



## **JOINT STATEMENT BY THE FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY AND GHANA HEALTH SERVICE ON WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK CELEBRATION 2023**

Theme: "*Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for Working Parents* "  
Accra, Ghana – August 2023

On this occasion of World Breastfeeding Week 2023, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and the Ghana Health Service reaffirm our commitment to promoting and supporting breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is a fundamental right of every child and is important to child survival and development. This year's theme, "*Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for Working Parents*" emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive environment that allows working parents to continue breastfeeding without affecting their work.

Breastfeeding is not only a natural and nutritious act, but an important factor in building a healthier and more sustainable future for our society. As we celebrate World Breastfeeding Week, we recognize the important benefits of breastfeeding for infants, mothers, families, and communities at large. Breast milk provides essential nutrients and antibodies that help protect infants from infections, reduce the risk of malnutrition and improve cognitive development. For mothers, breastfeeding promotes postpartum recovery, reduces the risk of certain cancers, and fosters a strong emotional bond with their baby.

Despite the irrefutable benefits of breastfeeding, many working parents still face difficulties in keeping up with exclusive breastfeeding for the recommended six months and continue to give breast-feeding for up to two years or longer. Long working hours, limited maternity leave, inadequate breastfeeding leave and the stigma surrounding breastfeeding in the workplace are some of the barriers preventing parents from providing nutrition, optimal for their infants.

We therefore call on all stakeholders, including governments, employers, civil society, and community organizations, to work together to overcome these barriers and create a favorable environment to support breastfeeding for working parents. Some of the key actions we recommend include:

- **Laws and Workplace Policies:** We advocate for national legislation that protects the breastfeeding rights of working parents, including full leave, flexible work arrangements, and breastfeeding leave.

- **Employer Support:** Encourage and establish a breastfeeding-friendly workplace with safe spaces, hygienic facilities, and storage of breast milk.
- **Public Awareness:** Conduct public education campaigns about the benefits of breastfeeding, dispel myths and create a supportive environment.
- **Capacity building:** Strengthen health systems to support breastfeeding through training and supporting health professionals.
- **Cooperation:** Foster partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies.
- **Media Interaction:** Use the media to promote positive and accurate breastfeeding messages and support working parents.
- **Research and data collection:** Invest in research to understand the breastfeeding challenges facing working parents and make evidence-based policy.

We wish to express our appreciation to our partners, including UNICEF Ghana, WHO and USAID for their immense support for child nutrition.

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