

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW STAKEHOLDERS CAN SUPPORT THE FIRST-FOOD SYSTEM

Supporting, promoting and protecting breastfeeding as the first food system has cross-cutting impact across all five Action Tracks of the Food Systems Summit in support of the SDGs:

- 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all and reduce the incidence of non-communicable disease, enabling all people to be nourished and healthy.**
 - Governments, donors, and the private sector need to ensure women have access to quality breastfeeding counselling and services before, during, after childbirth and up to at least two years thereafter.
 - » Mother- and family centered care should be provided antenatally, perinatally and postnatally emphasizing non-separation of the mother-infant dyads. During antenatal visits and all points of care, provide dietary counseling and appropriate supplementation to pregnant mothers to prepare them for safe delivery in mother-baby friendly health facilities. Assist them in drafting their birth plans to include exclusive breastfeeding started within the first hour of birth. Emphasize that only breastmilk will be needed until 6 months of life and that breastfeeding will be continued for a minimum of two years while the infant receives safe and nutritious complementary solids.
 - Governments and the private sector need to implement policies of maternity entitlements and provide paid maternity leave and breastfeeding-friendly workplaces that provide on-site facilities for day-care and breastfeeding and/or breastmilk expression breaks, as well as clean, hygienic, and private places for mothers to express, store and means to transport breastmilk.
 - Governments, donors, and implementers need to work with communities to develop solutions to address the lack of maternity protections for women working in both the formal and informal labor sectors, such as through universal health coverage with financial risk protection, microinsurance schemes, and by targeting social protection transfers to vulnerable pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.
 - Governments also need to provide at least 14 weeks of paid leave around childbirth (as recommended by the International Labor Organization), but optimally at least 18 weeks of paid leave.
- 2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns including through building demand for sustainably produced food, improving nutrition, eliminating wasteful patterns of food consumption, and recognising that we need to facilitate a transition in diets towards more nutritious foods that require fewer resources to produce and transport.**
 - Governments need to incorporate the Code, its subsequent resolutions and relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions, e.g. WHA Resolution 69.9, into their laws and regulations and monitor and enforce the Code in collaboration with WHO's monitoring mechanism, NetCode.

- Stakeholders, including consumers, investors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the UN need to demand CMF companies publicly commit to full compliance with the Code and disclose a concrete plan for achieving this goal by 2030 at the latest. The Code is for all stakeholders who have a responsibility to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.
- Governments and stakeholders (including investors, CSOs, and the UN) need to increase public awareness and understanding of the Code and its role in promoting and protecting breastfeeding and regulating inappropriate promotions of breastmilk substitutes.
- Communications should focus on promoting breastfeeding as a social norm, de-normalizing the consumption of CMFs, and calling out CMF companies and media platforms when they violate the Code.
- Emphasize that maternal milk and so called follow-on formula are not necessary. During pregnancy, a variety of locally available foods consisting of fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, protein from animal sources like fish, lean meat eaten in moderation are beneficial for both the pregnant woman and her fetus. For infants and young children, complementary solids that are locally available, preferably indigenous can be introduced safely and in an environment of nurturing care.
- Governments, donors, and stakeholders should implement multi-channel social and behavior change interventions for a wide range of audiences (e.g., families, community leaders, health workers, employers, media) to ensure a supportive enabling environment for breastfeeding that can counter the aggressive marketing of the CMF industry.

3. Boost nature-positive production at sufficient scale

- Stakeholders, including consumers, investors, CSOs, and the UN need to raise awareness among decision-makers around the impact of CMF production and consumption on food security, climate change, and the environment.
- The vast majority of mothers can breastfeed successfully and empowered to be the first food system if adequately counselled, supported and protected, States must invest in promoting, supporting and protecting breastfeeding by engaging multisectoral partners that do not have commercial interests in the dairy or baby food markets. This will contribute to efforts to mitigate the impact on climate change, reducing emissions and increasing carbon capture, regenerating and protecting critical ecosystems and reducing food loss and energy usage, without undermining health or nutritious diets.
- Stakeholders, including investors, CSOs, and the UN need to conduct additional research on the impact of CMF on the climate and the environment.

4. Advance equitable livelihoods and value distribution

- Maternity protection, including paternity leaves for both the formal and informal labor sector will increase productivity, raising incomes, distributing risk, expanding inclusion and creating jobs.

5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses ensures the continued functionality of healthy and sustainable food systems.

- By prepositioning breastfeeding mother-infant dyads as the first food system under normal contexts, high breastfeeding rates will strengthen our health and nutrition systems for the most vulnerable of our populations, making them resilient and able to withstand the shocks and stresses of natural disasters, armed conflicts, displacement and new threats posed by climate change, emerging pandemics etc.
- Upholding the International Code and pushing for all countries to have national legislation to regulate marketing of breast milk substitutes are crucial to protecting breastfeeding against commercial interests of the CMF industry whether under normal or emergency contexts