In 1990, eight global goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), were set by governments and the United Nations to fight poverty and promote healthy and sustainable development in a comprehensive way by 2015. There are regular “countdowns” to gauge progress in achieving the goals. This year’s WBW theme responds to the latest countdown by asserting the importance of increasing and sustaining the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding in the post 2015 agenda, and engaging as many groups and people of various ages as possible.

2014 is also the year of the Football World Cup! Breastfeeding provides good health and nutrition, both these are important for sports. So let us all score a goal or two - a breastfeeding goal - for life and for sports!

WABA does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment and/or complementary foods that displace breastfeeding. WABA encourages all participants of World Breastfeeding Week to respect and follow this ethical stance.

Welcome to World Breastfeeding Week 2014!

To stimulate interest among young people of both genders to see the relevance of breastfeeding in today’s changing world.

To provide information about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and how they relate to breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding (IYCF).

To showcase the progress made so far and the key gaps in breastfeeding and IYCF.

To call attention to the importance of stepping up actions to protect, promote and support breastfeeding as a key intervention in the MDGs and in the post 2015 era.

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Let's review how the UN's Scientific Committee on Nutrition illustrated how breastfeeding is linked to each of the Millennium Development Goals.

**GOAL 1**

**Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

Exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for two years provide high quality energy and nutrients, and can help prevent hunger and malnutrition. Breastfeeding is a cost-effective way of feeding babies and children. It is affordable for everyone and does not burden household budgets compared to artificial feeding.

**GOAL 2**

**Achieve universal primary education**

-Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are fundamentals for readiness to learn. Breastfeeding and good quality complementary foods significantly reduce the risk of stunting, and so enhances mental development and thus promote learning.

**GOAL 3**

**Promote gender equality and empower women**

Breastfeeding is a great equalizer giving every child a fair start in life. Most differences in growth between sexes begin as complementary foods are added into the diet, and gender preference begins to act on feeding decisions. Breastfeeding is uniquely a right of women, and should be supported by society, for example via maternity protection laws.

**GOAL 4**

**Reduce child mortality**

Infant mortality could be readily reduced by about 13% with improved breastfeeding practices alone, and 6% with improved complementary feeding. In addition, about 50-60% of under-5 mortality is secondary to malnutrition, largely caused by inadequate complementary feeding following on from poor breastfeeding practices.

**GOAL 5**

**Improve maternal health**

Breastfeeding is associated with decreased maternal postpartum blood loss, decreased breast cancer, ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer, and osteoporosis. Breastfeeding also contributes to increasing birth intervals, reducing the risks of pregnancies too close together.

**GOAL 6**

**Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

Exclusive breastfeeding together with antiretroviral therapy for mothers and babies can reduce the transmission of HIV from mother to child to a very low level.

**GOAL 7**

**Ensure environmental sustainability**

Breastfeeding is linked to less milk industry waste, pharmaceutical waste, plastic and aluminium waste, and reduced use of firewood and fossil fuels.

**GOAL 8**

**Develop a global partnership for development**

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding fosters multi-sectoral collaboration, and can build upon existing partnerships for support of development through breastfeeding and complementary feeding programs.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are meant to be achieved by 2015 - next year! Although much progress has taken place, there is still a lot of unfinished business. Here are some examples: Poverty has gone down, but in 1 in 8 people still go to bed hungry. Undernutrition affects about a quarter of all children globally. Overweight, the other form of malnutrition is becoming more common too.

In the last 2 decades, child mortality has decreased by about 40%, but still almost 7 million children under five die each year, mainly from preventable diseases. As the overall rate of under-five mortality has declined, the proportion of neonatal deaths (during the first month of life) comprises an increasing proportion of all child deaths.

Globally, maternal mortality has declined from 400 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 210 in 2010, but fewer than half of women deliver in baby-friendly maternities.

By protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding, YOU can contribute to each of the MDGs in a substantial way. Exclusive breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are key interventions for improving child survival, potentially saving about 20% of children under five.

How are BREASTFEEDING and the MDGs linked?

- Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are key interventions for improving child survival, potentially saving about 20% of children under five.
- Breastfeeding practices alone, and 6% with improved complementary feeding.
- Exclusive breastfeeding together with antiretroviral therapy for mothers and babies can reduce the transmission of HIV from mother to child to a very low level.

WABA • World Breastfeeding Week • 1-7 August 2014

World Breastfeeding Week is coordinated by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA Core Partners are the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN International), La Leche League International (LLLI), and Wellstart International. WABA comprises an increasing proportion of all child deaths.

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