JOINT STATEMENT
of Ministry of Health of Ukraine,
UNICEF Ukraine and WHO Country Office in Ukraine Concerning
Support Necessary to Ensure Proper Infant and Young Child
Feeding in Ukraine

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine, UNICEF Ukraine and WHO Country Office in Ukraine call on the institutions and persons interested in providing support to ensure child growth and development and their disease and mortality prevention.

In emergencies, it is very important to reduce the risks related to the existing nutrition practices. Breast feeding ensures the most significant protection from infections and is a safe and stable source of nutrition, especially under inadequate hygienic conditions and in situations when the insufficient vaccination coverage of children less than 1 year of age elevates the risks of infection disease spreading.

The use of artificial breast-milk substitutes creates additional risks under emergency conditions. Humanitarian activity should not promote that breastfed infants take artificial breast-milk substitutes. Preventing the spreading of artificial breast-milk substitutes is defined by the Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine as of October 28, 2011 No. 715 “On Further Introduction of Hospital Favourable to a Child Expanded Initiative in Ukraine”.

All cases of the transfer or inappropriate distribution of artificial breast-milk substitutes should be notified of to the organizations signing this statement.

We stress that the principles of feeding children from their birth until they are three years old are regulated by the norms and regulations of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. These documents contain confirmed WHO principles and requirements with regard to supporting breast feeding and the rules, products and time frames for introducing additional food.

There is a common mistake that in emergencies mothers cannot breastfeed their children properly because of the stress or because they do not get necessary nutrition themselves.

The desire to help in this situation may lead to an inappropriate transfer or distribution of infant formulas or other milk products. The world scientific studies proved that mother’s stress and bad nutrition does not impact the quantity and quality of breast milk. Under emergency circumstances it is necessary to pay attention to creating favourable conditions for breast feeding, namely group and individual consultations and the group of mothers’ mutual support.
The Ministry of Health of Ukraine, UNICEF Ukraine and WHO Country Office in Ukraine call on the institutions and persons engaged in searching the funding, planning and implementing measures responding to the crisis in Ukraine to promote at all communication levels the preservation of life, health and development of children with a view to reducing child mortality which may be prevented by protecting, popularising and supporting breast feeding, proper additional food, as well as preventing the uncontrolled distribution and use of breast milk substances.

________/Signed/_______
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