

Concurrently with this Statement, the Geneva meeting adopted the following recommendations...

[Extract from WHO report on the WHO/UNICEF Meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding, October 1979].

### The marketing of infant formula

Women have the right to correct and full information; even objective information, however, can be misleading and harmful if it is given in inappropriate settings or times. Women's organizations should be involved in national councils or government agencies in the monitoring and enforcement of marketing codes dealing with the regulation of information and publicity. Women in all parts of the world - in developed and developing countries - should express their solidarity in deciding what is best in this unique and important part of their lives.

### APPROPRIATE MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION OF INFANT FORMULA AND WEANING FOODS

The government of each country has the responsibility to promote coherent food and nutrition policies which should give special attention to mothers, infants and children. These policies should emphasize the preservation of breastfeeding and the implementation of appropriate nutritional guidance (calendrier nutritionnel). Governments have a duty to ensure the supply and availability of adequate infant food products to those who need them, in ways that will not discourage breastfeeding. Informed advice should be given at the appropriate time and place to mothers and families about best infant and young child feeding practices.

Breastfeeding is the only natural method of feeding babies and it should be actively protected and encouraged in all countries. Therefore, marketing of breastmilk substitutes and weaning foods should be designed not to discourage breastfeeding.

There should be no sales promotion, including promotional advertising\* to the public of products to be used as breastmilk substitutes or bottle-fed supplements and feeding bottles. Promotion to health personnel should be restricted to factual and ethical information.

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\* This includes the use of mass media and other forms of advertising directly to the mother or general public, designed to increase sales of breastmilk substitutes, to

There should be an international code of marketing of infant formula and other products used as breastmilk substitutes. This should be supported by both exporting and importing countries and observed by all manufacturers. WHO/UNICEF are requested to organize the process for its preparation, with the involvement of all concerned parties, in order to reach a conclusion as soon as possible.

Monitoring of marketing practices is recommended. Usually this will be done under government auspices. Advertising councils and industry, consumer and professional groups can make an important contribution.

There should be no marketing or availability of infant formula or weaning foods in a country unless marketing practices is in accord with the national code or legislation if these exist, or, in their absence, with the spirit of the meeting and the recommendations contained in this report or with any agreed international code.

Facilities of the health care system should never be used for the promotion of artificial feeding. Therefore, advertising or promotional distribution of samples of breastmilk substitutes through health service channels should not be allowed. Artificial feeding should not be openly demonstrated in health facilities.

No personnel paid by companies producing or selling breastmilk substitutes should be allowed to work in the health care system, even if they are assigned more general responsibilities that do not directly include the promotion of formulas, in order to avoid the risk of conflict of interest.