

Global standard-setting committee puts child health before trade

Idioma Undefined



Codex Alimentarius, the FAO/WHO body that sets global trading standards for food, decided last week to put the interest of child health above trade – when in a breakthrough consensus the Committee agreed to include reference to WHO’s recommendations for strict controls on the marketing and labelling of formulas for babies over six months. This measure should help governments to halt the inappropriate marketing of these products, including cross branding with formulas for infants.

IBFAN – the 35-year old global network that has been calling for such safeguards, warmly welcomed this radical change of direction. Codex’ standard-setting is a long-drawn out process. This revised standard work, started in 2014 is expected to complete in 2019.

Bad diet is now acknowledged to be the biggest cause of death and disability and the costs of diet-related diseases are fast consuming health budgets.

The aggressive marketing of the baby food industry misleads and confuses parents and undermines breastfeeding. These processed, expensive, sweetened and flavored milks targeting 6-36 month old children account for 50% of absolute growth in a formula market that is set to rise by 55% from US\$45 billion to US\$70 billion by 2019.

IBFAN welcomed the support of ILCA, IACFO and HKI in their advocacy to improve the standard. The NGOs and many Member States are calling for a clear statement that the products are not necessary – in both the standard and on labels (infant formula can continue to be used after 12 months). Since the composition of the products is not yet finalised it is important countries are free to prevent their import if they are considered to pose a risk to health.

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[Maternal, infant and young child nutrition Guidance on ending the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and](#)

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