



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

BREASTFEEDING

A Key to Sustainable Development

1



Breastfeeding is a natural and low-cost way of feeding babies and children. It is affordable for everyone and does not burden household budgets compared to artificial feeding. Breastfeeding contributes to poverty reduction.

2



Exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond provide high quality nutrients and adequate energy and can help prevent hunger, undernutrition and obesity. Breastfeeding also means food security for infants.

3



Breastfeeding significantly improves the health, development and survival of infants and children. It also contributes to improved health and wellbeing of mothers, both in the short and long term.

4



Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are fundamentals for readiness to learn. Breastfeeding and good quality complementary foods significantly contribute to mental and cognitive development and thus promote learning.

5



Breastfeeding is the great equaliser, giving every child a fair and best start in life. Breastfeeding is uniquely a right of women and they should be supported by society to breastfeed optimally. The breastfeeding experience can be satisfying and empowering for the mother as she is in control of how she feeds her baby.

6



Breastfeeding on demand provides all the water a baby needs, even in hot weather. On the other hand, formula feeding requires access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation.

7



Breastfeeding entails less energy when compared to formula production industries. It also reduces the need for water, firewood and fossil fuels in the home.

8



Breastfeeding women who are supported by their employers are more productive and loyal. Maternity protection and other workplace policies can enable women to combine breastfeeding and their other work or employment. Decent jobs should cater to the needs of breastfeeding women, especially those in precarious situations.

9



With industrialisation and urbanisation, the time and space challenges become more prominent. Breastfeeding mothers who work outside the home need to manage these challenges and be supported by employers, their own families and communities. Crèches near the workplace, lactation rooms and breastfeeding breaks can make a big difference.

10



Breastfeeding practices differ across the globe. Breastfeeding needs to be protected, promoted and supported among all, but in particular among poor and vulnerable groups. This will help reduce inequalities.

11



In the bustle of big cities, breastfeeding mothers and their babies need to feel safe and welcome in all public spaces. When disaster and humanitarian crises strike, women and children are affected disproportionately. Pregnant and lactating women need particular support during such times.

12



Breastfeeding provides a healthy, viable, non-polluting, non-resource intensive, sustainable and natural source of nutrition and sustenance.

13



Breastfeeding safeguards infant health and nutrition in times of adversity and weather-related disasters due to global warming.

14



Breastfeeding entails less waste compared to formula feeding. Industrial formula production and distribution lead to waste that pollutes the seas and affects marine life.

15



Breastfeeding is ecological compared to formula feeding. Formula production implies dairy farming that often puts pressure on natural resources and contributes to carbon emissions and climate change.

16



Breastfeeding is enshrined in many human rights frameworks and conventions. National legislation and policies to protect and support breastfeeding mothers and babies are needed to ensure that their rights are upheld.

17



The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding (GSIYCF) fosters multi-sectoral collaboration, and can build upon various partnerships for support of development through breastfeeding programs and initiatives.



Sustainable Development Goals

1 
End Poverty in all its forms everywhere

2 
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

3 
Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

4 
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

5 
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

6 
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

7 
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

8 
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all


9 
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

10 
Reduce inequality within and among countries

11 
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

12 
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

13 
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

14 
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

15 
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss

16 
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17 
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development