



IBFAN-GIFA Newsletter

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In the third issue of our Newsletter, we tell you what we have been doing over the first half of 2013. We are open to your ideas and comments, as well as to any information you would like us to send out in our next Newsletter.

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Advancing child rights

General Comments on the right to health and on business and child rights

The CRC Committee issued two new General Comments in April 2013: [General Comment No. 15](#) on 'the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (art. 24)' and [General Comment No. 16](#) on 'State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights'. These are two very important documents which frame the importance of breastfeeding within the right of the child to health and to adequate food and nutrition as well as to survival, growth and development identifying not only the State's obligations but also the business sector's responsibilities.

General Comment 15 urges States, in the effort to diminish infant and child mortality, to devote particular attention to neonatal mortality and suggests, inter alia, to "pay particular attention to ensuring full protection and promotion of breastfeeding practices". Moreover, "**Exclusive breastfeeding for infants up to 6 months should be protected and promoted and breastfeeding should continue together with appropriate complementary foods preferably until two years of age as feasible. States' obligations in this area are defined in the "protect, promote and support framework"**", adopted unanimously by the World Health Assembly in the [Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding](#).

In order to prevent negative impact of marketing on children's right to health, survival and development, States are required to adopt preventive measures including appropriate and effective regulation and monitoring of advertising and marketing by industries. The General

membership grew again



The [Geneva Infant Feeding Association](#) (IBFAN-GIFA) serves as IBFAN's global liaison office, acting as the interface between the IBFAN network and the UN agencies and international NGOs based in Geneva.



Have a look at [Issue 2](#) and [Issue 1](#) of our newsletter.



Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA) - International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

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Comment 16 specifically calls on States "to implement and enforce internationally agreed standards concerning children's rights, health and business including the [...] *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions*".



Read the full General Comments [here](#).

For more information read IBFAN's submissions on the two General

Comments: on the [right to health](#) and on [business and child rights](#).

Country review by the Committee on the Rights of the Child

We submitted IBFAN alternative reports on [Malta](#), [Guinea](#) (Guinea report also in [French](#)), [Niue](#), [Armenia](#), [Guinea Bissau](#), [Israel](#), [Rwanda](#), [Slovenia](#) and [Uzbekistan](#) to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee). These countries were reviewed by the CRC Committee in January and June 2013, and were given clear recommendations for improving the health situation of children and the state of breastfeeding.

Read the [Report of the January session](#) and the [Report of the June session](#)

Click [here](#) to see all the alternative reports

Are our babies falling through the Gaps?: Side-event at Human Rights Council

IBFAN-GIFA in collaboration with IBFAN Asia organized a [side-event to the 23rd Human Rights Council](#) session, launching the report "[Are our babies falling through the gaps?](#)" The report documents the state of implementation of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding in 51 countries around the world. Countries are evaluated using the World Breastfeeding Trends initiative (WBTi) participative process.

The side-event consisted of a **panel discussion** on how participatory assessment tools contribute to increasing human rights accountability by states in the area of infant and young child feeding.

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BREASTFEEDING BRIEFS
Last issue 54



Distinguished members of the panel included Dr. Arun Gupta, regional coordinator of IBFAN Asia and initiator of WBTi; Dr. Hiranthi Wijemanne, member of the CRC Committee; Dr. Francesco Branca, WHO's head of Nutrition Department; Dr. Prakash Shrestha, president of Nepal Breastfeeding Promotion Forum and Ms. Joyce Chanetsa, regional coordinator of IBFAN in Africa; Dr. Lida Lhotska from GIFA was moderator.

Read the [Report of the Side-event](#)

Breastfeeding at the Committee on Economic Social & Cultural Rights (CESCR)



In 2013, IBFAN-GIFA submitted to the CESCR five alternative reports on the situation of infant and young child feeding in [Azerbaijan](#), [Denmark](#) (50th session), [Austria](#), [Belarus](#) and [Egypt](#) (51st pre-session). The reports

aim at sensitizing the Committee on the issue of infant and young child feeding and its importance for the full implementation of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant, in particular the right to health and food. The IBFAN-GIFA team presented the reports orally at meetings of the CESCR with NGOs.

[More information](#)

The CESCR is the body mandated to monitor the implementation of the [International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights](#). It is composed of 18 independent experts and monitors. The implementation of the right to health (art 12) including sexual and reproductive health, the right to food (art 11) and the right to work (art 6, 7, 10) are among the subjects they deal with.

WHO Reform: The struggle of separating NGOs from Business



Since 2011, IBFAN-GIFA has been closely following the reform process of the World Health Organisation

(WHO), with a focus on watching for ways in which the reform may weaken WHO and give way to more influence by the private for-profit sector. In March, [IBFAN](#) and the [Democratizing Global Health Coalition](#) participated in WHO's web-based consultation on WHO's engagement with non-state actors. In order to share these views with governments, IBFAN-GIFA, together with allies, met with Geneva representatives of EU countries, and organized a briefing with Geneva-based UN Missions ([more info](#)).

WHO Secretariat fails to act on WHA decision on relations with non-state actors

The 133rd Executive Board (EB) discussed WHO's engagement with external non-state actors, based on the report [EB 133/16](#) 'WHO Governance reform: report by the Secretariat'. The approach proposed by the Secretariat goes counter to [Decision WHA 65\(9\)](#) by the World Health Assembly which requested two specific and separate policies on interaction with NGOs and the private commercial entities. This feeling of contradiction was expressed by many States as they asked for clarification on why the previous decisions had not been reflected in the approach contained in the new document. They demanded that their concerns are reflected in a revised paper. [Read the full article](#) (Click here for the article in [Italian](#))

GAIN –industry's Trojan Horse fails to enter WHO's policy setting process

The failure of GAIN (the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) to obtain official relations status with the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an NGO, has been warmly welcomed by health campaigners and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN).

GAIN is a new type of public-private entity which claims to tackle malnutrition but its work seems to focus on opening up markets for its 600 partner companies. [Read more](#)

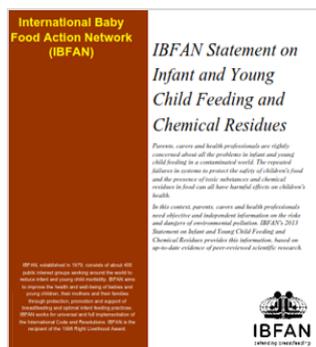
Health in all Policies: 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion

The [8th Global Conference on Health Promotion: "Health in All Policies Framework for Country Action"](#) was held in June 2013 in Helsinki, Finland. IBFAN-GIFA was invited by WHO to give a

[presentation](#) on Using treaty body reporting mechanisms for NGOs to advance protection, promotion and support of adequate infant and young child feeding. It generated a lively discussion and IBFAN's work in this area was much appreciated.

At the opening of this conference, Dr. Margaret Chan gave [a powerful speech](#) which identified the commercial interests of the business sector as one of the major obstacles to efforts to advance public health issues especially in relation to noncommunicable diseases. The [Conference Statement](#) which reflected some of Dr. Chan's key points was developed in a participatory manner and called for commitment to health and health equity as a priority. Also, among other points, the building of institutional capacity, and for the establishment of conflict of interest measures that include effective safeguards to protect policies from distortion by commercial and vested interests and influence. Yet, some key contributions did not make it into the final conference statement, thus the call to action appears to fall short of the challenges described in its preamble. Members of the People's Health Movement – to which IBFAN is an affiliated member – thus developed an [alternative statement](#) which attempts to capture the many points raised in the discussions.

Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding and Chemical Residues



In 2013, IBFAN published the [Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding and Chemical Residues](#).

The Statement covers all aspects of contamination of formula, feeding

bottles and baby foods. It addresses the detection of chemical residues in breastmilk and emphasises the positive effect of breastfeeding. The Statement has already been reviewed and disseminated by ILCA, the People's Health Movement, the Health and Environment Alliance in Europe and the US Breastfeeding Committee.

The lead author is Dr. Adriano Cattaneo (IBFAN Italy), with input from members of the IBFAN's Global working group on chemical and microbiological contamination of infant feeding products (GWG). The GWG covers a wide range of subjects for campaigning and is a space for sharing information needed for campaigns on food safety. For more information read also the [submission of the GWG](#) to the online consultation on Hunger, Food and Nutrition Security for the post-2015 MDGs.

Breastfeeding Briefs 54: Pacifiers and breastfeeding

[Issue 54](#) of our periodical publication Breastfeeding Briefs, came out in March, with an editorial by Simona Di Mario on '*Pacifiers and breastfeeding*'.

Click [here](#) to read all the issues

IBFAN Europe membership grew again

Since mid-2012, three new groups joined the IBFAN Europe network: [Croatian Association of Lactation Consultants](#)-member of IBFAN; [IBFAN Greece](#); and [IBFAN Portugal](#).

We are thrilled that the values IBFAN stands for and the work we do attract new colleagues and we welcome them warmly.

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Keep well until next time and send us your
comments and suggestions.

The IBFAN-GIFA team