IBFAN AFRICA NEWS BULLETIN

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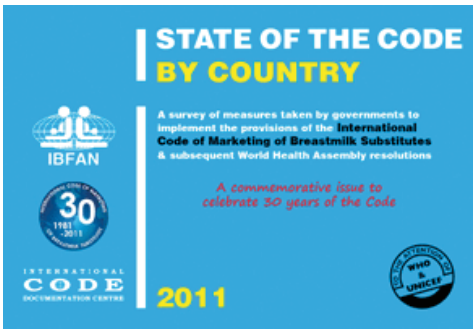
Dear Colleague,

Here we are with IBFAN's second News Bulletin for 2011. We hope that it will pro-

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

STATE OF THE CODE BY COUNTRY:
THIRTY YEARS OF HOLDING COUNTRIES ACCOUNATABLE

***The State of the Code by Country 2011* is a commemorative issue released to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.**



The International Code was adopted through a World Health Assembly Resolution in May 1981 as a ***minimum requirement for all countries.*** Its aim is to protect infant and young child health by ensuring that parents receive sound, evidence-based information; and to regulate the commercial promotion of all breastmilk substitutes including formula, as well as bottles and teats.

The Code covers:

- ⇒ *composition;*
- ⇒ *labeling;*
- ⇒ *information; and*
- ⇒ *advertising of products to health workers or the public.*

Since 1981 companies have claimed to observe the Code; but in practice they continue the unethical marketing of products covered by the Code.

Countries are categorized according to how they perform in the following areas:

1. ***SCOPE:*** *does the law include all breastmilk substitutes? Not just infant formula.*
2. ***AMBIT:*** *are all provisions of the Code and relevant* ***WHA*** *resolutions covered by the measure?*
3. ***ENFORCEABILITY:*** *does the law include sanctions to fine or punish offenders?*

In many countries, the baby food industry lobbies to weaken laws at the drafting stage or introduce loopholes that allow marketing that misleads parents and undermines breastfeeding.

Some 14 additional WHA resolutions have been adopted over the years to keep pace with changes in science and marketing. Resolutions have stressed the importance for governments to make compliance with the Code and all the other recommendations binding through legislation or other measures.

Today, out of 193 WHO Member States, 67 have taken action to implement it at the national level, 33 have laws which cover all provisions of the Code while another 34 have legislation encompassing a number of provisions.

Where the code is effectively implemented and monitored — for example in **Brazil** and **India** — they have effectively put a stop to the majority of misleading and unethical marketing strategies. This has contributed to a rise in breastfeeding rates or, at the very least, a halt in their decline.

In another 50 countries, some action has been taken. For example, in **Botswana** an

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infant food manufacturer had to withdraw its literature from health centres and another had to pull down its billboards advertising a baby feeding bottle.

IBFAN is strict in assessing what countries have done: partial or voluntary measures are not considered adequate protection of infants and their mothers.

ONLY BAD COMPANIES — Annelies Allain

The controversy that surrounds the Code and the behaviour of companies was brought into focus during the 2011 World Health Assembly debate on maternal, infant and young child nutrition this May. The **Director General of WHO, Dr Margaret Chan,** had called for companies to "earn their trust" saying, *"In my experience there are good and bad companies. They have to earn their trust by keeping their promises; track them but don't generalise; pick the good ones and leave the bad ones behind."*

However, in her intervention during the debate , **Annelies Allain**, Director of the International Code Documentation Centre in Penang said: *"IBFAN has been tracking baby food companies for years and publishing the evidence. In our experience there seem to be only bad companies and none have earned the "trust" Dr Chan is calling for. Governments would do well to enforce strict laws so companies realize that their practices are simply unacceptable."*

The evidence of this is contained in a new IBFAN report — Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010 — that details the latest marketing strategies used by major baby food manufacturers and exposes violations of the International Code. The evidence was compiled, checked and legally analysed by the International Code Documentation Centre (ICDC).

"This report is different from previous reports in that it analyses trends in marketing. … the report shows that health and nutrition claims are now the key marketing strategy that needs to be tackled. Companies are using the most extraordinary and bizarre claims to suggest that their new ingredients provide functional benefits that are essential to child health. ***(http://www.ibfan.org/code-publications.html)***

International Workers' Day: *Revisiting Maternity Protection*

International Workers' Day (May 1st) in many countries is the day all workers celebrate their right to work and often use the day to organise protest marches to demand improvements in their working conditions.

For women in the work place, this includes obtaining the full range of maternity protection provisions in strong laws and collective agreements that are implemented on a day-to-day basis.

By right, all working women are entitled to decent conditions of work and to decent salaries, on par with those of male workers. They are entitled to work that respects their human dignity and allows them to participate and develop as human beings. Childbearing adds to their total workload, thus working women are also entitled to specific protection before and after giving birth.

For the past hundred years, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has considered maternity protection the responsibility of the State rather than the individual alone.

However, the ILO Maternity Protection Convention *laws generally cover only workers in the* ***formal economy****, and often only those in the public sector.*

The laws are diverse and also vary from country to country:

- *The average length of paid maternity leave is 13-14 weeks though in a few countries it is 6 months. Some countries provide as little as 6 weeks.*
- *Having maternity entitlements also means the right to* ***resume one's job at the end of the leave****.*
- *Most countries entitle women workers to payment during their leave (at least 66% of salary).*
- *Pregnant and lactating workers need to be protected at work from* ***physical, chemical, biological or other potential dangers****.*
- *Some countries have legislation that ensures that employers* ***do not discriminate*** *against women of reproductive age by refusing to employ them.*
- *Women are entitled two 30-minute breastfeeding breaks a day for a period running from a few months to 18 months or more in many countries.*

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The Maternity Protection (MP) Coalition, formed by breastfeeding advocates and networks from all parts of the world, are fighting for measures that empower men and women alike to better balance work and family responsibilities. For women, the period of maternity is a time that calls for special attention with protective measures to ensure health and safety for mother and child at home and in the workplace.

WOMEN WORKERS NEED A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF PROTECTION

The MP Coalition supports a woman's right to work without having to endure exploitation, unhealthy work conditions, poverty, and/or lack of dignity.

The Coalition therefore calls on governments, employers, trade unions and women's groups to join with them to ensure that **measures are adopted and implemented that protect working women in their multiple roles, in particular those related to maternity.**

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action. Web: www.waba.org.my. Email: waba@waba.org.my

BREASTFED BABIES 'DEVELOP FEWER BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM'

Children who are breastfed for four months or more develop fewer behaviour problems, Oxford researchers say.

The study, involving 10,000 mothers and their babies and in journal Archives of Disease in Childhood, says that may be because of the make-up of breast milk. Or, it says, breastfeeding may lead to better mother-baby interaction. Breastfeeding is already associated with other health benefits for babies, including lower rates of infection and less obesity in later life.

Researchers looked at the feeding habits of 10,037 mothers and their babies involved in a large study known as the *Millennium Cohort Study (*a longitudinal survey following the lives of a sample of about 19,000 babies born in the UK in the year 2000/2001). The mothers were asked to assess problems in their children by the age of five, including anxiousness and clinginess, restlessness, and lying or stealing. Only 6% of children who were breastfed showed signs of behaviour problems, compared with 16% of children who were formula-fed.

Mothers, who breastfeed tend to be older, better educated, and from a higher socio-economic background, which may contribute towards fewer problems in their children's behaviour. But even after the researchers, from the Universities of Oxford, Essex, York and University College London, adjusted their figures to take that into account, they still found there was a 30% greater risk of behavioural problems among formula-fed children. "Our results provide even more evidence for the benefits of breastfeeding," said Maria Quigley of Oxford University, who led the research.

She said breast milk contained large quantities of a particular type of fatty acid, as well as growth factors and hormones, which were important for the development of the brain and nervous system. But mothers who breastfeed also tend to interact with their children more, which could mean the babies learn more about acceptable ways of behaving. Breastfed children also get ill less often, which may affect their behaviour.

"We just don't know whether it is because of the constituents in breast milk, or the close interaction with the mum, or whether it is a knock-on effect of reduced illness in breastfed babies," but it does begin to look like we can add fewer behavioural problems as another potential benefit of breastfeeding.." said Ms Quigley.

The Royal College of Midwives welcomed the findings and said they added to the evidence that breastfeeding was better for babies. Janet Fyle from the RCM said it was vital women had enough help and support from midwives to help them keep breastfeeding. But she said it was important not to over-emphasise the study's results.

"We must not send a negative message to mothers that they have failed or make them feel guilty because they bottle-fed their babies," she said.

(*http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_releases_for_journalists/110509.html*)

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2011: *TALK TO ME! BREASTFEEDING - A 3D EXPERIENCE*

WABA has announced that the World Breastfeeding Week theme for 2011 will focus on engaging and mobilising youth intergenerational work with the slogan: "Talk to me! Breastfeeding - a 3D Experience". The theme deals with communication at various levels and between various sectors.

The idea is to extend breastfeeding support from the present two-dimensional concept: *TIME* (from pre-pregnancy to complementary feeding) and *PLACE* (the home, community, health care system, etc) to include a third dimension: *COMMUNICATION* — an essential part of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

New lines of communication are being created every day and through these channels we can broaden our horizons and also spread breastfeeding information beyond our immediate time and place. Communication channels also cross generational, sectoral, gender, and cultural lines.

WABA in collaboration with IBFAN Africa is urging everyone within the network to take an active role in commemorating World Breastfeeding Week, celebrated annually from 1—7th August.

In some countries it is extend to a month to enable a greater number of activities to take place and ensure a wider dissemination of information.

If you are planning to organize a WBW event — it does not matter how big or small — please do let WABA (or the Regional Office) know about it and it will be shared with the rest of the world. All you need to do is download the pledge form from *http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org* For every pledge that is received, WABA will create a Speech Bubble with your picture (including information about your event) and put it on the World Wall Mosaic on the WBW website. To participate, please follow these 3 simple steps.

- Complete the pledge form;
- Attach a Photo of the main organiser (preferably close up shot) at least 640X480 jpeg format; and
- Send it back to WABA as attachments by emailing to *wbw@waba.org.my*

1—7th August World Breastfeeding Week

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

20th June	Fathers' Day
4th July	34th Anniversary of Nestle Boycott
11th July	World Population Day
1st August	21st Anniversary of Innocenti Declaration
12th August	International Youth Day
21st September	International Day of Peace

IBFAN Africa *News*

The Jan—June Newsletter is currently being compiled. Please help us make it a success by submitting your articles and photos as soon as possible. We welcome articles on any topic — from the community health worker who is dedicated to the promotion of breastfeeding in the community to the university professor who is conducting