

# GLOBAL BREASTFEEDING COLLECTIVE

## A CALL TO ACTION

Breastfeeding gives all children the healthiest start in life.

Breastmilk acts as a baby's first vaccine, stimulates brain development, and protects a woman's health. When mothers breastfeed, everyone benefits. Breastfeeding leads to lower health care costs, healthier families, and a smarter workforce.

Yet, only 44 percent of children under six months of age are fed only breastmilk. UNICEF and WHO are leading a Global Breastfeeding Collective to increase political commitment for breastfeeding—one of the smartest investments a country can make. The initiative aims to increase early initiation, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding for up to two years or beyond, together with appropriate, adequate and safe complementary foods.



**We call upon implementers and donors from governments, philanthropies, international organizations, civil society to:**



**1 Increase funding to raise breastfeeding rates from birth through two years.**



**2 Fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions through strong legal measures that are enforced and independently monitored by organizations free from conflicts of interest.**



**3 Enact paid family leave and workplace breastfeeding policies, building on the International Labour Organization's maternity protection guidelines as a minimum requirement, including provisions for the informal sector.**



**4 Implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in maternity facilities, including providing breastmilk for sick and vulnerable newborns.**



**5 Improve access to skilled breastfeeding counselling as part of comprehensive breastfeeding policies and programmes in health facilities.**



**6 Strengthen links between health facilities and communities, and encourage community networks that protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.**



**7 Strengthen monitoring systems that track the progress of policies, programmes, and funding towards achieving both national and global breastfeeding targets.**

## BREASTFEEDING FACTS

Increasing rates of breastfeeding could:

- Save the lives of more than 820,000 children under age five, annually.
- Prevent 20,000 breast cancer deaths.
- Save hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs.
- Generate US \$302 billion annually in additional income—nearly 0.5 per cent of the world's GNI.
- Breastfeeding is associated with an IQ increase of 3 to 4 points.
- Only 44 per cent of children younger than six months are exclusively breastfed.

## SOURCES

Victora CG, Aluísio JD, Barros AJD, et al. Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect. *Lancet* 2016; 387: 475-90.

Rollins NC, Bhandari N, Hajeebhoy N et al. Why invest, and what it will take to improve breastfeeding practices? *Lancet* 2016; 387: 491-507.

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL BREASTFEEDING COLLECTIVE

Led by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Breastfeeding Collective brings together implementers and donors from governments, philanthropies, international organizations, and civil society.

The Collective's vision is a world in which all mothers have the technical; financial; emotional; and public support they need to start breastfeeding within an hour of a child's birth, to breastfeed exclusively for six months, and to continue breastfeeding—with complementary foods—for two years or beyond. The Collective's mission is to rally political; legal; financial; and public support, so rates of breastfeeding increase, which will benefit mothers, children, and society.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO JOIN THE COLLECTIVE:

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Global Breastfeeding Collective Partners:

1000 Days | Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine | Action Against Hunger | Alive and Thrive | Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Network | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation | CARE | Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute | Center for Women's Health and Wellness | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Concern Worldwide | Helen Keller International | International Baby Food Action Network | International Lactation Consultant Association | La Leche League International | New Partnership for Africa's Development | Nutrition International | PATH | Save the Children | UNICEF | United States Agency for International Development | USAID Advancing Nutrition | WHO | World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action | World Bank | World Vision International

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