

THIRTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

WHA39.28

Agenda item 21

16 May 1986

30393

INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING

The Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolutions WHA27.43, WHA31.47, WHA33.32, WHA34.22, WHA35.26 and WHA37.30 which dealt with infant and young child feeding;

Having considered the Progress and Evaluation Report on Infant and Young Child Nutrition;¹

Recognizing that the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes is an important contribution to healthy infant and young child feeding in all countries;

Aware that today, five years after the adoption of the International Code, many Member States have made substantial efforts to implement it, but that many products unsuitable for infant feeding are nonetheless being promoted and used for this purpose; and that sustained and concerted efforts will therefore continue to be necessary to achieve full implementation of and compliance with the International Code as well as the cessation of the marketing of unsuitable products and the improper promotion of breast-milk substitutes;

Noting with great satisfaction the Guidelines concerning the main health and socioeconomic circumstances in which infants have to be fed on breast-milk substitutes,² in the context of Article 6, paragraph 6, of the International Code;

Noting further the statement in the Guidelines, paragraph 47: "Since the large majority of infants born in maternity wards and hospitals are full term, they require no nourishment other than colostrum during their first 24-48 hours of life - the amount of time often spent by a mother and her infant in such an institutional setting. Only small quantities of breast-milk substitutes are ordinarily required to meet the needs of a minority of infants in these facilities, and they should only be available in ways that do not interfere with the protection and promotion of breast-feeding for the majority.";

1. ENDORSES the report of the Director-General;¹

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to implement the Code if they have not yet done so;

(2) to ensure that the practices and procedures of their health care systems are consistent with the principles and aim of the International Code;

¹ Document A39/8.

² Document A39/8 Add.1.

(3) to make the fullest use of all concerned parties - health professional bodies, nongovernmental organizations, consumer organizations, manufacturers and distributors - generally, in protecting and promoting breast-feeding and, specifically, in implementing the Code and monitoring its implementation and compliance with its provisions;

(4) to seek the cooperation of manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of Article 2 of the Code, in providing all information considered necessary for monitoring the implementation of the Code;

(5) to provide the Director-General with complete and detailed information on the implementation of the Code;

(6) to ensure that the small amounts of breast-milk substitutes needed for the minority of infants who require them in maternity wards and hospitals are made available through the normal procurement channels and not through free or subsidized supplies;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General

(1) to propose a simplified and standardized form for use by Member States to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation by them of their implementation of the Code and reporting thereon to WHO, as well as the preparation by WHO of a consolidated report by each of the articles of the Code;

(2) to specifically direct the attention of Member States and other interested parties to the facts that:

(a) any food or drink given before complementary feeding is nutritionally required may interfere with the initiation or maintenance of breast-feeding and therefore should neither be promoted nor encouraged for use by infants during this period;

(b) the practice being introduced in some countries of providing infants with specially formulated milks (so-called "follow-up" milks) is not necessary.

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