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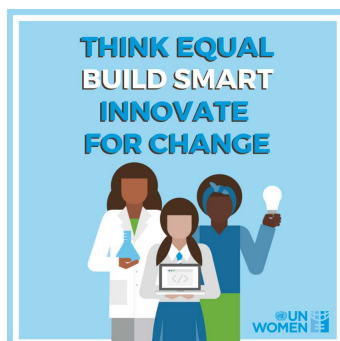
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WABA Statement for International Women's Day 2019

Breastfeeding teamwork is smart, innovative and leads to equality



Although breastfeeding is traditionally considered to be in the mother's domain, when fathers, partners, families, and society support her, breastfeeding rates increase. Breastfeeding is teamwork. Empowering both women and men as equal parents also enables breastfeeding.



The theme of the International Women's Day 2019 "[Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change](#)" draws attention to the [63rd session of the CSW](#), prioritising social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.



Empowering Parents Campaign

[The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action \(WABA\)](#) through its [Empowering Parents Campaign \(EPC\)](#) advocates for innovative approaches such as breastfeeding teamwork and the expansion of parental social protection policies to cover both formal and informal work sectors in order to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

On this International Women's Day, WABA highlights that breastfeeding is an integral part of care work that benefits children, women, families, and societies at large. The UN Women's SDG [fact sheet](#) reports that women do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do. Balancing the unpaid care and domestic work is integral to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Scaling up optimal breastfeeding could prevent more than 823 000 child and 20 000 maternal deaths each year.



To achieve optimal breastfeeding, we need to address the needs of the woman and child and her support systems across the [continuum of care during the first 1000 days](#), from pregnancy to the child's second birthday.

[Research](#) has shown that when antenatal preparation targets couples compared to women only, breastfeeding rates increase. It results in many other benefits such as improved attitudes and knowledge about breastfeeding, less use of infant formula, more domestic and care support from the father of the child, and greater satisfaction overall.

Lack of support for parents at work is one of the main barriers to optimal breastfeeding. Gender-equitable parental social protection in all its forms (parental, maternity, paternity or family leave) can help create the enabling environment for breastfeeding in the context of work.



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2019

The [World Breastfeeding Week \(WBW\) 2019](#) slogan "Empower parents, Enable breastfeeding" serves as a platform to call for gender-equitable social norms, such as teamwork between parents for successful breastfeeding and balancing of paid and unpaid care work.

We call upon governments, trade unions, employers and civil society organisations to advocate for and implement innovative and smart solutions that lead to gender equality and improved breastfeeding rates. Enacting paid family leave and family-friendly workplace policies according to the minimum global standards outlined by the [International Labor Organization \(ILO\)](#) is a good way to start.

For more information, contact:

Revathi, revathi@waba.org.my



The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Its core partners are International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLL), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM). WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA is incorporated in Malaysia as World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Bhd (847762-P), a non-profit company limited by guarantee.



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