

26<sup>th</sup> February 2013

Secretariat Office  
Taskforce on Hong Kong Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes  
Family Health Service  
Department of Health  
Room 1308, 13/F, Guardian House  
32 Oi Kwan Road  
Wanchai, Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

**Comments on the draft “Hong Kong Code of Marketing and quality of formula milk and related products, and food products for infant & young children”**

I fully support the Hong Kong Code of Marketing and Quality of Formula Milk and Related Products, and Food Products for Infants & Young Children released by the Department of Health in October 2012.

Breastfeeding and safe, appropriate and adequate nutrition of infants and young children are one of the important public health issues and should be protected and promoted. In addition to providing clear short-term benefits against infectious diseases, evidence on breastfeeding’s long-term health benefits is well known and has been widely published. I have no doubt that promoting breastfeeding is one of the priorities issues for child health.

Although benefits of breastfeeding are well established, a significant proportion of parents have misconceptions about formula milk as equally conducive to health as breastfeeding. It is also observed that marketing of formula milk is increasingly aggressive in Hong Kong and misleading health claims are common in their advertisement and promotional materials. In order to protect members of the public from misleading information, we support restrictions on advertising and promotional activities for formula milk and related products. I support that the Department of Health and other professional bodies will provide informational and educational materials on infant and young children feeding for parents through various channels. Manufacturers and distributors of formula milk should be responsible for providing factual product information to consumers through their websites, healthcare professionals and retailers.

I also support the requirement on labelling and quality standards of formula milk. For those who are not breastfed, infant formula is the sole source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life. The quality and composition of infant formula is therefore of prime importance for their healthy growth and development. This is also applicable to formula milk for children 6 to 36 months.

In conclusion, I support all the proposals addressed in the Code which would serve to empower mothers to make fully informed decisions on infant feeding free from misleading information and create an environment that protect and promote breastfeeding and healthy eating in infants and young children in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Betty Young