



World Alliance for
Breastfeeding Action

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27 August 2012

To the office of President Benigno Aquino III in the Philippines

Dear Mr. President,

WABA is a global network of organizations and individuals who believe breastfeeding is the right of all children and mothers. Our mission is dedicated to protect, promote and support this right. WABA is also the international initiator of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual event celebrated in over 170 countries around the world, including the Philippines.

WABA encourages genuine national endeavors to uphold the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions. We also support the global public health recommendation on optimal infant and young child feeding, defined by UN agencies as exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months followed by safe and appropriate complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding until the age of two years or beyond. This recommendation is contained in the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding of 2002, adopted by WHO/UNICEF, which the Philippines helped developed and endorsed at the regional and international level.

We are therefore alarmed to learn that the proposed consolidated draft Bill—**HBs 3527, 3537, 3525 & 3396 entitled "An Act Promoting a Comprehensive Program on Breastfeeding Practices and Regulating the Trade, marketing and Promotions of Certain Foods for Infants and Young Children"**—will effectively overturn the milestone National Milk Code (EO 51), and shorten the government's support of breastfeeding to just six months; with marketing regulation restricted to activities concerning infant formula marketed for infants below six months. We are also concerned that the Bill will open the doors to marketing and promotion in the public health system, risking the lives of millions of infants and young children in your country. WABA therefore calls for the draft Bill to be rejected as it seems the brain child of the baby food industry. Legislation to ban promotion is the fulfillment of the duty of government to protect public health. Failing outright rejection of the draft Bill, we ask for critical review and revision to ensure the promotion, protection and support of continued and sustained breastfeeding for the six-24 month period and beyond. (See also WABA Position Paper at: http://www.waba.org.my/pdf/gbpm_statement_June09.pdf).

Thank you.

(Signed)

Sarah Amin, Executive Director on behalf of the Steering Committee, WABA