

### **III. Implementation of policies supporting infant and young child feeding**

The Global Strategy on IYCF based on the principle of respect, protection, promotion and facilitation for ensuring human right. The International Convention on Children's Right also emphasizes the right of children of being given priority for the best nutrition care as well as health care. In June 2004, the National Assembly approved the revised Law on protection, care and education of children. Although there is remarkable achievement in the implementation of the policies for ensuring childcare, there are still a lot of problems, particularly in IYCF.

The monitoring and supervision of the policy implementation are still limited. On 10 June 1994, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 307-TTg on some regulations relating to trading and use of breast milk substitutes in an effort to support breastfeeding, followed by the Decree No. 74/2000/ND-CP dated December 6, 2000 by the Government on the marketing and use of breast milk substitutes. There has been some progress made such as the trading of breast milk substitutes is coming into order, and the violation is partly diminished thanks to the cooperation of related sectors/ministries in the implementation of the Decree 74, strengthened education and communication activities, and reinforced monitoring and inspecting work. In spite of this, the violation of marketing regulations of breast milk substitutes is still common. Working capacity of health inspectors remains limited and it is mainly carried out at provincial level only. The inspection at district level is not implemented yet. Besides, the sanction disposing the violation of breast milk substitute marketing is not yet adequate and asynchronous; therefore inspection and disposing activities have encountered many difficulties. Currently, the MOH has submitted to the Government the revised Decree 74 to overcome the shortfalls in the past 5 years of implementation.

The Decree No. 43/CP dated June 22, 1993 by the Government on temporary regulations concerning Social Insurance and the Circular letter No. 34/TT-LB dated July 13, 1994 by the General Labor Union of Vietnam instruct the implementation of subsidizing regulations concerning social insurance on illness, pregnancy and delivery, working accident, occupational diseases for workers. The union has defined the regulation concerning maternal leave, which is only 4 months. This is an issue that needs to be revised in the current policies so that women will have a more favorable condition to take care of and to breastfeed their babies exclusively in the first 6 months.

Policies somehow have affected the causes of malnutrition at different levels, from basic causes to direct causes. On one hand, mothers are encouraged to apply scientific solutions in IYCF such as BF, but on the other hand, a supporting policy for BF mothers, particularly exclusive BF in the first 6 months, has not yet been specified. Other policies on childcare have not been synchronized and provided with sufficient resources to support these activities, especially in disadvantaged areas.

Mothers have the right to access a proper diet as well as the right to decide an optimal nutrition for their children. In order to do so, the mothers need to be provided adequate information as well as to live in a favorable environment that enables them to apply their own choice. There should be specified policies supporting those mothers, despite they work in offices, factories or in rural areas... so that they can put appropriate knowledge

into proper nutrition practice for their children. Hence the need of implementation of accomplished policies supporting IYCF is becoming very urgent.