

No.Z.28020/77/2013-CH  
Government of India  
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
(Child Health Division)



Nirman Bhavan,  
New Delhi - 110 108  
Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2013

To,

Dr. Arun Gupta  
Regional Coordinator, IBFAN Asia  
Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India,  
BP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110034 (INDIA)  
Tel: +91-11-27315936

**Sub: Concerns on India's Call to Action- Strategic Approaches for Private  
Sector Engagement.**

Sir,

This is in reference to your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013, drawing the attention of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on abovementioned subject. You are already apprised of the fact that a broad based Stakeholder Consultation was held in the months of September 2012-January 2013, against the backdrop of the Child Survival and Development: Call to Action Summit, February 2013.

In context of India's commitment to meet the MDGs in 2015 and the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan targets by 2017, it is recognized that there is a need to reach out as fast and as widely as possible, by aligning the efforts of all stakeholders working towards this national cause. Six sub committees were constituted in order to facilitate discussions and engage with various stakeholders who could potentially bring their skills, experience and resources to support the cause of child survival and development in the country. These stakeholders (the private sector, NGOs, CSOs, and professional bodies) are already involved, through various activities, with the health and development of women and children and Government's intent is to ensure that their efforts are harmonized and aligned with the national goals and strategies. The effort to engage constructively with the stakeholders should in no way be construed as Government's intent to absolve itself from its roles and responsibilities to the people of India.

Engagement with corporate / private sector is a much wider concept, which includes making available affordable low cost technologies and commodities eg; ORS, Zinc , IFA , Vitamin A , vaccine carriers, syringes etc., innovation in supply chain management and raising awareness through powerful campaigns.

It is imperative to note that the 'Private' or the 'Corporate' Sector, engaged by the Sub Committee, represented a broad spectrum of private and public sector enterprises present in India. The food industry is one segment of the private sector; the concern raised in your letter regarding the two companies (Nestle and Britannia) specifically, are not necessarily relevant to majority of other enterprises being referred to as 'private sector'. We can categorically confirm that Britannia, Nestle has not been involved or consulted for any of the activities undertaken for the Call to Action and the insinuation that a deal has been struck with a specific corporate/corporate sector undermines the august offices of the Government of India and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare specifically. Neither has there been any discussion on the de-regulation of the IMS Act, any concerns in this regard are totally unfounded as GOI's position in this regard is clearly articulated and MOHFW stands by this position.

The document (*Strategic Approaches for Private Sector Engagement*) exploring various possible options for engaging with the private sector, is work in progress. The Ministry and the sub-group for private sector are currently contemplating a mechanism that can assist in tapping into the expertise /skills of the Private / Corporate sector without compromising the larger objective of health and development of children. The concern and forewarning about 'some' vested interests has been noted and shall be taken into consideration during any future discussions.

With regards

Yours faithfully



(Prem Narain)

for Under Secretary to the Govt of India (CH)  
Tel.: 011-23061986.