

## **STATEMENT OF CONCERN**

3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2012

*Alliance Against Conflicts of interests (AACI) Condemns Government's Association with Nestle's Creating Shared Value Forum*

Nestle is organizing a 'Creating shared value Forum' on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in India and trying to showcase the value Nestle brings. The Forum is a CSR activity and deals with everything from 'Double Burden of Malnutrition' to Water, Energy, and Food Security to find solutions for the governments through working with civil society and private sector. Ironically, these happen to be the areas where Nestle has a stake in making products and profits. That's what CSR is all about.

This has been scientifically proved that partial or full formula feeding contribute significantly to childhood diarrhea and pneumonia. This is a common form of child malnutrition due to inappropriate feeding practices led by aggressive promotion of baby foods and feeding bottles by the companies. The link is well known. Another form of malnutrition is childhood obesity, which is also caused by consumption of infant formula as against breastfeeding, and the company has largest share in it and continues to promote aggressively. Childhood obesity becomes the predisposing factor for non-communicable diseases(NCDs) like heart disease, diabetes and hypertension. Further, the junk foods like instant noodles of the company also contribute to NCDs. A recent study done by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) New Delhi has found that trans-fat levels are very high in instant noodles and so is the salt content of noodles. [http://www.downtoearth.org.in/dte/userfiles/images/Nutritional\\_Analysis\\_Junk\\_Food.pdf](http://www.downtoearth.org.in/dte/userfiles/images/Nutritional_Analysis_Junk_Food.pdf)

It is matter of great concern that government ministers and public health authorities provide legitimacy to the company making baby foods. The Parliament took notice of the promotion of baby foods as a health hazard and enacted a law to ban their promotion (*Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003(IMS Act)*) The Statement of Objectives, while the Bill was placed in the Parliament, stated that promotion of baby foods is more pervasive than that of breastfeeding. **Nestle was found violating the IMS Act and charges were framed by a Delhi court in March 2012 and faces criminal proceedings.**

The Forum information reveals that Minister of Corporate Affairs, President of Public Health Foundation of India, Minister of Rural Development, Minister of Water

Resources, Govt. of Karnataka, would be present there apart from FICCI, and other business interests like 'Micronutrient Initiative' as well as past chief of UNICEF, Ann Veneman who now has joined the board of Nestle. One can understand FICCI's interest as it is mandated for promoting business; but one fails to understand the interest of government officials/public authorities. We are also concerned about the presence of Ajay Chhibber, Assistant Secretary General UN and UNDP Regional Director of Asia and Pacific whose primary mandate is public interest.

<http://www.nestle.com/Media/MediaEventsCalendar/Pages/AllEvents.aspx?PagelId=88>

The World Health Assembly in May 2012 adopted a resolution by consensus to which Government of India is also committed to. The resolution WHA 65.6, URGES Member States,"....

(1) developing or, where necessary, strengthening nutrition policies so that they comprehensively address the double burden of malnutrition and include nutrition actions in overall country health and development policy, and establishing effective intersectoral governance mechanisms in order to expand the implementation of nutrition actions with particular emphasis on the framework of the global strategy on infant and young child feeding;

(2) developing or, where necessary, strengthening legislative, regulatory and/or other effective measures to control the marketing of breast-milk substitutes;

(3) establishing a dialogue with relevant national and international parties and forming alliances and partnerships to expand nutrition actions with the establishment of adequate mechanisms to safeguard against potential conflicts of interest;..."

**If this resolution is not understood, it is unfortunate !**

AACI strongly condemns such an 'association' and legitimacy being given to the company that has sued UOI for making the law it enacted in 1992.

We would like to ask two questions to all those 'associating' with Nestle in the shared value Forum. What are the values that you share with Nestle and with what public interest?

Finally, we would like to ask the UPA and Government of India to put health before profits and ensure that the IMS Act, will not be weakened or repealed, which was attempted in 2005 at the behest of Ministry of Food Processing. Baby food companies and their 'front organisations' as well as business interest NGOs like GAIN have expressed clear interest in 'friendly' regulatory frameworks.

**The Alliance Against Conflicts of interests (AACI) <http://aaci-india.org/>**

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