Innocenti Declaration 2005
On Infant and Young Child Feeding

In the 15 years since the adoption of the original
Innocenti Declaration in 1990, remarkable
progress has been made in improving infant
and young child feeding practices worldwide.

Nevertheless, inappropriate feeding practices –
sub-optimal or no breastfeeding and inadequate
complementary feeding – remain the greatest
threat to child health and survival globally.

Improved breastfeeding alone could save the lives
of more than 3,500 children every day, more than any
other preventive intervention.

Guided by accepted human rights principles,
especially those embodied in the Convention on the
Rights of the Child, our vision is of an environment
that enables mothers, families and other caregivers
to make informed decisions about optimal feeding,
which is defined as exclusive breastfeeding1 for six
months followed by the introduction of appropriate
complementary feeding and continued
breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond.

Achieving this vision requires skilled practical support
to arrive at the highest attainable standard of health
and development for infants and young children, which
is the universally recognised right of every child.

We who are assembled in Florence, Italy,
on this Twenty-Second Day of November
2005 to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the
Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion
and Support of Breastfeeding declare that these
actions are urgent and necessary to ensure the
best start in life for our children, for the
achievement of the Millennium Development
Goals by 2015, and for the realisation of the
human rights of present and future generations.

Challenges remain: poverty, the HIV pandemic,
natural and human-made emergencies, globalisation,
environmental contamination, health systems investing
primarily in curative rather than preventive services,
gender inequities and women’s increasing rates
of employment outside the home, including in the
non-formal sector. These challenges must be addressed
to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the
aims of the Millennium Declaration and for the vision
set out above to become reality for all children.

The targets of the 1990 Innocenti Declaration and
the 2002 Global Strategy for Infant and Young
Child Feeding remain the foundation for action.
While remarkable progress has been made,
much more needs to be done.

We therefore issue this Call for Action so that:

All parties
• Empower women in their own right, and as mothers
and providers of breastfeeding support and
information to other women.
• Support breastfeeding as the norm for feeding infants
and young children.
• Highlight the risks of artificial feeding and the
implications for health and development throughout
the life course.
• Ensure the health and nutritional status of women
throughout all stages of life.
• Protect breastfeeding in emergencies, including by
supporting uninterrupted breastfeeding and
appropriate complementary feeding, and avoiding
general distribution of breastmilk substitutes.

• Implement the HIV and Infant Feeding – Framework
for Priority Action, including protecting, promoting
and supporting breastfeeding for the general
population while providing counselling and support
for HIV-positive women.

All governments
• Establish or strengthen national infant and young
child feeding and breastfeeding authorities,
coordinating committees and oversight groups
that are free from commercial influence and
other conflicts of interest.
• Revitalise the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative
(BFHI), maintaining the Global Criteria as the
minimum requirement for all facilities, expanding
the Initiative’s application to include maternity,
neonatal and child health services and community-
based support for lactating women and caregivers
of young children.
• Implement all provisions of the International
Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes
and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly
resolutions in their entirety as a minimum
requirement, and establish sustainable enforcement
mechanisms to prevent and/or address
non-compliance.
• Adopt maternity protection legislation and other
measures that facilitate six months of exclusive
breastfeeding for women employed in all sectors,
with urgent attention to the non-formal sector.
• Ensure that appropriate guidelines and skill
acquisition regarding infant and young child feeding
are included in both pre-service and in-service
training of all health care staff, to enable them to
implement infant and young child feeding policies
and to provide a high standard of breastfeeding
management and counselling to support mothers to
practise optimal breastfeeding and
complementary feeding.
• Ensure that all mothers are aware of their rights
and have access to support, information and
counselling in breastfeeding and complementary
feeding from health workers and peer groups.
• Establish sustainable systems for monitoring
infant and young child feeding patterns and
trends and use this information for advocacy
and programming.
• Encourage the media to provide positive images
of optimal infant and young child feeding,
to support breastfeeding as the norm, and to
participate in social mobilisation activities such as
World Breastfeeding Week.
• Take measures to protect populations, especially
pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, from
environmental contaminants and chemical
residues.
• Identify and allocate sufficient resources to fully
implement actions called for in the Global
Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
• Monitor progress in appropriate infant and
young child feeding practices and report
periodically, including as provided in the

1. Exclusive breastfeeding means that no other drink or food is
given to the infant; the infant should feed frequently and for
unrestricted periods.

All manufacturers and distributors of products
within the scope of the International Code
• Ensure full compliance with all provisions of
the International Code and subsequent relevant
World Health Assembly resolutions in all
countries, independently of any other measures
taken to implement the Code.
• Ensure that all processed foods for infants
and young children meet applicable Codex
Alimentarius standards.

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The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding

OPERATIONAL TARGETS

Four operational targets from the 1990 Innocenti Declaration:

1. Appoint a national breastfeeding coordinator with appropriate authority, and establish a multisectoral national breastfeeding committee composed of representatives from relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations, and health professional associations.

2. Ensure that every facility providing maternity services fully practises all the “Ten steps to successful breastfeeding” set out in the WHO/UNICEF statement on breastfeeding and maternity services.

3. Give effect to the principles and aim of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety.

4. Enact imaginative legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women and establish means for its enforcement.

Five additional operational targets:

5. Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive policy on infant and young child feeding, in the context of national policies and programmes for nutrition, child and reproductive health, and poverty reduction.

6. Ensure that the health and other relevant sectors protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond, while providing women access to the support they require – in the family, community and workplace – to achieve this goal.

7. Promote timely, adequate, safe and appropriate complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding.

8. Provide guidance on feeding infants and young children in exceptionally difficult circumstances, and on the related support required by mothers, families and other caregivers.

9. Consider what new legislation or other suitable measures may be required, as part of a comprehensive policy on infant and young child feeding, to give effect to the principles and aim of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and to subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions.

Multilateral and bilateral organisations and international financial institutions

- Recognise that optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding are essential to achieving the long-term physical, intellectual and emotional health of all populations and therefore the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other development initiatives and that inappropriate feeding practices and their consequences are major obstacles to poverty reduction and sustainable socio-economic development.

- Identify and budget for sufficient financial resources and expertise to support governments in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their policies and programmes on optimal infant and young child feeding, including revitalising the BFHI.

- Increase technical guidance and support for national capacity building in all the target areas set forth in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

- Support operational research to fill information gaps and improve programming.

- Encourage the inclusion of programmes to improve breastfeeding and complementary feeding in poverty-reduction strategies and health sector development plans.

Public interest non-governmental organisations

- Give greater priority to protecting, promoting and supporting optimal feeding practices, including relevant training of health and community workers, and increase effectiveness through cooperation and mutual support.

- Draw attention to activities which are incompatible with the Code’s principles and aim so that violations can be effectively addressed in accordance with national legislation, regulations or other suitable measures.

The Innocenti Declaration 2005 was adopted by participants at the event, “Celebrating Innocenti 1990-2005: Achievements, Challenges and Future Imperatives”, held on 22 November 2005, in Italy, co-organised by the following organisations: