



World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2024

01 - 07 August

Statement by:

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during

Specialized Technical Committee on Health,

Nutrition, Population and Drug Control

(STC-HNPDC-5)

As the chair of Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Nutrition, Population and Drug Control (STC-HNPDC-5), I join the rest of the world to commemorate the 2024 World Breastfeeding Week. This year's theme,

"Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All," aims to highlight the diverse experiences of breastfeeding mothers and the critical support needed from families, communities, and health workers throughout their breastfeeding journeys.

Breastfeeding is a vital life-saving practice that ensures the survival, health, and well-being of infants and young children. It provides ideal nutrition, promotes cognitive development, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases later in life.

Despite notable progress, significant challenges remain in ensuring that every woman receives the necessary support for a successful breastfeeding experience. According to the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard (CNAS) in 2020 only 17 countries are on course to meet the World Health Assembly target of increasing the rate of Exclusive Breastfeeding to at least 50%. The gaps in breastfeeding support are evident due to limited adoption of recommended policies, inadequate health worker capacity, insufficient advocacy, and the unregulated marketing of breast milk substitutes.

As part of implementing the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025), Africa's leaders committed to increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates during the first six months in Africa to at least 50 per cent by 2025 in line with the WHA targets. In the same vein, the African Union Commission's Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA Plus) is a vital initiative aimed at addressing the alarming rates of maternal mortality throughout the continent. This campaign recognizes the essential role of breastfeeding in improving the health of both mothers and their infants.

Call to Action

As we celebrate World Breastfeeding Week 2024, I urge all Member States to commit to improving infant and young child feeding practices across Africa. Together, we can close the gap and ensure that every mother receives the support needed to provide the best start in life for her child.

To commemorate the World Breastfeeding Week during this STC-HPNDC-5, the AUC has produced picture frames highlighting key messages that promote breastfeeding. I urge distinguished delegates to take pictures and post on various social media platforms.

Let's Close The Gap and Support Breastfeeding for All in Africa!

I thank you.