

# THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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## REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING IN BENIN



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## SUMMARY

*The following obstacles/problems have been indentified:*

- High level of infant, child and maternal mortality;
- Lack of systematic and regular monitoring of infant and young child feeding key indicators;
- Low rate of early initiation breastfeeding (50.4%) and exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months (33%), together with a high rate of institutional deliveries (87%), which clearly shows the inadequate training of medical professionals;
- Lack of support for lactating mothers in maternity hospitals but also at community level (absence of Board Certified Lactation Consultants);
- The Decree N° 97-693 of 31 December 1997 enacting the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes is only partially implemented. Moreover, no sanctions are imposed against companies breaching the decree provisions;
- Lack of monitoring the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) due to inadequate funding. Indeed, the Baby-Friendly certified health facilities no longer comply with “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” ;
- Women and men working in the informal sector are not covered by, respectively, maternity and paternity leave;
- Lack of public information campaigns targeting infant feeding in HIV context.

*Our recommendations include:*

- Implement measures to ensure that **all deliveries are attended by skilled personnel**, and establish a **genuine partnership between the Ministry of Health and IBFAN-BENIN with regard to infant feeding and breastfeeding**;
- **Ensure a regular and systematic monitoring of infant feeding key indicators** as defined by the WHO;
- Enhance public awareness on optimal breastfeeding practices through **national information campaigns** on optimal breastfeeding practices, including infant feeding and HIV;
- Provide **adequate support to breastfeeding mothers** and ensure their **access to Certified Lactation Consultants in sufficient number** in maternity hospitals and at community level;
- Ensure full implementation of the **Decree N° 97-693** enacting the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and **enforce it efficiently through implementation decrees** so that Code violations are punished by deterring sanctions;
- Ensure that **women and men working in the informal sector are covered by the maternity and paternity leave**;
- **Strengthen the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)** at regional and departmental level through the adoption of implementation decrees. In addition, it is necessary to **ensure the promotion and follow-up of the BFHI** by allocating sufficient financial resources.