

Amman, Jordan, 1 August 2021 – Today, the Jordanian Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and UNICEF mark the beginning of the World Breastfeeding Week. This year’s theme is ‘Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility’, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts to promote and protect breastfeeding for every child.

“The Ministry of Health of Jordan through the Primary Healthcare Administration is committed to promoting breast feeding as the best start in life for every newborn,” said Dr Ghazi Sharkas, Assistant Secretary-General for Primary Health Care.

This year, the world is marking the 40th anniversary of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. The code is a landmark policy framework aimed at effectively managing the sale of breast milk substitutes and avoiding the negative impact on the rates of breastfeeding, which undermine the health and nutrition of Jordan’s youngest population.

In Jordan, while more than 9 out of 10 children were breastfed at some point in their young lives, only 26% of children were exclusively breastfed (fed nothing but breastmilk) during the first 6 months of life. This rate in Jordan is much lower than the regional average of 34%.

“This year’s celebration of World Breastfeeding Week is a stark reminder of the importance of breastfeeding, which provides high quality nutrients and energy for newborns, infants and children under the age of 2 years,” said Tanya Chapuisat, Representative, UNICEF Jordan. “To reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, UNICEF will continue to support the Ministry of Health in promoting and protecting breastfeeding practices, and overall child nutrition.”

Breastfeeding is the best food for newborns and infants. Research has shown that adolescents and adults, who were breastfed are less likely to be overweight or obese and demonstrate improved IQ test results. Studies have proved that breastfeeding is good for mothers as well as for children. It not only reduces the risk of postpartum depression and diabetes, but also lowers risk of breast and ovarian cancer later in life.

“Today is an opportunity to highlight the progress made in promoting and supporting

breastfeeding for its the incomparable benefits as the best start in life for every child,” said Dr Jamela Al-Raiby, acting WHO Representative in Jordan. “And we need greater emphasis on the need to protect breastfeeding and for greater collective work to accomplish our objectives.”

Thanks to the generous contributions from the United States Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and United States Agency for International Development. With their support, and under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, in cooperation with WHO, is implementing national breast-feeding interventions as part of the overall maternal and child health programme.

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