

Chairperson Emeritus of WABA, Anwar Fazal honoured at UN Day Malaysia



The United Nations Representative (Michelle Gyles – McDonnough) presenting the Award to Anwar Fazal.

The United Nations in Malaysia marked the UN's 68th anniversary by honouring Government partners, civil society organisations and prominent individuals in Malaysia that have partnered with UN agencies to achieve significant targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Among the eight honoured by The United Nations in Malaysia were Dato' Dr. Anwar Fazal, Chairperson Emeritus and Director of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

The winners were feted at the annual UN Day awards ceremony that was graced by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and Education Minister, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Yassin and several Cabinet Ministers, who were among the recipients of awards on behalf of their Ministries and government bodies. The awards paid tribute to the recipients' many years of invaluable contribution towards the achievement of MDG targets.

"The core of the work that the UN system does across the globe in partnership with governments and other stakeholders such as civil society, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and academia is represented by the Millennium Development Goals that were formulated further to the Millennium Declaration by the world's Heads of State and Government in the year 2000, at the dawn of this millennium. With less than 800 days left for the deadline of the MDGs, the UN Country Team of Malaysia considers it timely to acknowledge the efforts of its partners in development – both government and non-government - for the tremendous work done over the years which has helped Malaysia achieve and even surpass many of its MDG targets, as well as to put Malaysia on track to achieving remaining unmet targets," said Ms. Michelle Gyles – McDonnough, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

The citation for Anwar Fazal read at the ceremony is as follows:

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

For his critical and global role in reducing child mortality through the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, the UN Malaysia Award for Millennium Development Goal 4 goes to Dato' Dr. Anwar Fazal.

Dato' Dr. Anwar is currently the Chairman Emeritus of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). His local and global work on maternal and child health spreads across four decades, beginning with the setting up of a breastfeeding group under the Consumers Association of Penang in 1973 and attending the 1st United Nations Conference on Women that was held in Mexico in 1975, where he advocated for the promotion of breastfeeding and protection of both mother and child rights. He played a key role in the founding of two of the world's largest global movements which work to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and improve maternal and child health, including the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) in 1979, and the World Alliance of Breastfeeding Action (WABA) in 1991. The work of IBFAN directly contributed towards the development of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. WABA cooperates closely with WHO and UNICEF in the implementation of World Breastfeeding Week, and in promoting the WHO-UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

His work in the consumer movement, particularly during his tenure as President of the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU) from 1978 till 1984, ensured that the issue of appropriate infant feeding practices was made a matter of global concern that required urgent action. He was also the initiator of several international commemorative events, including World Consumer Rights Day (March 15th) and World Breastfeeding Week (August 1st to 7th), which helped to raise the profile of the importance of infant feeding and health amongst the public. Dato' Dr. Anwar has also served on the UN Advisory Committee on Nutrition.

In 1982, Dato' Dr. Anwar was conferred *The Right Livelihood Award* for his work in promoting and protecting public interest. His contributions towards reducing child mortality have been significant in ensuring the health and well-being of all future generations. He continues to be a great source of inspiration for the progress of all people across the world, and is especially enabled to continue this work in his current role as Advisor of the University-Community Engagement Programme of Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang.

And now, it is my pleasure to invite Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr. Anwar Fazal, Chairman Emeritus of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) to receive this award.