

CH-1.

Community Health Cell

From: "Arun Gupta" <arun@ibfan-asiapacific.org>
 To: "PHA Group" <pha-ncc@yahoo.com>
 Cc: "Vandana Prasad" <chaukhat@yahoo.com>
 Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2004 2:06 PM
 Attach: Copenhagen Consensus press release.pdf; OneWorld South Asia Home - NewsOpinion & Comment - Why ensure exclusive breastfeeding for all babies.txt; Political advocacy article.doc - *do you need these?*
 Subject: [pha-ncc] Comments on Ensuring Healthy Future - *distraction part*

August 23, 2004

Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan,
 LOK SATTA,
 401/408 Nirman Towers
 Dwarkapuri Colony, Punjagutta,
 Hyderabad 500 082.

Dear Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan,

Please allow me to introduce myself first, I am a pediatrician and write to you on behalf of Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), a premier national organization to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in India. Let me congratulate you for having made such comprehensive paper "ENSURING A HEALTHY FUTURE".

I agree with the views put forward in your paper, and appreciate the hard work that gone in to prepare it. At the same time I like to point out that issues concerning infant and young child health, development and survival need more attention. Ensuring healthy future of nation would not be possible in fact, without due attention given to the infant and the young child. You would agree with me that for ensuring health future, the first commitment is to ensure a best possible start to life and a healthy and well developed child. I am writing to you in this regard.

I share my comments and would like to suggest that these may be suitably addressed and incorporated in any future discussion on the issue and I will be more than willing to assist.

I hope you are well aware of the child malnutrition in the country and the devastating impact it has on life. Child malnutrition contributes to more deaths than any other health condition, accounting for or contributing to about 6 million of the 10.9 million deaths of under- five children each year. India's share in these deaths is 2.4 million. We should also know that malnutrition among children occurs almost entirely during first two years of life and is virtually irreversible after that. The mortality in young children is closely associated with child malnutrition and inappropriate feeding practices. It is associated with high morbidity due to impaired immune functions and it impairs cognitive development, intelligence, strength, energy and productivity. Obviously it tremendously impacts development outcomes, as more than 90% of brain actually develops during first two years. Its negative impact on other programmes like Polio eradication is worthy to take note of.

In light of the Millennium Development Goals India has to meet with, preventing child malnutrition would need to be a greater priority. And India can't escape addressing it urgently to achieve meaningful progress in its development and sustain it. The Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding, developed jointly by UNICEF and the WHO and approved by the World Health Assembly in May 2002, provides a strong basis for policy and action on this priority. It also states, "Inappropriate feeding practices and their consequences are major obstacle to sustainable socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Governments will be unsuccessful in the efforts to

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accelerate economic development in any significant long-term sense until optimal child growth and development, especially through appropriate feeding practices, are ensured."

The government of India's 10th Five- year Plan document notes, *"As a result of these faulty infant feeding habits, there is steep increase in the prevalence of undernutrition from 11.9 percent at less than six months, to 58.5 percent in the 12-23 months age."*

Keeping these facts and situation in mind, I would like that following issues may be addressed under the given headers in your paper.

Challenges : include

1. Preventing child malnutrition should be there in list of challenges.
2. Preventing Infant HIV may also be included in challenges.

Agenda for action : include

1. Include Achieving high rates of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months as a means to achieve optimal survival growth and development of infants and young children.

Tables : include

1. Infant mortality, state wise
2. Tenth plan goals on reduction of malnutrition
3. Tenth plan goals on improving infant and young child feeding.

I attach a piece of Guest Editorial that I was invited to write for one world.net as well as a draft paper I am writing on the issue, to express my views. I take liberty in attaching some documents and PPT slides in support of my suggestions. Please feel free to contact me for any clarification or assistance.

Hope to hear from you and with best regards,

With thanks and best regards,

Sincerely yours

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