



The Asia-Pacific Infant and Young Child Nutrition Association (APIYCNA) is a not-for-profit organization set up with the mission of improving the nutritional well-being of infants and young children throughout the Asia Pacific region.

APIYCNA believes that ensuring optimal infant and young child nutrition is a shared responsibility: Government, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector all have essential roles to play in this effort and should work together.

Our members share the goal of improving nutrition for infants and young children, and commend Save the Children for its intent to raise the awareness of the challenges of breastfeeding and realities of child malnutrition through the report *“Superfood for Babies: How overcoming barriers to breastfeeding will save children’s lives”*.

APIYCNA concurs with the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO) for exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with timely, safe, and appropriate complementary feeding thereafter. Like Save the Children, we share a strong commitment to supporting improved nutrition for infants, young children and their mothers.

Our members are fully committed to ensure that marketing policies and practices are (i) transparent and consistent with the aims and principles of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, and (ii) in line with any legislation to implement the WHO Code, as enacted by national governments in the region. While the WHO Code itself is not a legally-binding instrument, it is useful to note that the regulations and legislative measures that have been implemented by national governments in the Asia Pacific are in fact much stricter than anywhere else in the world. This reality is often distorted as legislative mechanisms/processes in the region are presented as severely laissez-faire.

APIYCNA stands ready to work in partnership with all stakeholders to support public health goals to protect and promote breastfeeding and the proper use of infant formula where necessary. We acknowledge that there is room for further improvement in the area of governance and ensuring ethical marketing practices - this is in fact a key priority for APIYCNA this year.

It is imperative that we recognise that the global challenge of infant, young child and maternal nutrition is complex and multi-faceted, and identifying and implementing solutions requires multi-stakeholder collaboration. Breastfeeding is but one important component of infant and young child nutrition, and a number of other critical factors must also be considered. The WHO puts it well when it says, “(an) optimal strategy to ensure rapid improvement of nutrition requires the implementation of a set of specific nutrition interventions and the integration of nutrition into health, agriculture, education, employment, social welfare and development programmes.”¹

Given the complexities of the issues at hand, we are concerned that this report does not paint a comprehensive and balanced picture as it features selective information, contains factual inaccuracies and scientific errors, and fails to utilise the most current national and regional data.

APIYCNA welcomes the opportunity for dialogue and engagement with Save the Children and others interested in improving the health and nutritional well-being of infants, young children and their mothers. We look forward to working in partnership with all stakeholders to develop a focused, holistic and actionable plan in the near term.

(For more information, kindly contact venetta.miranda@apiycna.org)

¹ *Maternal, infant and young child nutrition: comprehensive implementation plan (World Health Organization)*