

World Breastfeeding Week in Ethiopia

Representing its civil society partners working to scale up nutrition in Ethiopia, Save the Children joined the Ministry of Health and partners to commemorate [World Breastfeeding Week](#) on 7 August.

The event was held at Yekatit 12 Hospital in Addis Ababa and included participants from the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, the Ethiopian Pediatrics Society and other local and international organizations. Birara Melese, from the Federal Ministry of Health, also attended the event and announced the government's plan to increase the national exclusive breastfeeding rate from 52% to 70% and reduce stunting from 44% to 30% by 2015.

Dr. Million Shibeshi, Save the Children's Head of Nutrition, represented the Ethiopia Civil Society Coalition (ECSC) and delivered a speech highlighting the benefits of breastfeeding and consequences of undernutrition that can result from neglecting breastfeeding.

Citing Save the Children's [Super Food for Babies Report](#), Dr. Million said, "It is estimated that 3.1 million children die from malnutrition each year. Breastfeeding is not only crucial for tackling malnutrition and saving children's lives, it also has the potential to have tangible impacts on the economic and social development of a nation."

Emphasizing shared responsibility, Dr Million said "Promotion of optimal breastfeeding practices and creating a conducive policy environment for breastfeeding mothers are the responsibilities of the government with all its sectoral offices, the media, the private sector, civil society organizations, and all development partners. With enough will and commitment, we have the opportunity to ensure that every child has the best chance to fulfill their potential."

To bolster the collective efforts of civil society during World Breastfeeding Week, Save the Children also ran radio spots to help promote exclusive breastfeeding.

In addition to good media coverage of the event, an opinion editorial entitled ["The Super Food with the potential to save hundreds and thousands of children's lives"](#) by Paul Emes, Deputy Country Director of Save the Children was run in *The Reporter* newspaper on August 10th.