



70th World Health Assembly – Geneva, May 2017

IBFAN statement on Agenda Item 15.5: Report of the Commission
on Ending Childhood Obesity: implementation plan

I speak on behalf of IBFAN. This statement is supported by FIAN International . We are glad to comment on this Plan. IBFAN participated in the development of the ECHO Report and is pleased that many of our comments were taken on board, in particular the recognition of the importance of breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding in obesity prevention.

As you know, States obligations with regard to breastfeeding are defined in the 3-pillar framework ‘Protect, Promote and Support’ adopted in 2002 by the WHA. Recently, a group of UN experts, among whom the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, have reiterated that these obligations, including protection against misleading marketing, constitute an integral part of States’ human rights obligations.

Mothers themselves have no obligation to breastfeed their child. Indeed, they always remain fully sovereign over their own body. It is rather the role of States to ensure that mothers do not face obstacles to breastfeeding.

States have the obligation to provide mothers with accurate and unbiased information and counseling from the start of their pregnancy, including on the continuation of breastfeeding up to 2 years or beyond. We regret that key factor, is not mentioned in Action 4. The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative should also be mentioned as the external audit that guarantees implementation of the Ten Steps.

To be consistent with the recommendation to exclusively breastfeed up to 6 months, States should grant working mothers with a minimum of 6 months of maternity leave.

Finally in relation to education, we are pleased that Action 5 warns of the risks of corporate sponsorship and the need for conflict of interest safeguards – corporate sponsorship of education blurs the lines between marketing and education. As highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education the rapid increase in the commercialization of education is a major concern.

Thank you.