - o Exclusive breastfeeding for first six months
 - o Continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond
 - o Appropriate, adequate and indigenous complementary feeding after six months
- ⊙ **Provision of access to objective and complete information** for mothers, fathers and caregivers about optimal infant and young child feeding practices, free from commercial influences.
- ⊙ **Provision of skilled counseling services** in the health and nutrition care system, in order to build mothers' confidence, improve feeding techniques and resolve problems related to breastfeeding
- ⊙ **Provision of paid maternity leave**, part-time work arrangements, on-site crèches and facilities for expressing and storing breastmilk and implementation of maternity protection legislation
- ⊙ **Application of International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and National legislations** at all levels including in programs related to HIV and infant feeding, and other areas during emergency situations
- ⊙ **Effectively controlling the marketing practices of baby food manufacturers**
- ⊙ **Provision of counseling on infant feeding options for all HIV infected mothers** and guidance for selecting suitable options to their specific situation and counseling



Operational targets of the Global Strategy

The Global Strategy calls upon governments to initiate action in cooperation with international organizations and other key partners taking into account the conflict of interests and reaffirm their commitment towards infant and young child feeding and promote the following in order to achieve its objectives:

Renewed commitment to Innocenti targets and additional targets

- Appoint **national level committees** and coordinators representing a cross section of stakeholders;
- Ensure maternity facilities follow the "Ten steps to successful breastfeeding" and **revitalize Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)**;



- Give effect to the **International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes** and adopt national legislations.;
- Enact **maternity protection** legislation to protect the rights of working women;
- **Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive national policy on infant and young child feeding;**
- Ensure that all health, nutrition and other relevant sectors protect, promote and support **exclusive breastfeeding for first six months;**
- Ensure continued breastfeeding for two years of age or beyond along with **adequate and appropriate complementary feeding;**
- Develop guidelines for **infant feeding during HIV** and **infant feeding during emergencies;**
- **Stimulate community initiatives** to support women's care and nutrition and optimal infant and young child feeding;
- Initiate **communications and advocacy** for these issues.



What are our responsibilities?

The Global Strategy assigns obligations and responsibilities to various sectors.



- **Governments**

- ⇒ Formulate, implement and monitor a comprehensive national plan of action on IYCF with defined goals, objectives and timelines
- ⇒ Identify and allocate adequate human, financial and organizational resources

- **Health Professional Bodies** (medical facilities, public and private institutions for training health workers and schools of public health)

- ⇒ These institutions and facilities should ensure that basic education and training for health workers cover all aspects of breastfeeding and complementary feeding, nutritional needs of infants and information on relevant legislations
- ⇒ Provide skilled training for exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding counseling
- ⇒ Stay away from commercial interests and avoid conflict of interests to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in the International Code, and WHA Resolutions and national legislations
- ⇒ Encourage the establishment of community support groups for mothers.



- **Non-governmental organizations including community based support groups**

- ⇒ Provide accurate and up-to-date information about infant and young child feeding
- ⇒ Integrate support for infant and young child feeding with other community based interventions and facilitate linkages with the health care system
- ⇒ Work towards implementing aims of the International Code and relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions monitoring commercial practices.

- **Commercial Enterprises**

- ⇒ The para 44 of the global strategy states as “Manufacturers and distributors of industrially processed foods intended for infants and young children also have a constructive role to play in achieving the aim of this strategy. They should ensure that processed food products for infants and children, when sold, meet applicable Codex Alimentarius standards and the Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Foods for Infants and Children. In addition, all manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, including feeding bottles and teats, are responsible for monitoring their marketing practices according to the principles and aim of the Code. They should ensure that their conduct at every level conforms to the Code, subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions, and national measures that have been adopted to give effect to both”.



- **Social Partners**

- ⇒ Employers should ensure that maternity entitlements of women in paid employment are met in order to facilitate breastfeeding after the period of paid maternity leave is over.
- ⇒ Trade unions should negotiate for adequate maternity entitlements and employment security for women during their reproductive age.



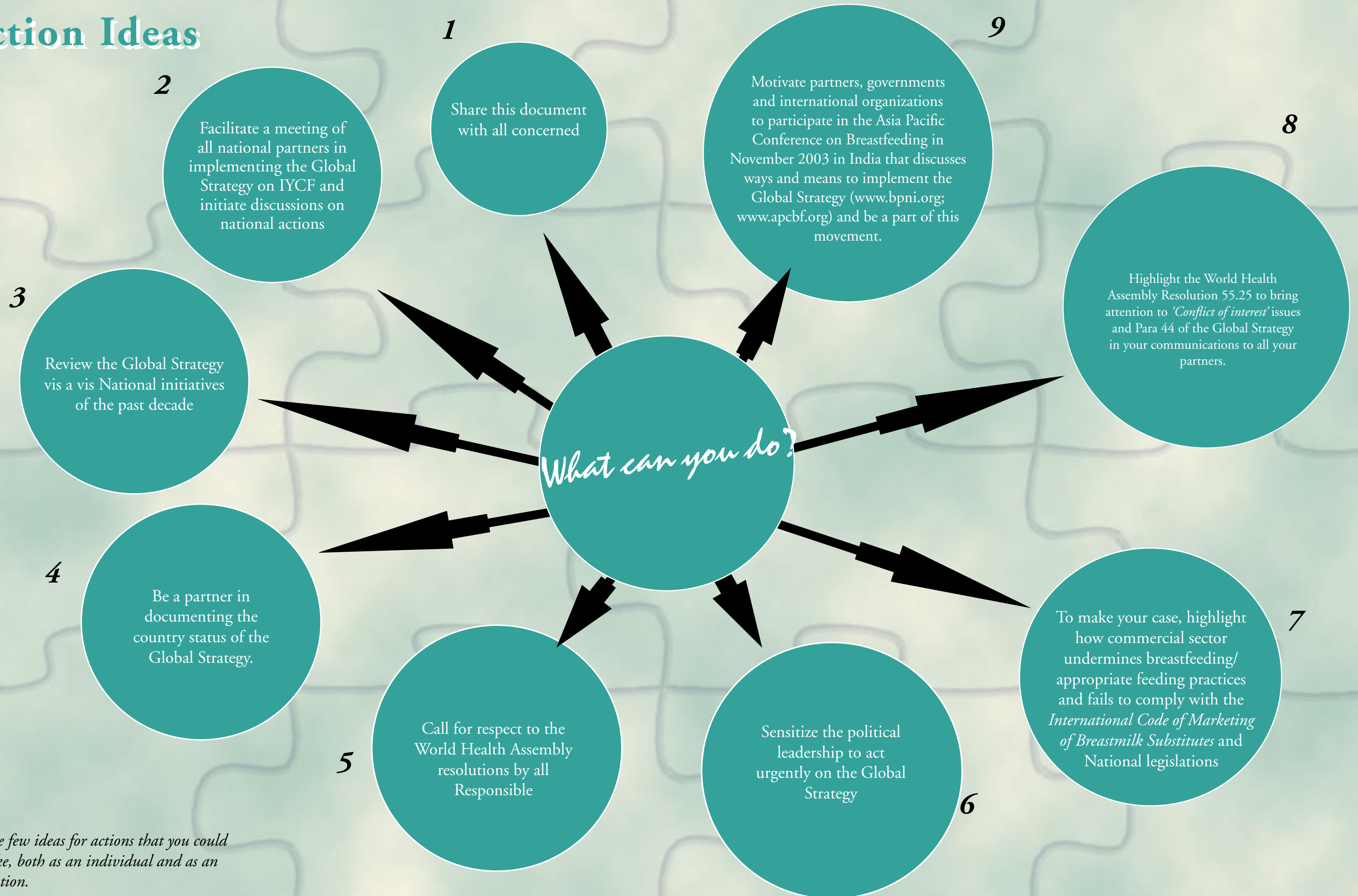
- **Other Groups and Concerned Parties**

- ⇒ Educational authorities and mass media should provide adequate information (free from conflict of interests), create awareness on infant and young child feeding, and help shape attitudes of children and parents towards childcare and products in keeping with the International Code.
- ⇒ Groups within society that play an important role in advocating rights of women and children can help to remove cultural and practical barriers to appropriate feeding practices.

- **International Organizations**

- ⇒ International organizations should place infant and young child feeding as a high priority issue on the global public health agenda and advocate for increased human and financial resources for implementation of the Global Strategy.
- ⇒ Develop guidelines to help governments achieve targets of the Global Strategy.
- ⇒ Sensitize and train health policy makers.
- ⇒ Support social-mobilization activities using mass media to promote optimal infant and young child feeding practices.
- ⇒ Advocate for ratification of ILO Maternity Protection Convention 2000.
- ⇒ Support research on marketing practices and the International Code.

Action Ideas



These are few ideas for actions that you could undertake, both as an individual and as an organization.

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List of Resources

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) Documents

1. Maternity Protection Campaign Kit

This is WABA's campaign to support working women's right to breastfeed through international instruments and national legislations, to provide for better maternity entitlements.

2. Global participatory Action Research Project (GLOPAR)

- a. **Investigating Breastfeeding: Questions, Ideas and Issues to Explore**
- b. **Presenting Breastfeeding: Guide to reporting on State of Breastfeeding in Your Country**
- c. **Action on Breastfeeding: A Guide to Participatory Training and Participatory Learning**

These books highlight some of the questions and issues that are important to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, give guidelines for reporting the same.

3. Evidence of Ten Steps of Successful Breastfeeding

This document is developed to review the evidence for the efficacy of the "Ten Steps" and to provide a tool for both advocacy and education.

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Documents

1. Protecting Infant Health – A Health Worker's to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitute

This booklet is addressed to health workers, doctors, nurses, midwives and obstetricians to help them recognize inappropriate practices and make effective use of the WHO/ UNICEF Code to avoid and counter them.

2. Complying with the Code. A Manufacturers and Distributors Guide to the Code

This guide designed by IBFAN to help sellers, distributors, manufacturers, importers and exporters of infant feeding products to understand and comply with WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

3. State of the Code by Country

This is a survey of measures taken by governments to implement the provisions of the International Code of marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

4. State of Code by the Company

This is a survey of marketing practices of infant foods and feeding bottles companies, compared to the requirements of international Code of marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

5. The Code Handbook

This is a handbook to aid governments in developing measures to implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) documents

1. The Law to Protect Breastfeeding

The book provide very simply the details of the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infants Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 and the IMS Amendment Act, 2003. This book also explains about the monitoring process of the violations of the IMS Act and where to report for this purpose. It also has complete text of the Act.

2. The Science of Infant Feeding

A book on breastfeeding and infant feeding with scientific advance of 20th century.

3. Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding – A Training Course

This has been adapted from WHO/UNICEF Course "Breastfeeding Counselling: A Training Course". This training course of 5-6 days duration has several sessions on the technical aspects. Lectures and demonstration in the sessions, role-plays, exercises, groups works make it participatory and learning experience. This is meant for health and nutrition professionals, lactation consultants.

4. Faulty Feeding Practices and Malnutrition – A Link

This document explains how faulty feeding practices leads to malnutrition and through light on some initiatives to improve infant feeding practices.

5. Tools for Investigating Infant and Young Child Feeding

These are set of questionnaires developed to investigate qualitative and quantitative aspects of breastfeeding and status of newborn care and infant feeding practices.

6. Manual and Questionnaire for Monitoring the Compliance with the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 (The IMS Act)

This manual and set of questionnaires are one of the tools used in monitoring compliance with the infant milk substitutes, feeding Bottles and infant foods, (Regulation of production, Supply & Distribution) Act, 1992 .The manual aims to inform the readers in simple words the basic provisions of the Act, the need for systematic monitoring, how one can monitor

the activities of the manufacturers of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles and infant foods and the action one can take as an informed individual.

Others

1. Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding - WHO- 55 World Health Assembly

This document is report of the secretariat for Fifty Fifth World Health Assembly.

2. Innocenti Declaration

This was produced and adopted by the participants at the WHO/ UNICEF policy maker meeting on "Breastfeeding in the 1990's: A Global Initiative". The Declaration reflects the content of the original background document for the meeting and the views expressed in groups and plenary sessions.

3. Breastfeeding Counselling- A Training Course

A training course developed by WHO/UNICEF to train health workers in all countries in the skills needed to support and protect breastfeeding. The course is of 40 hours and is divided into 33 sessions of between 30 and 120 minutes, using variety of teaching methods.

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