

Victor Aguayo
Associate Director, Programme Division
Chief, Nutrition
UNICEF New York

Subject: Request for approval to procure Ready to Use Infant Formula (RUIF) in the context of the earthquake response in Haiti

Dear Victor,

The 7.2-magnitude earthquake that hit Haiti the 14th of August has taken over 2,000 lives, affected over 1.2 million people, and destroyed the infrastructure and water systems in the southern area. The earthquake was followed by a storm that left part of the affected areas flooded.

The Nutrition sector, with UNICEF support, will put in place baby tents to support, protect, promote, and encourage exclusive breastfeeding and other recommended infant and young child feeding practices. Community workers will be trained to provide breastfeeding counseling to mothers of children under 2, prioritizing children under 6 months. A Joint Statement to avoid donations and untargeted distributions has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by the Nutrition sector partners; it will be issued as soon as possible.

Non-breastfed infants with no potential to breastfeed are considered most urgently in need of identification and support. In Haiti wet nursing is not accepted due to the high prevalence of HIV (2%), one of the highest rate in Caribbean region. Mixed fed infants may need artificial feeding support in the immediate term, but re-establishing full breastfeeding will be supported as a preferable less risky option.

According to the DHS (Demographic Health Survey) of 2016-2017, 40% of Haitian children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed but at 4-5 months, this percentage is much lower (15%). With the earthquake having affected the water supplies and the storm having flooded the riverbeds, the quality and quantity of available water is currently insufficient and the means to mix powdered infant formula, boil water, etc. is extremely limited.

Although an initial rapid assessment methodology has been submitted to the MOH and partners, due to insecurities and disruptions during distributions, the initial rapid assessment methodology for nutrition is being discussed and is not easily rolled out. Health facilities are currently being contacted for more information on the number of orphans under 6 months.

In this context, the Government of Haiti has identified the need to procure Ready to Use Infant Formula (RUIF). Following discussions with the Government, UNICEF has been identified as the provider of first resort for RUIF.

The Ministry of Health (MSPP) is therefore kindly requesting UNICEF to facilitate the purchase and use of Ready to Use Infant Formula (fed with cups and spoons) under highly supervised conditions and supported by guidance, tools and training materials developed during the post-earthquake response in Haiti in 2010.

The UNICEF Haiti Country Office with the MoH will put in place the following measures to avoid spillover of the use of RUIF:

- 1- RUIF targeted distribution will be carried out solely by an implementing partner member of the nutrition cluster who has signed an MOU with the MOH. The MOU to be used will be adapted from the one used post-earthquake response of 2010 found as an Annex of [the national guidelines for baby tents \(2010\)](#). The MOU binds the implementing partner to ensure qualified personnel is administering the baby tents, to follow the national guidelines, to report to the nutrition sector on use of RUIF and to provide RUIF stock updates each month.

- 2- The RUIF targeted distribution will take place in an isolated manner by an implementing partner so as not to discourage breastfeeding mothers. For instance, when a tent will be used for promoting and encouraging optimal infant feeding practices, a separate tent on a different site will be specifically used for the targeted RUIF distribution. Storage of infant formula should not be in view of beneficiaries. Caregivers shall be requested to return empty containers to reduce the risk of RUIF selling. The distribution of RUIF to individual infants shall be monitored and documented in a detailed manner.
- 3- The baby tents program's main activity is to promote, protect and support optimal infant feeding, and there will be adequate breastfeeding counselling and support for breastfeeding mothers. In collaboration with other sectors food and non-food items will be distributed to breastfeeding mothers during counseling sessions and/or in the baby tents.
- 4- Media messages will be aired to warn the population of the dangers of non-breastfeeding and the use of substitutes.
- 5- A hotline number will be set up for the population and partners to call when witnessing a violation of the Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitute or inappropriate use of RUIF and or when a caregiver is struggling to feed his or her infant.

It is estimated that:

- **190 infants under six months** (rounded 1% of the total number of children under 6 months in the three departments affected) might need RUIF and,
- **140 infants 6-11 month** (rounded 1% of the total number of children 6-11 months in the three departments affected) might need full cream UHT milk.

In light of the above, the following quantities of BMS (Breast Milk Substitute) to support this response will need to be procured for a period of one month:

1. **22800 units of 200 mL** of Ready to use Infant Formula (RUIF) for infants under 6 months of age (**950 packs of 24 units**)
2. **2 100 pack of 1 L UHT Milk** for 6 – 11 months of age - to be locally procured

Based on the above, Haiti Country Office is seeking your approval to procure RUIF in the exceptional context of the Haiti post-earthquake response.

Sincerely,



Bruno Maes
Representative



CC: Akthem Fourati, Chief, Medicines and Nutrition Center, Supply Division

CC; Maaïke Arts, Regional Adviser, Survive & Thrive, and Paula Veliz, Nutrition Specialist, LACRO (Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office)

Encl.:

- Request from MoH to UNICEF to procure RUIF
- Directives nationales pour point conseil nutrition bébé
- Estimation of quantities of RUIF to procure

Estimation of quantities of BMS to procure

Population figure in affected areas:

- Population figure = 1 211 000 people (population in the 3 departments affected)
- Target figure for infant <6months (1.55% population) = 18771
- Target figure children 6 - 12 months (1.13% population) = 13684

Target figure:

- The target for infants <6mo (1% population) = **188. Rounded target = 190**
- The target for infants 6-12 months (1% population) = **137. Rounded target = 140**

Table 1: Estimated quantity required for the above est. beneficiaries.

RUIF for <6mo			
Daily Req (Av for infants 0-6 mo) 800ml	# <6-month Infant	# days	# RUIF Units Required (1 Unit = 200ml)
800	190	30	22800 950 PAC of 24 units

UHT Milk full cream for children 6-23 months			
Daily Req (Av for 6- 12 months) – 500ml	# 6-12 months age	# days	# UHT Milk Pack 1lt.
500	140	30	2 100