

1 National Policy, Programme and Coordination

The “Innocenti Declaration was adopted in 1990. It recommended all governments to have national breastfeeding committees and coordinators as established mechanisms to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the country. The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding (2002) calls for an urgent action from all member states to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive policy on IYCF. The Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding (2005) captures the renewed commitments made at this historic anniversary meeting and records the additional five operational targets that were identified as part of the ongoing global strategy on Infant and Young Child feeding including the WHA resolutions regarding IYCF. The Planning Guide for national implementation of the Global Strategy for

Need for countries to translate policies into action plans with adequate budget

Infant and Young Child Feeding (2007) calls for implementation of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding into concrete focused national strategy, policy and action plans.

The indicator on national policy, programme and coordination addresses this particular need of having a national infant and young child feeding/breastfeeding policy, which is well implemented for the protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding, and a government plan to support the policy. Besides looking at whether there is a mechanism for coordination, the subset of questions provides information on whether

Table 1: Key question & subset questionnaire for the indicator on national policy, programme and coordination and scoring criteria

Key question: Is there a national infant and young child feeding/breastfeeding policy that protects, promotes and supports optimal infant and young child feeding and the policy is supported by a government programme? Is there a mechanism to coordinate like National infant and young child feeding committee and a coordinator for the committee ?

Guidelines for scoring

Criteria

Criteria	Score	Check all that apply
1.1) A national infant and young child feeding/breastfeeding policy has been officially adopted/approved by the government	1	
1.2) The policy recommended exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, complementary feeding to be started after six months and continued breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond.	1	
1.3) A national plan of action developed based on the policy	2	
1.4) The plan is adequately funded	2	
1.5) There is a National Breastfeeding Committee/ IYCF Committee	1	
1.6) The national breastfeeding (infant and young child feeding) committee meets, monitors and reviews on a regular basis	2	
1.7) The national breastfeeding (infant and young child feeding) committee links effectively with all other sectors like health, nutrition, information etc.	0.5	
1.8) Breastfeeding Committee is headed by a coordinator with clear terms of reference, regularly communicating national policy to regional, district and community level.	0.5	
		___/10

the policy has an attached plan and budgetary allocation for putting the plan in action, as well as status of implementation. (Table 1)

This indicator gets an average score of 6.21 out of 10. Figure 4 shows that only seventeen countries scored between 9.5-10, 22 countries scored between 7 and 9, 30

countries scored between 3 and 6.5, and 15 received a score below 3 of which 5 countries scored 0.

Figure 5 shows that most of the regions need to work hard to get their national policy, programmes and coordination on going to be able to move breastfeeding interventions.

Figure 5: Status of 84 countries on national policy, programme and coordination based on colour coding

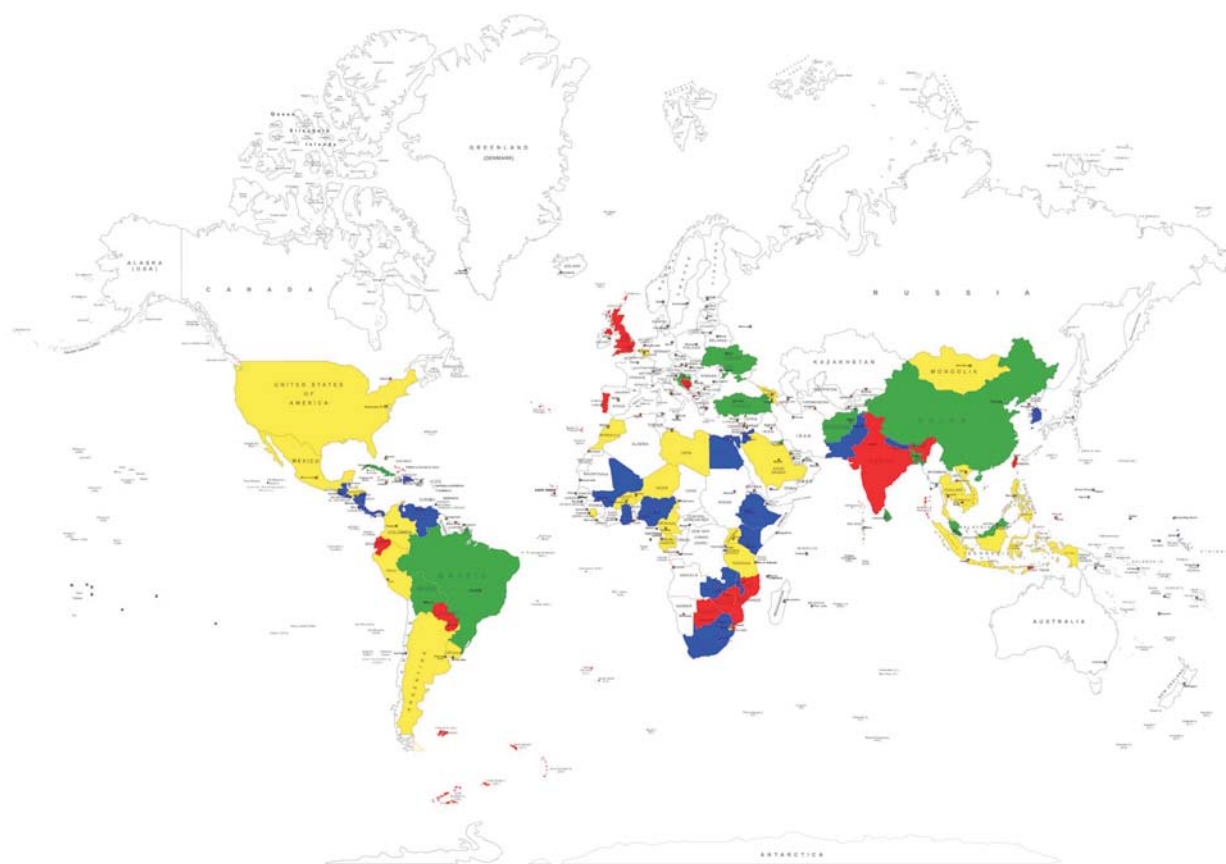
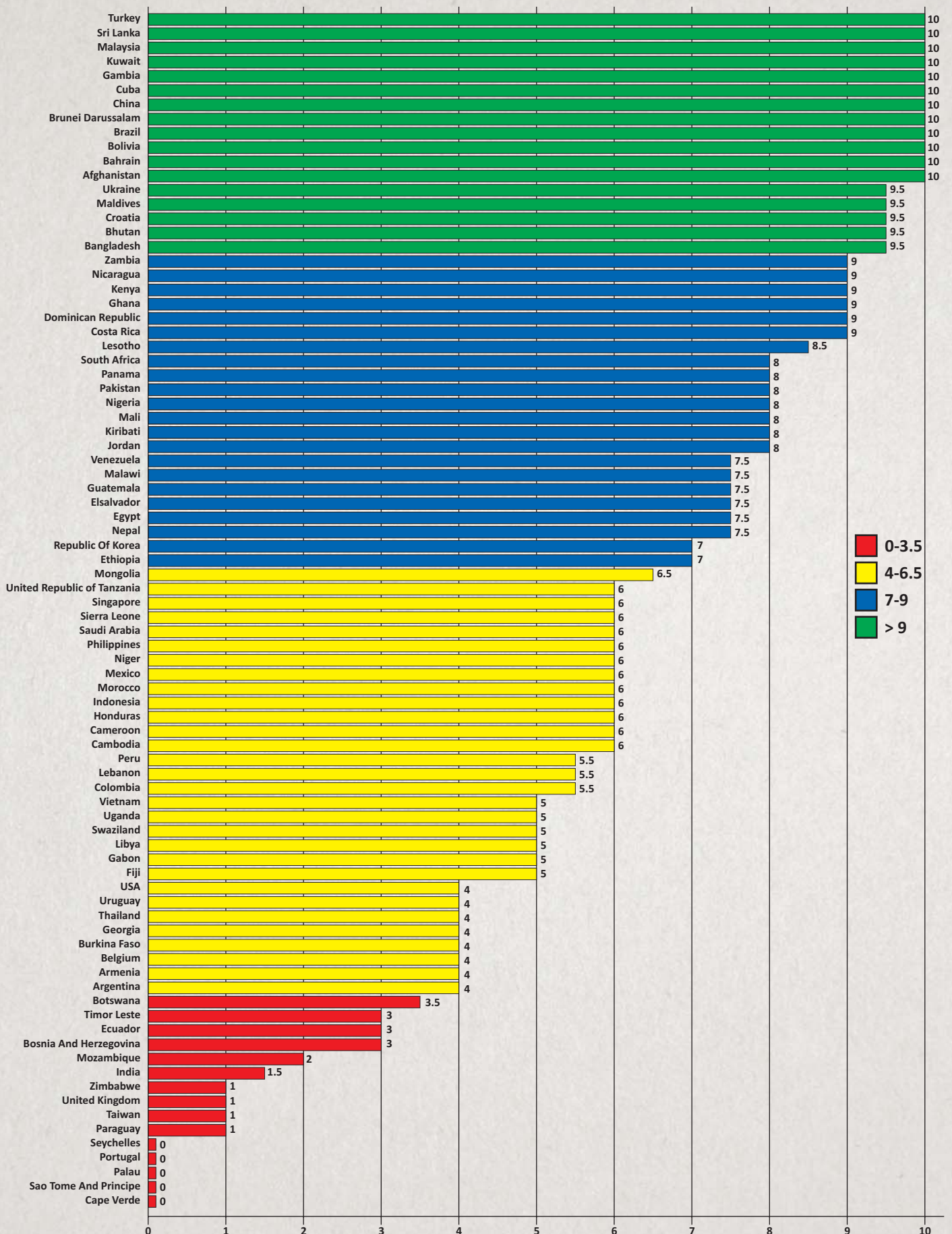


Figure 4: The state of national policy, programme and coordination in 84 countries on a scale of 0-10



Analysis and Conclusion

A detailed analysis of the indicator points out exactly where the gaps are and therefore gives an idea of what needs to be done with regard to establishing policy and coordination for enhancing optimal breastfeeding rates.

Figure 6 reveals that 68 out of 84 countries report having a policy, but 59 have a plan and only 24 report that the plan is adequately funded. Similarly, while 66 countries have national committees but only

40 function effectively.

It is evident from the assessment that there is a need for countries to translate policies into action plans with adequate budget through well coordinated national processes in order to enhance optimal breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices. Availability of resources/funding has been lacking in 70% of the countries, which poses a big challenge in the implementation of the policy & programmes.

Figure 6: Status of subset questions for indicator on national policy, programme and coordination in 84 countries

