

Section 1.1 - Annex 4
The contribution of Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding
to achieving the Millennium Development Goals⁴

Goal Number and Targets	Contribution of Infant and Young Child feeding ⁵
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day, and who suffer from hunger.	Breastfeeding significantly reduces early childhood feeding costs, and exclusive breastfeeding halves the cost of breastfeeding ⁶ . Exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for two years is associated with reduction in underweight ⁷ and is an excellent source of high quality calories for energy. By reducing fertility, exclusive breastfeeding reduces reproductive stress. Breastfeeding provides breast milk, serving as low-cost, high quality, locally produced food and sustainable food security for the child.
2 Achieve universal primary education Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education.	Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are prerequisites for readiness to learn ⁸ . Breastfeeding and quality complementary foods significantly contribute to cognitive development and capacity. In addition to the balance of long chain fatty acids in breast milk, which support neurological development, initial exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding address micronutrient and iron deficiency needs and, hence, support appropriate neurological development and enhance later school performance.
3 Promote gender equality and empower women Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	Breastfeeding is the great equalizer, giving every child a fair start on life. Most differences in growth between sexes begin as complementary foods are added into the diet, and gender preference begins to act on feeding decisions. Breastfeeding also empowers women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased birth spacing secondary to breastfeeding helps prevents maternal depletion from short birth intervals; - only women can provide it, enhancing women's capacity to feed children; - increases focus on need for women's nutrition to be considered.

⁴ Developed by the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition Working Group on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding, 2003/4.

⁵ Early and Exclusive Breastfeeding, continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding and related maternal nutrition.

⁶ Bhatnagar, S, Jain, N. P. and Tiwari, V. K. Cost of infant feeding in exclusive and partially breastfed infants. *Indian Pediatrics*. 1996; 33:655-658.

⁷ Dewey, K. G. Cross-cultural patterns of growth and nutritional status of breast-fed infants. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 1998; 67:10-17.

⁸ Anderson, J. W., Johnstone, B. M. and Remley, D. T. Breast-feeding and cognitive development: a meta-analysis. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 1990; 70:525-535.