



PR#171-23

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **World Breastfeeding Week 2023**

*Belmopan, August 1, 2023.*

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated globally from August 1 to 7, each year. This year's theme, "Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a Difference for Working Parents", speaks to strengthening the capacity to protect, promote and support breastfeeding across all levels of society. This year's theme will focus on breastfeeding and working mothers and will provide a strategic opportunity to advocate for essential maternity rights. Working women must be given basic maternity provisions equating to robust breastfeeding support when returning back to work.

Stakeholders or partners can advocate for best practices for workplace-related breastfeeding support, across different sectors, and can promote actions to ensure a successful breastfeeding environment for ALL working women. Policymakers and employers can ensure that employers provide paid time so that employment-related discrimination against women, during and after pregnancy, does not occur. This can include flexible work arrangements for women returning to work as well as championing women's rights in the workplace.

Breastmilk provides the best nutrition for babies for proper growth and development while strengthening their immune response. Exclusive breastfeeding is encouraged for the first six months of life, and along with the introduction to home foods, its continuation for up to two years. Additionally, breastfeeding also provides health benefits for mothers by protecting them from cancer, reducing the risk of postpartum depression, and promoting the loss of extra baby weight gained from pregnancy.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness, in collaboration with its partners (UNICEF, PAHO and INCAP), will use the entire month of August to highlight the

importance of breastfeeding and coordinate activities countrywide to support this cause. Key activities this year involve reactivating the breastfeeding committees in all districts and conducting sensitization sessions for employers to support working moms. Other activities include conducting educational sessions within various communities, social media campaigns, breastfeeding training and support for exclusive breastfeeding moms.

The ministry thanks its partners for their continued support and reminds all pregnant women of the importance of breastfeeding to both the mother and child.

## **Ends**

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