

WHA31.47 The role of the health sector in the development of national and international food and nutrition policies and plans, with special reference to combating malnutrition

The Thirty-first World Health Assembly,

Having considered the Director-General's report on the role of the health sector in the development of national and international food and nutrition policies and plans;

Recalling resolutions WHA27.43, WHA28.42 and WHA30.51;

Convinced that malnutrition is one of the major impediments in attaining the goal of health for all by the year 2000, and that new approaches based on clearly defined priorities and maximum utilization of local resources are needed for a more effective action to combat malnutrition;

Noting with concern the continued decline in breast-feeding in many countries, while in certain countries it has been possible to arrest or reverse this trend;

Recognizing that during the first months of life breast-feeding is the safest and most appropriate way to feed infants and that it should be maintained as long as possible, with timely supplementation and weaning which ideally should be done with locally available and acceptable foods;

1. THANKS the Director-General for his report;
2. ENDORSES the functions of the health sector in this field, as described in the report of the Director-General;
3. RECOMMENDS that Member States give the highest priority to stimulating permanent multisectoral coordination of nutrition policies and programmes and to preventing malnutrition in pregnant and lactating women, infants and young children by:
 - (1) supporting and promoting breast-feeding by educational activities among the general public; legislative and social action to facilitate breast-feeding by working mothers; implementing the necessary promotional and facilitating measures in the health services; and regulating inappropriate sales promotion of infant foods that can be used to replace breast milk;
 - (2) ensuring timely supplementation and appropriate weaning practices and the feeding of young children after weaning with the maximum utilization of locally available and acceptable foods; carrying out, if necessary, action-oriented research to support this approach; and training personnel for its promotion;
4. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to develop, in cooperation with Member States, a programme of research and development in nutrition, oriented primarily to the needs of developing countries, and aimed initially at the prevention of malnutrition in pregnant and lactating women and in young children by promoting adequate nutrition of the mother and by encouraging breast-feeding and timely supplementation and appropriate weaning practices, with the maximum utilization of locally available and acceptable foods;

- (2) to take any necessary measures to coordinate international activities designed to promote breast-feeding, and especially to work in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies active in this field;
 - (3) to cooperate with national institutions in their problem-solving research and training programmes so as to strengthen their capacity to combat malnutrition, and to stimulate technical cooperation among developing countries in this field;
 - (4) to collaborate with multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies and with other inter-governmental and nongovernmental organizations in programmes of technical cooperation with countries for the development and implementation of national food and nutrition policies, plans and programmes;
 - (5) to stimulate the mobilization of scientific and financial resources in support of a global effort to eliminate malnutrition;
5. URGES governments, multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies to support the proposed programme of research and development in nutrition through their technical and scientific institutions and workers and by financial contributions.