

# The Nation

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## Efforts for breast-feeding promotion stressed

ISLAMABAD (APP) - World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year from 1 to 7 August in more than 120 countries to encourage breast-feeding and improve the health of babies around the world.

It commemorates the Innocenti Declaration made by WHO and UNICEF policy-makers in August 1990 to protect, promote and support breast-feeding.

Breast-feeding is the best way to provide newborns with the nutrients they need. WHO recommends exclusive breast-

feeding until a baby is six months old, and continued breast-feeding with the addition of nutritious complementary foods for up to two years or beyond.

The theme of World Breast-feeding Week 2009 is "Breast-feeding a vital emergency response. Are you ready?" It highlights the need to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in emergencies for infant and young child survival, health and development.

Children are among the most vulnerable groups during emergencies, small children are the

most vulnerable of all, due to increased risk of death due to diarrhoea and pneumonia.

During emergencies, unsolicited or uncontrolled donations of breast-milk substitutes may undermine breastfeeding and should be avoided.

Hospitals and other health care services should have trained health workers who can help mothers establish breastfeeding and/or overcome difficulties. Main objectives of World Breast-feeding Week are to draw attention to the vital role that breast-feed-

ing plays in emergencies worldwide. To stress the need for active protection and support of breast-feeding before and during emergencies.

To inform mothers, breast-feeding advocates, communities, health professionals, governments, aid agencies, donors, and the media on how they can actively support breastfeeding before and during an emergency. To mobilise action and nurture networking and collaboration between those with breastfeeding skills and those involved in emergency response.