



To create an enabling environment where men participate with women to support breastfeeding and care for infants and young children.

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### Editorial: Way Forward From WBC

The “World Breastfeeding Conference 2012” organized by IBFAN Asia from the 6th—9th December was one of the greatest leap forward in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding globally. Over 800 participants from 84 countries around the world witnessed new kinds of challenges as scores of speakers highlighted the importance of the breastfeeding during the deliberations. It brought many people together from all races, from so many countries, of so many special personalities and so many new issues were raised. The global movements of WABA and IBFAN built new solidarity for achieving common missions and the most important was that ‘women should be empowered in all regions for nations to walk the talk, and build up programs that will touch lives and make a difference. WABA MI e-newsletter by virtue of the importance of the issues treated during the conference, is publishing a special edition with relevant content for its readers, wherever they are on the globe. The Coordinator of WABA Men’s Initiative, Editor-in-chief of your e-newsletter and the entire team would like to use this opportunity to extend to all your families and you, Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2013. The next proposed venue will be WBC in 2016 in Africa.



### WABA Chairperson Emeritus, Prof. Anwar Fazal Speaks on the need to promote breastfeeding at WBC 2012



**Prof. Anwar Fazal, “WABA Chairperson Emeritus”** has reiterated the importance of breastfeeding to ensure the health of mothers and the babies. He was speaking at the “World Breastfeeding Conference” in New Delhi, India held from 6th – 9th December 2012. He observed that though India hosted the conference, it ranked 31 on the list of 51 countries in the report

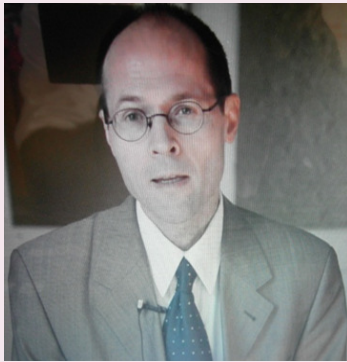
#### Prof. Anwar Fazal

released by the “International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)” and this is critical. *Anwar Fazal* added that If we take care of mothers, we are taking care of the future. Mothers should benefit from services and empowerment, to be able to demand the things that they are entitled to, because when we are investing in maternal health, we are not disinvesting, but we are investing in the future. We invest because mothers give us the new generation and it is the future that is at stake when we talk about maternal health. *Prof. Fazal* described Breastfeeding as a human right because it has certain elements which are so critical for the baby. The breasts are designed according to the needs of the infant and cannot be replicated in any form. If we deprive babies of breast milk, we are depriving them of medicine of a kind that we cannot deliver otherwise. We are depriving them of nutrition which we can never deliver; we are depriving them of their own contribution to the sustainability of the world because this is natural, ecological and free of cost. A baby’s refusal to the breast milk will add to the destruction of the environment, because parents will choose infant formula, and with this we destroy our forests, we burn things and we put plastic bottles first in our choice. This is how the babies contribute to the protection of environment and help save our environment. On the other hand, babies contribute to the sustainability of the family by saving parents money to buy unnecessary things. Breastfeeding is a powerful concept too. The fifth advantage of breastfeeding, *Prof. Anwar Fazal* described as the all five, the “*Panchaseela*” of breastfeeding, a human right based on five principals, related to love and bonding that comes with the touch, the touch of a special kind and the eyes that make contact between the mother and child. These are things that are so special as human rights. Above all, the mother and child begin as one before they go into the separation at birth. So, the “*Panchaseela*” of breastfeeding is in these five very powerful things that form the basis of why breastfeeding is a human right, because without it we are destroying economy, destroying ecology, and destroying the health of the baby.

By **James Achanyi-Fontem**

## UN chief urges govts. to move beyond campaigns

**Prof. Olivier de Schutter, United Nation special Rapporteur for “Right to Food” handed a list of recommendations to governments as to how to improve food security & promote the vital food at all levels during the “World Breastfeeding Conference” in Delhi, India from the 6th – 9th December, 2012.**



**Prof. Olivier de Schutter**

Though not present in Delhi, he sent a message from New York, which lauded the work of the “International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia” that was instrumental in organizing the event. He called on governments to copy the good example of Vietnam, where on the 18th June 2012, the National Assembly approved the extension of paid maternity leave from 4 months to 6 months. On 24th June, it voted to ban the advertising of Breast Milk Substitutes for infants from 6 to 24 months, aligning the country more closely with the 1981 International Code on Breastmilk Substitutes on the marketing of breastmilk substitute and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions. Prof. Olivier De Schutter added that, exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued breastfeeding until the second birthday of the child, is very important for governments to move beyond promotional campaigns and education. Promotional Campaigns and education are extremely important, that they are necessary and useful. Education about nutrition and the benefits of breastfeeding in schools should be supported, while the media should be sending the right messages to communities. He regretted that there is relatively a low number of countries that are serious about the enforcing the International Code on the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitute. In his words, the statistics of World Health Organization in December 2011, show that, out of a total of 165 states, 103 states had some regulatory measure in place, 37 States relied only on the voluntary commitments of the infant formula manufacturers and 25 States had taken no action. More worrying is the fact that out of the 103 States which adopted legislative instruments in order to implement the International Code on the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitute, only a bit less than 50% of the countries have provisions on enforcement and only 37 States has the World Health Organization considered serious enforcement of these provisions. With this, the UN Special Rapporteur on the “Right to Food” said, governments should ensure that the mothers are given the right message and that the efforts of government to promote breastfeeding are not nullified and made fruitless by the selling of infant formula by the manufacturers. The International Code of 1981 as far as breastfeeding promotion is concerned is absolutely vital, but not enough, Prof. Schutter said. Governments must also ensure that the employers facilitate breastfeeding, by having childcare facilities in the work place. Maternity leaves allow women not to have to choose between remaining in employment and providing adequate breastfeeding to the child, he emphasised.

This should also be true for public work programmes because the important part of social protection measures is often forgotten in developing countries. Another phase for action for supporting breastfeeding is by strengthening women’s rights and women’s education. There was a very impressive study published in 2000 by Smith & Haddad showing that based on a cross country study, covering 25 years from 1970 to 1995 Smith & Haddad showed that 43% of the reduction of hunger in developing countries during those 25 years were attributable to improved women’s education. This is almost as much as the increase in food availability which stands at 26% and the improvements in health services at 19% together. Infact if we put 12% of the improvement to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition during this period attributable to better life expectations for women, the conclusion is that 55% of the gains against hunger, malnutrition during this period were attributable to women’s education or a longer life expectancy for women. This leads us to recognize the importance of adequate care of the children during the first few years of life in order to have adequate nutritional and health outcomes. UNICEF in particular has proven and demonstrated that food intake alone would not ensure adequate health & nutritional outcomes if not combined with adequate care, combined with adequate access to water, sanitation services and health services. All these together ensures that young children develop well physically and mentally and that the mortality of the children under five is reduced. Better education for girls and women is absolutely vital to achieve this. Today, better education for women and girls means more economic opportunities and more chances of employment outside the household. The effects of income are such that the child ultimately benefits & women who are economically more active and independent can make better use of their time and can make the right choices; for example, to visit health facilities and to have the child adequately taken care of. To promote breastfeeding better and more effectively, we must build on breastfeeding as a human right both for the women and for the infant. This imposes certain obligations on governments particularly to adapt the world of employment to the need to support breastfeeding and to seriously implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.



**IBFAN Africa during WBC 2012**

## Indian Government Supports UN Vision At WBC 2012



In support of the UN vision, the President of India, His Excellency, Shri Pranab Mukherjee sent a congratulatory message to the organizers of the World Breastfeeding Conference. Considering that New Delhi was honoured as host, he extended wishes of success during the deliberations. Mrs. Sheila Dikshit, the Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, on her part said, that the Global Breastfeeding Initiative for Child Survival, GBIGS, organizing the World Breastfeeding Conference, WBC, under the theme “Babies need mom-made, Not man-made” was very relevant, especially as over 1.000 delegates from all regions of the world were in Delhi to contribute and exchange their experiences. The Chief Minister of Gujrat, Narendra Modi, on his part said, while India is fighting malnutrition, the age-old tradition of breastfeeding is a blessing in disguise. Breastfeeding the very natural source of nutrition for newborn provides anti-bodies which help to establish the baby’s immune system. It also provides digestive nutrients essential for healthy growth. It was an opportunity to pledge support for every breastfeeding mother in the world. Minister Omar Abdullah, Minister of Jammu and Kashmir said, the nature of the theme was timely. He observed that the nature of the family is changing and the change is impacting the relationship between the mother and the child with breastfeeding as an important structural element. He added that feeding the baby through any other method different from the breast is artificial. Artificial feeding impacts on the baby negatively health-wise, physically and psychologically. Minister Oomen Chandy of Kerala, added his voice by saying that the dawn of modern day health care remedies and life style has influenced artificial feeding to suppress breastfeeding. With this situation, we have to highlight the nutritious and healthy nature of mother’s milk. Breastmilk substitutes trigger impairment in children and we should fight against it. The world breastfeeding conference aimed at popularizing the significance of infant feeding globally. H.E. Manohar Parrikar of Goa called on participants to take up issues related to policy gaps if change has to be achieved in the struggle for child survival and especially to support



women to improve on child health and nutrition. India has a ministry for health and family welfare and another ministry for women and child development.

## Breastfeeding Gets Into Worldwide Development Agenda

By James Achanyi-Fontem,  
Email: camlink99@gmail.com

“ Babies Need Mom Made Not Man Made” was echoed in over 100 presentations in four busy working days by facilitators and over 800 participants from 84 countries. We point out in this special edition of WABA Men’s e-newsletter, some of the strong statements presented by Dr. Arun Gupta, who highlighted the advantages of breastmilk in a paper, saying that junk food causes girls to hit puberty at the age of 6 years. Bananas may soon become a critical food source for millions of people and replace potatoes as a staple diet due to climate change according to recent research and publications. Healthy diet can prevent second heart attack because this has been seen as powerful as pills and healthy life is what mothers and their babies deserve. Breastfeeding can save 22% of new born babies, especially as the first 1.000 days shape the health life of the baby.

### Breastfeeding Icons’ Legacy

*Prof. Anwar Fazal* presented past icons of breastfeeding promotion and what they all left behind as a memorial legacy. Dr. Nicholas Alipui, the UNICEF Director of Programmes in New York presented a paper which revealed that breastfeeding is on the development agenda worldwide, as he highlighted the successes, challenges and way forward. Dr. Alipui said, what is hampering progress is the lack of a common agenda with a shared vision of change and the orphan issue is not grounded in a cohesive advocacy with the communities. The industries act as counter forces. The bottleneck at programme level is the under-estimation and inadequate recognition of impact, the absence of effective, comprehensive approaches at scale, interventions are not optimally implemented, slow and non-tangible behaviour change, while HIV and infant feeding makes issues more complex and confusing.

### Opportunities for Scaling Up

Some of the opportunities are the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) action with focus on a promise renewed, quality of education/learning link to Nutrition, early Childhood Development, greater focus on gender equality and support to national movements for the expansion of health campaigns to involve community workers. UNICEF has produced a good number of IYCF tools and reviews to facilitate achievement of goals within communities and health facilities. Another strong intervention was made on how to enhance breastfeeding rates globally by Dr Francesco Branca, Director of Nutrition for health development department at the World Health Organisation head quarters. It was made known that on the 26th May 2012 at the WHA, Member States committed to tackle global nutrition challenges. The six nutrition targets agreed on include reduction of childhood stunting by 40%, reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age by 50%, reduction of Low Birth Weight by 30%, 0% increase in childhood overweight, increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in the first 6 months up to 50% and reduction and maintaining childhood wasting to less than 5%.

## Adventist Hospital Keeps BFHI Standard High in Malaysia

By Naweed A. Harooni, WABA

The Adventist Hospital in Penang, Malaysia certified as the only Baby Friendly Hospital in Private Sector in Penang since 2005 has been described as health facility with a difference because it respects the 10 conditions for successful breastfeeding and encourages breastfeeding at all times, from pregnancy to post-natal counseling while discouraging the use of formula. The initiative to convert the Adventist Hospital into a baby friendly health facility was through the efforts of Dr. Pong of Paediatrics department. He asserted senior staff



of the hospital, who made the proposal to be evaluated in achieving the gold standard. This led the Malaysian Ministry of Health to certify the hospital as baby friendly in 2005. A second evaluation was conducted In 2008 and it maintained the gold standard till date. Naweed of WABA Secretariat who reported this story commented that, though a private hospital, its efforts should be emulated by other public and private health sector facilities. The Adventist Hospital is making a healthier difference in the lives of 'would be parents' and their babies. Talking to Dr. Pong, he observed that 'ante natal' courses are organised for 'would be parents' regularly, The training provides useful information to mothers and multimedia systems are used for coaching and this prepares them mentally. "Action folders" on the baby friendly way are printed and distributed to mothers. The babies are placed on the chest of mothers within 5 minutes after birth and breastfeeding starts within the first hour as recommended. The mother and baby stay together to encourage attachment. To achieve the standards, nurses and midwives are interchanged regularly and given extensive trainings on 'lactation management' and relevant areas of infant and young child feeding. The hospital management has installed a state-of -the-art security system in the hospital to ensure that the mothers and babies remain safe throughout their stay in the facility. WABA outreach information to mothers is said to have contributed a lot to the achievements of gold standard at the Adventist Hospital in Penang, Malaysia.

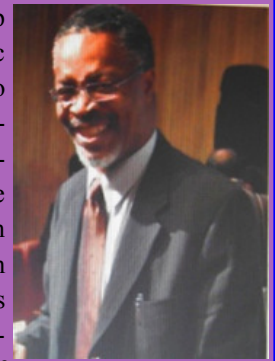
## COL Pledges To Scale Up Radio Story Design Programmming In Cameroon

The Commonwealth of Learning has pledged to contribute for scaling up radio story design programming on breastfeeding in Cameroon from January 2013. This is the first achievement by Cameroon Link after attending the World Breastfeeding Conference in New Delhi, India from the 6th—9th December, 2012.

The contribution agreement was signed on the 18th December 2012 between the Commonwealth of Learning and Cameroon Link. The initiative aims at using the open distance learning module to educate mothers in rural areas through the use of community radio stations in two of Cameroon's ten regions.

## The Breastfeeding: Child Survival Tool... says Nicholas Alipui, Dir. Programs, UNICEF HQ

Mom made milk is the first step for child survival and a basic right of every child. We need to mainstream breastfeeding promotion to understand the urgency and seriousness of the issue. India has already begun to make its impact in this area in terms of reducing the numbers of children who are not exclusively breast fed. In terms of reducing stunting, to reduce the impact of non communicable diseases. It will become a role model for the rest of the developing world to follow, so we are energized and enthusiastic about the progress India is making recognizing that there is lot to be done.



## Battle to reduce the rate of children which are not breastfed...



Francesco Branca, Director, Nutrition, WHO HQ

"A battle to reduce the rate of children not breastfed is absolutely crucial. Breastfeeding is the best way a child should be fed, it's the right of the child. BF is

going to save so many lives in the world. India is a leading country in breastfeeding movement. Looking at the activism shown and number of people who have joined us, certainly India can do more in terms of exclusive breastfeeding. This conference will highlight issues related to the maternal health, post partum maternal care and some structural aspects which need to be taken into account."

# COME JOIN THE FIGHT

6th—9th December, 2012.  
New Delhi, India.

Early Bird Registration Date Extended Till 30th June



Men, Fathers, Grandfathers and everyone - Come join us and get your updates on WABA's Men's Initiatives at <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/mensinitiative/publications.htm> and do check out on the Men's Initiatives current global info on fatherhood, and men's support for breastfeeding and more from Cameroon - <http://camlinknews.blogspot.com/2009/07/mens-initiative.html>

## PCF7 Holds In Abuja, Nigeria from 2 - 6 December, 2013

COL's Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7) holds in Abuja, Nigeria from 2 - 6 December 2013. It will be co-hosted by the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is the lead partner institution. The theme of PCF7 is "Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation" and sub-themes announced include: Girls' and Women's Education, Skills Development, Promoting OER, Innovation and Technology, with Institutional Development Established in 1988, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) was inspired by the vision that the peoples of the Commonwealth must and can have access to knowledge, regardless of where they live and whether they are rich or poor. Member governments have given COL a mandate to encourage the development and sharing of open and distance learning knowledge, materials, expertise, technologies and other resources. Working with, and providing services to hundreds of institutions throughout the 54-member Commonwealth, COL is helping to increase the capacities of developing nations to meet the demands for improving access to quality education and training. COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held bi-annually. It is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth each time. The five-day programme is designed to explore applications of open and distance learning in widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations at large. The Forum's focus is on topics relating to developing countries and participation of practitioners from these countries. COL's Excellence in Distance Education Awards are also presented at the Forum. The Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6) took place from 24 - 28 November 2010 at Le Méridien Cochin Resort & Convention Centre (Kochin, Kerala), India, in partnership with India's Indira Gandhi National Open University. Theme: "Access & Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives." The Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF5) was held in London, from 13-17 July 2008, hosted in collaboration with the University of London. Over 700 educators from more than 70 countries explored how open and distance learning can help achieve international development goals and education for all. The Commonwealth of Learning held the First Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Brunei Darussalam, followed by the Second Forum in 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The Third Pan-Commonwealth Forum was held 4-8 July 2004 in Dunedin, New Zealand, and PCF4 was held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica from 30 October - 3 November 2006. COL is very supportive to maternal and child protection initiative within its healthy community initiative. The current circle covers the period 2012- 2015. For more information, visit the following link - <http://.col.org>

## “Breastfeeding has become everybody’s problem but no body’s responsibility”... says Dr. Nicholas K. Alipui, Director of UNICEF Programmes

Dr. Nicholas K. Alipui, presented a paper at WBC 2012 on the importance and necessity of breastfeeding, based on the “Global under five mortality burden report”. Dr. Alipui echoed the fact that a large proportion of deaths in just few countries represent nearly 80% of the total burden. These countries, he said are Nigeria, India, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan and China. He cautioned that through synergy with other infectious diseases “under nutrition” is implicated in more than one third of child deaths.



With this, he advised that

five things need to be done to reverse the situation:

- A. Mothers need support both at family level and at professional level.
- B. We have to energize and re-energize the breastfeeding promotion efforts, building knowledge, creating social change and causing a movement.
- C. We have to protect breastfeeding from commercial influence of marketing that glamorizes and passes subliminal messages that in effect cause mothers to feel that by not feeding their children infant formula they are not doing the best for their children which paradoxically is not right.
- D. We need to enforce and implement policies at government level.
- E. He affirmed that breastfeeding can make an impact on child survival and development, because it contributes in 13 to 15 % reduction in ‘under-five mortality’ rate.



## The 2012 World Breastfeeding Conference Declaration and Call to Action

Almost 7 million children under five years of age die globally every year, largely from preventable causes. Of these, two thirds die before they reach their first birthday, most from pneumonia, diarrhea and new-born infections. One third of all under five deaths are related to malnutrition. Breastfeeding is not a 'lifestyle choice' but a public health imperative. There is no food more locally produced, affordable and sustainable than breastmilk. Artificial feeding increases the risk of not only childhood infections, but also of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and cancers. But two out of three babies – or 92 million babies of 136 million born - are either artificially or mixed fed. Initiating breastfeeding within the first hour of birth can reduce neonatal mortality by 20%, but shockingly, more than half the world's new-borns are not breastfed within first hour of birth. Globally less than 40% of infants under six months are exclusively breastfed. Infants need continued breastfeeding along with adequate amounts of complementary foods after they are six months old.

Yet, only one in two children continues breastfeeding until the age of two. Breastfeeding has enormous benefits for maternal health, and is an important factor in child spacing for the millions of women who have no access to modern forms of contraception.

**Optimal breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding rates are low because:**

- ❑ Women lack support to breastfeed.
- ❑ Baby food and feeding products industries continue to mislead and market products aggressively.
- ❑ The commercial, for-profit sector and their front organizations are unduly influencing national and international decision-making processes, policies and programmes.
- ❑ Glaring gaps exist in policy and programmes as documented by the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi).
- ❑ Ready to use or processed fortified foods are being pushed to replace appropriate family foods after six months.

Over the last four decades, the global community has failed to achieve its commitments to improve people's health. The Alma Ata Declaration of Health for All by the Year 2000 has not been realized. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, endorsed by all but two countries of the world, has not yet been fulfilled.

**The Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty, maternal and child mortality significantly by 2015 are largely unmet. On the 9th December, 2012 at the first World Breastfeeding Conference 2012, the participants from 84 countries coming from diverse groups including governments, breastfeeding organisations, health providers, peoples organisations and movements, international NGOs and individuals - are all concerned at the continuing inequality in health and nutrition and the subjugation of these concerns to the business objectives of corporations.**

Participants recognize that protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child feeding is a human right and should be entrenched in policy and programmes.

Participants call upon all concerned to take the following actions:

1. Adopt a human right based approach to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding at international, national and community levels.
2. Monitor and track the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding in every country using World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)
3. Ensure adequate human and financial resources with clear budget lines for policies and programmes to enhance optimal breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices.
4. Protect breastfeeding from commercial sector, by strictly enforcing the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent related World Health Assembly Resolutions by prohibiting all kinds of promotion of commercial foods for children up to at least two years.
5. Establish institutional mechanisms to avoid and manage conflicts of interest in health and nutrition decision-making and programme implementation.
6. Support all women with a comprehensive system of maternity protection including its financing.
7. Ensure appropriate and adequate education and training of all health care professionals and allied health and community workers both pre-service and in-service and at all levels.
8. Revitalise the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative including support for women in maternal and neonatal programmes with due attention to low birth weight babies.
9. Provide skilled breastfeeding counsellors trained in health facilities and in the community for all mothers throughout the reproductive continuum.
10. Promote the use of affordable and diverse, locally grown foods for timely and appropriate complementary feeding after six months along with continued breastfeeding.
11. Publicise widely the multiple risks of artificial feeding.

Done in New Delhi, India on the 9th December, 2012

## THE FIGHT BEGINS TO PROTECT EVERY BREASTFEEDING MOTHER

The four day World Breastfeeding Conference began on 6th Dec 2012 at the India Habitat Center (IHC). The event was inaugurated by the Union Minister of External Affairs, Sh. Salman Khurshid and Union Minister of State (I/C) of Women and Child Development, Smt. Krishna Tirath. The Ministers formally released the report by International Baby Food Action Network, titled, 'Are Our Babies Falling Through the Gaps: The State of Policies and Programme Implementation of the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding in 51 Countries.'

The World Breastfeeding Conference 2012 is aimed at promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding and to assert the resolution of World Health Assembly (2010), which calls for specific action to enhance breastfeeding practices and to end appropriate promotion of baby foods for infants and young children. More than 80 countries are participating in this conference. Speaking at the event, Mr. Khurshid said that this is an issue on which even the most contentious societies that disagree on many other things, will not disagree. Smt. Krishna Tirath too talked about the need for 'all of us to act and set the stage for change.' The World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi), a web based tool from IBFAN has the job of tracking the performance of countries who are a part of this movement and ranking them accordingly on a scale of 10. The host nation India, ranks 31st among the 51 countries. Smt. Tirath said that the Government of India is expanding the reach of its newly launched maternity protection scheme to cover the entire country so that poor women can be provided with cash benefits. During the conference some gaps were discussed which were found in almost all the countries. Some of them are; Weak implementation of international code of marketing of breast milk substitutes and the baby food industry is exploiting this to their full potential, women in the unorganized and informal sector are neglected on maternity protection. Dr. Arun Gupta, Regional Coordinator of IBFAN Asia said, 'the baby food industry or its front organizations supported or floated by them should be considered as a part of the industry and partnerships with them are a fundamentally flawed concept. The World Health Organization (WHO) is one of the co-sponsors of the event. 'A wealth of knowledge and guidance exists to tackle the many forms of malnutrition, like the improvement of exclusive breastfeeding practices, adequate and timely complimentary feeding and continued breastfeeding for up to two years or beyond. This can save the lives of 1.5 million children aged under five, every year.'



### "A little more can change a lot more"

by: James Achanyi-Fontem

When we talk about status of "Gender" in any country/region we need to begin right from the time one appears on the earth or you can say the very moment "sex" of a new born is divulged. Indian society like any other conservative society has been very slow in accepting changes. It had only preferred boy child or 'son' when a baby is being expected. Reasons varied from person to person and culture to culture viz. security issues of a girl child, hesitation in spending on her education thinking that she has to get married early, worries of collecting sufficient valuables for her dowry, consideration of such rites which only a son is supposed to perform e.g at the time of funeral of parents, worry for discontinuation of previous generation and many other factors; whatsoever the reasons were but the gist is that birth of boy child gave happiness while girl brought sorrow. However, scenario is changing now; present generation is emerging as a sensitized one. They focus on just a child, be it a girl or boy, most of the parents believe to give a happy and affluent life to the one they are bringing in this world. Yet it's not necessary that everyone has the same mindset of being unbiased between the two. Factors like 'rise in cost of living' are making it difficult for parents to bear expenditures of two children. Therefore they are opting for one child, either a girl or boy. It has nothing to do with gender equality but economics. Instances are, where well-off / educated parents opt for sex determination test despite of its legal prohibition, while not well-off/uneducated do not mind any number of births as each child contributes to the income of family. Their children do not study and are occupied in some kind of labour as soon as they cross 10 years of age, which is again against the law. In terms of changing mindset I can only say with confidence that only 40% of well-off/educated parents welcome the child birth without any disparity of their sex.

Now comes upbringing. A girl child who earlier had to face discrimination in getting equal share of food and other domestic facilities do not have to undergo such pains now. Parents who can afford education of their children want both girl and boy to have better education. While, 'not well-off' parents don't seem to be keen in educating either of the child as they don't want children to waste time in studying while they can earn. On the other hand Government is working very hard to provide access to education for every child with especial focus on girl child. This might seem contrary as the sex-determination at birth is quite prevalent but there's not much discrimination in educating children. This may be because present generation is open enough to accept the will of God than the older generation who cried over birth of girl child throughout their life. In present scenario a change has occurred regarding the age difference between spouses also. Earlier, younger girls were married with older males (widower) to avoid the demand of dowry. But due to bad impact of this trend on girls' health such practices seem to be diminishing. However, dowry system is still extremely prevalent as it was before. Still the Governments are unable to eradicate this system despite several Acts. Girls still become victim of crime due to the evil practice of dowry. Though, highly educated class do not find anything exciting in this system and avoid demanding money from bride's family but it is wondering that the percentage of this class is very minimal. So, I can say that status of girls with respect to dowry is challenging and it might require self-sensitization and determination to bring a change.

## SWAZILAND: Child Marriages Banned

The practice of men marrying underage girls - which has been an accepted social norm for centuries has been linked in recent years to the spread of HIV - was recently declared illegal in Swaziland. Known in SiSwati as 'kwendizisa', the marriage of an adult man to an underage girl was considered a legal "grey area" prior to the promulgation of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2012. According to the 2005 Swaziland constitution, some customary practices are allowed unless they conflict with constitutional clauses. "Swazi men marrying girls once the girls enter puberty is not a customary law. It is not mandatory. It is tolerated because it has always been done. But times are changing, and Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the world. This practice has added to the spread of HIV. It is a great victory for public health and for the rights of girl children that this outmoded practice must now end," AIDS activist Sandra Kunene told IRIN/PlusNews. Married adolescents are at greater risk of HIV infection because many of them are in polygamous unions, face sexual violence or are unable to negotiate safe sex. The girls also tend to have little contact with their peers, restricted social mobility, low levels of education and limited access to media and health messages.

### Enforcing the new law

Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Themba Masuku announced the government's intention to enforce the Child Protection and Welfare Act by prosecuting men who marry underage girls. Sexual activity with underage girls was previously prosecuted as statutory rape - but only if it occurred outside the boundary of marriage. Girls aged 15 and older were legally permitted to marry in accordance with the 1920 Girl's Protection Act, and underage sexual activity within marriage was considered acceptable. Today, perpetrators face statutory rape charges, and they are additionally fined R20,000 (\$2,400) by the child welfare law. The new law also penalizes parents and guardians who collude with adult men to orchestrate a child marriage. Offenders face prison terms of up to 20 years.

At a press conference, Masuku described the marriage of girls under the age of consent as "child abuse" and said the fine should be raised to R 1 0 0 , 0 0 0 (\$12,000). "This would send a message," Masuku said. The WBC 2012 show-cased a good number of actions in the context of behavior change communication with African communities. **IRIN/PlusNews.**



## WABA MWG Core Group Members

The Global Initiative for Father Support (GIFS) was launched at the Global Forum II, Arusha Tanzania, 2002 to support Fathers of breastfeeding children. In October 2006, in Penang, Malaysia, the WABA Men's Initiative was born.

### WABA MWG Core Group Members

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Per Gunnar Engblom, Sweden  
Ray Maseko, Swaziland  
Qamar Naseem, Pakistan  
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**The Men's Initiative Newsletter is designed to share news, plans and actions of men's/young father's involvement and roles in the breastfeeding movement, mother support, gender justice and other areas of interest. If you are a father supporting breastfeeding, or know of someone working with a father support group, send us a report of your activities.**

The views expressed in the articles, supplements and inserts, do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of WABA or its Core Partners.

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), Wellstart International 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, PO Box 1200, 10850 Penang, Malaysia  
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