

International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

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Agenda Item 11.8 – Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases

IBFAN has worked with WHO on NCDs since 2003 and knows that the threat to public health cannot be solved by national policies alone. It needs an international solution to tackle the power of multinational food corporations -who all share the same tactics as the tobacco industry.

WHO's courage to continue its work on baby food code, tackling conflicts of interest and integrating the Code and WHA Resolutions into Codex trading standards, is an important model to follow that continues to save many lives. Thank you.

Sadly, WHO's work on NCD's has in many ways been derailed and is now becoming unsustainable. WHO's "fresh working relationship" with the food and related industries seems to be promoting the Public Private Partnership model –without the resources to identify and manage the risks. Without such scrutiny WHO's name is being misused and its health goals undermined.

WHO should be working with governments, small farmers, social movements and others to prevent soil depletion, deforestation and land-grabbing. It must encourage the healthy, biodiverse and culturally appropriate food that is best for humans and the planet. Instead WHO seems transfixed with persuading food corporations to produce slightly less harmful -but still highly processed products and risky technological fixes.

IBFAN has sat on the European Commission's Diet Platform for over 10 years and has seen its risks and limitations. Sound ideas are displaced by voluntary, here today, gone tomorrow promises and effective regulatory action is delayed.

Governments must be in the driver's seat and have access to hard data. Asking them to put 'engagement' before risk assessment is asking for trouble. We strongly urge a rethink on WHO's strategy on NCDs. Thank you.

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