



World Health Organization



To: Bath University
United Kingdom

Re: Enhanced Formula Feed (EFF)

Hanoi, 16 December 2005

Dear Madam or Sir,

UNICEF and WHO in Viet Nam are very concerned about the information about Bath University's research on infant formula about which information is posted on the Rotary's website (<http://www.chelwood-rotary.com/milkplus/mp-update04.htm>).

The information states that UNICEF and WHO in Viet Nam have "agreed that Vietnam had a growing problem of infant mortality and would be suitable for the Rotary Milk Plus Project clinical trials".

This information is incorrect. No agreements were made. The statement that mortality rates are on the rise in Viet Nam is also incorrect.

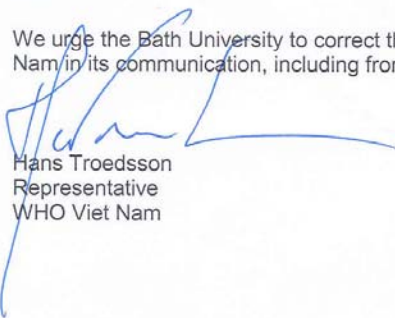
UNICEF and WHO staff were invited to a meeting with Dr. Stevens in November 2003, in which a briefing was given about the topic of his research. No agreement whatsoever has been made. On the contrary, UNICEF and WHO are very concerned that the research on a so-called "improved" infant formula will jeopardize breastfeeding.

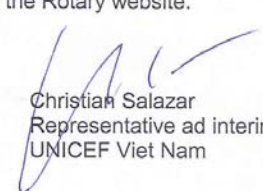
UNICEF and WHO are also very concerned about the involvement of an infant formula manufacturer, which raises a conflict of interest. The information about the involvement of this company was not shared in the meeting with Dr. Stevens.

UNICEF and WHO work closely with the Government of Viet Nam to strengthen breastfeeding practices. Current practices are not optimal – only 8 per cent of 4-5 months old children are exclusively breastfed.

Improved breastfeeding practices are crucial to further reduce neonatal, infant and child mortality in Viet Nam. The scientific journal The Lancet estimates that globally, 13 per cent of the deaths in children under 5 can be prevented by optimal breastfeeding practices. Improved breastfeeding practices also contribute to improve nutritional status of children under 5 years of age (currently 27% of this age group is underweight) and also help to prevent conditions like obesity and diabetes, which are on the rise in Viet Nam.

We urge the Bath University to correct the information about UNICEF and WHO Viet Nam in its communication, including from the Rotary website.


Hans Troedsson
Representative
WHO Viet Nam


Christian Salazar
Representative ad interim
UNICEF Viet Nam