



Statement of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN): Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week [1st to 7th August] 2017

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) joins the rest of the world to commemorate the 25th World Breastfeeding Week from the 1st to 7th August 2017. This year's theme is "*Sustaining Breastfeeding: Building Alliances without Conflicts of Interest*" which stresses the need to work together for the common good of sustaining breastfeeding. This year's theme is a continuation from the WBW 2016 that marked a new start of aligning breastfeeding with sustainable development.

Breastfeeding rates in most countries in the world have remained below the global target for the past two decades. For example, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding of less than 40 percent is far below the World Health Organization (WHO) target of increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months to at least 50 percent by 2025. Attaining this target would involve a 2.3 percent relative increase per year which would lead to approximately 10 million more children being exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life. New evidence presented in the Lancet series confirms that optimal breastfeeding could save 823,000 child lives and add USD 302 billion to the global economy annually.

Scientific evidence markedly showcases that breastfeeding can play a significant role in addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on maternal and child health, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), nutrition, education, poverty, inclusive economic growth and reducing inequalities. This WBW 2017 is an opportunity to define our collective and individual roles, for everyone concerned to generate action. The ultimate success will be dependent upon our collaborations/partnerships being free from conflicts of interest to ensure that mothers get the support they need in order to breastfeed, otherwise it can still be a distant dream.

Breastfeeding is not only a mother's responsibility; it requires support from governments, health care systems, families, communities, employers and workplaces. There is need to leverage all sectors of society to make breastfeeding successful for mothers and babies. To achieve this, women should have the right to accurate unbiased information needed to make an informed choice about breastfeeding. They also have the right to good quality health services, including comprehensive sexual, reproductive and maternal health services as well as the right to adequate maternity protection in the workplaces. In addition, a friendly environment and appropriate conditions in public places for breastfeeding are crucial to ensure successful and sustained breastfeeding practices.

IBFAN globally will continue to play its part in increasing breastfeeding rates in both rich and poor countries using the 3 important pillars of protection, promoting and support of breastfeeding to contribute to. Our unique contribution includes country support to adapt, implement and monitor implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent related World Health Assembly Resolutions [[Protect](#)]; provision of accurate and unbiased information on Infant feeding [[Promote](#)] and ensuring support to women at birth, at home, in communities and workplaces [[support](#)]. In addition, IBFAN through its structures supports countries to adapt and/or strengthen the implementation of the Global Strategy on IYCF as well as assess the performance using [World Breastfeeding Trend Initiative \(WBTI\) tool](#).

On the occasion of the World Breastfeeding Week 2017, IBFAN takes this opportunity to remind governments of their duty to protect mothers from systematic commercial pressure in violation of the code on marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. We also remind governments to urge health care professionals to focus on their responsibility of serving their patients/clients – the mothers and babies and to avoid possible situations that could result in conflicts of interests where they may put their personal interest before their duty to patients/clients. Finally, we urge all members of the network, breastfeeding advocates, communities, and individuals to use this week to reflect on the past accomplishments and to vigorously revitalise their efforts to advance breastfeeding for this and future generations. Emphasis should be put on strengthening the implementation of the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding by building alliances without conflicts of interest.

From the IBFAN Coordinating Council G---5

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For more information, please visit:

IBFAN Asia: <http://www.bpni.org/wbw/2017/WBW-Action-Folder-2017.pdf>

IBFAN LAC: <http://ibfan-alc.org/SMLM/SMLM2017/index.html>

IBFAN Africa: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/w79ai5imy8pixt4/WBW2017-IBFAN%20Brochure.pdf?dl=0>