

SOUTH ASIA

BREASTFEEDING PARTNERS FORUM-2

Theme- *Ensure Exclusive Breastfeeding: Save Newborn Lives*



Call for Action on Newborn Survival in South Asia

Hosts



Sponsors

- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Local host



The South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum 2 held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 26 to 28 October, 2005, brought together 70 participants from 8 countries of South Asia. They represented governments, IBFAN, WABA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, media, professional bodies, institutions, international organisations and NGOs. Theme of this forum was “*Ensure Exclusive Breastfeeding: Save Newborn lives*” to be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goal - 4 of reducing child mortality. It was jointly hosted by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia Pacific and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), locally hosted by Nepal Breastfeeding Promotion Forum (NEBPROF). It was inaugurated by Prof. Govinda Prasad Sharma, Vice Chancellor, Tribhuvan University, and Kathmandu, Nepal.

Recalling the global commitments enshrined in the, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and the *Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes*, subsequent relevant *World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions*, the *Innocenti Declaration*, UN's *Millennium Development Goals* and the *World Fit for Children Resolution*, the *ILO Maternity Protection Convention 183 and Recommendation 191*, the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*, the *UN Framework for Priority Action on HIV and Infant Feeding*; the *Delhi Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding* December 2003, the *South Asia Breastfeeding Partners' Forum -1 Call for Action on Health and Development of Children in South Asia 2004*, the *Delhi Declaration on Healthy Newborn Partnership 2004*, the *World Health Report 2005-Making Every Mother and Child Count*, and the *State of the Worlds Children 2005: Children under Threat*,

With the background that,

- inappropriate feeding practices and inadequate care contribute significantly to malnutrition that limits the survival, growth and development of young children;
- in South Asia more than 3.5 million children under the age 5 die annually and of these more than one third deaths occur during first month of life;
- exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months if increased to 90% can save more than 13% of these deaths;
- most countries are struggling to increase the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and evidence is available that it is a feasible and doable action,

The participants reviewed the status of the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding* in each country, shared and discussed key information on related issues based on scientific evidence, interacted with media persons, discussed ways and means to enhance the practice of early and exclusive breastfeeding and developed their action plans for the year 2006.

Recommendations

The participants adopted in unanimity the following **ten action recommendations** to contribute towards achieving the MDGs, especially MDG 4, and call upon the governments of South Asian countries, UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS, and other international organisations, health professionals, and NGOs to work together in partnership with each other on this issue.

1. Universalize neonatal care, by adopting in principle the “*Neonatal integrated package*” which includes 'breastfeeding education', as recommended in the MDG Report to the Secretary General, 2005 “*Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*”.
2. Ensure that there is a budget line for enhance early and exclusive breastfeeding and to mainstream this intervention within existing child health, nutrition and development programmes.
3. Make all efforts to enhance the practice of early and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding along with adequate and appropriate complementary feeding for two years or beyond; emphasizing solving “*not enough milk*” problem as a key behaviour change communication input.
4. Revitalize Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and expand it to family /community level calling it BFHI-CI, it should depend on high quality skills training of ALL health care providers/ community workers in breastfeeding counselling.
5. Review the communication strategies of breastfeeding movement and link with other groups proactively and productively, bringing in issues like '*understanding of maternity protection provisions*', '*dangers of bottle-feeding*', and '*involvement of men in supporting breastfeeding*'.
6. Strategically link with media professionals, providing them with up to date, accurate and timely information, and organise structured education programmes for media.
7. Issue/ revise guidelines on HIV and infant feeding on a regular basis based on new evidence, keeping 'skilled counseling' on infant feeding options as an integral part of training of counsellors and health workers of PMTCT/PPTCT programmes. These guidelines should be individualized based on social or local context.
8. Ensure the International Code for Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions are legislated and implemented effectively specially the '*sponsorship*' clause from WHA 2005.
9. Develop clear operational guidelines for handling infant feeding during emergencies.
10. Build national/institutional capacities for training of workers in breastfeeding, complementary feeding and HIV infant feeding counseling; Code implementation and monitoring; management and other related issues.



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About IBFAN Asia Pacific

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) is the 1998 Right Livelihood Award recipient. It consists of more than 200 public interest groups working around the world to save lives of infants and young children by working together to bring lasting changes in infant feeding practices at all levels. IBFAN aims to promote the health and well being of infants and young children and their mothers through protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding practices. IBFAN works for the universal and full implementation of 'International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes' and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions. IBFAN Asia Pacific, is a part of this global network consisting of 42 countries with 4 sub regions, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Pacific.