



Response to Save the Children's report

23 February 2018

We hold ourselves to the highest standards regarding the marketing of breastmilk substitutes and welcome external scrutiny of our practices, such as the one carried out by Save the Children in its "Don't push it" report. Nestlé has a global commitment to support breastfeeding as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), and to protect it through our industry-leading policy to market breastmilk substitutes (BMS) responsibly. We respect national laws by complying with the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes as implemented by national governments.

Save the Children mentioned numerous allegations of incidents of non-compliance in its report. In order for Nestlé to take immediate action and effectively address any verified incidences of non-compliance, we ask Save the Children and all concerned stakeholders to share copies of the assessments it conducted at country level with us directly or through our corporate compliance reporting system, "[Tell us](#)". We take verified allegations very seriously and investigate all concerns. Our employees know that we will take fast and decisive action if any wrongdoing is found. We are confident we have robust systems in place to responsibly market BMS and transparently report on our progress in our [annual report](#) and [corporate website](#).

Our policy on the marketing of BMS applies to the entire Nestlé group and is mandatory for all Nestlé employees and third parties acting under Nestlé's authorization. To reinforce this, we regularly train employees and distributors on Code compliance. We have also incorporated Code compliance into our governance structures and it is subject to board level oversight. Moreover, our policy follows the FTSE4Good Index criteria on BMS marketing, which prioritises 152 countries where there is the greatest risk of malnutrition and infant mortality to infants and young children. Nestlé was the first manufacturer of breastmilk substitutes to apply the Index's strict 104 BMS criteria for BMS marketing. As recognised in the "Don't push it" report, the inclusion of more key industry players in addition to Nestlé and Danone in FTSE4Good could transform the sector, thereby creating a new baseline standard for discussions.

We agree that current breastfeeding rates are still not sufficient. As the Save the Children report states, there are numerous socio-economic factors influencing the usage of infant formula around the world that are not due to the actions of manufacturers alone. An important element not mentioned in the report, and yet one we believe is key to improving infant nutrition, is the need to pay more attention to inappropriate foods fed to some infants in the first six months of life when they are neither breastfed nor formula fed.

For mothers who cannot or choose not to breastfeed, infant formula is the only suitable breastmilk substitute. Whilst Nestlé actively seeks to make formula as close to breastmilk as scientifically possible, we absolutely reject any suggestion that we claim infant formula is equal to or better than breastmilk. We aim to offer infants the best possible start in life through our support for breastfeeding, scientific research, responsible marketing practices and commitment to providing safe and nutritious products.

We welcome the "Don't push it report" as it draws attention to key factors impacting breastfeeding rates and acknowledges the positive role infant formula can play in providing adequate nutrition when breastfeeding is not possible. We strongly support breastfeeding given the fundamental part this plays in the growth and development of babies during their first 1000 days. We also reiterate our readiness to work with civil society, the public sector and other concerned stakeholders to improve the health and nutrition of women and children.