

WABA Press Release



World Alliance for
Breastfeeding Action

Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014 LAUNCHED!

WABA announces the launch of the global report, Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014, which focuses on the 10th Anniversary of the FAO Right to Food Guidelines

Oct 8, 2014 - Ten years ago, in November 2004, the FAO Council adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (known as the 'Right to Food Guidelines'). As a contribution to the 10th anniversary of the Guidelines, the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014 report is dedicated to celebrating and critically assessing 'Ten Years of the Right to Food Guidelines: Gains, Challenges and Concerns'.

WABA is a member of the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition. The Global Network, together with other civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements, has seized this anniversary as an opportunity for stocktaking and, more importantly, to call for renewed commitment by governments, UN agencies, civil society and other stakeholders, for the full realisation of the right to adequate food and nutrition.

“As an alliance of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide, WABA asserts that breastfeeding has a vital role in making food security a reality for millions of babies born every year. Breastfeeding has been shown repeatedly to be the single most effective way to prevent infant death. It plays a major role in children’s nutrition, health and development, and significantly benefits the health of mothers” notes Jay Sharma, WABA Executive Director. **“While included in the Voluntary Right to Food Guidelines, current statistics show that breastfeeding rates are abysmally low across the globe due to a confluence of factors including aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes, and lack of political will and a reluctance to make resources available by governments”** adds Sharma.

This dire scenario becomes even more critical when countries are ravaged by emergencies and disasters, whether natural or man-made, as has been the case in recent times. WABA's

representative to the WATCH Consortium board, Dr Marcos Arana, in his co-written article for WATCH 2014 argues that, **“Disasters are not exceptional situations in which states are exempt from their responsibilities with regard to the right to adequate food and nutrition. On the contrary, their responsibilities to respect, protect and fulfill this right have to be more strictly observed, both when addressing the urgent and immediate needs of the affected populations as well as when foreseeing the long-term impact of disasters”**.

In the article entitled ‘Restoring Self-reliance through Local Knowledge after Disasters: Lessons for Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding and from Small-holder Farmer Solidarity’, Dr Arana states that the tendency to handover the implementation of relief operations to private corporations has been justified by some governments that argue for reducing relief operations cost and the promise of higher efficiency and technical effectiveness: **“During emergencies, support for exclusive and continued breastfeeding is absolutely critical for the health and lives of infants and young children. Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months accompanied by continued lactation and adequate complementary feeding is crucial for preventing infant deaths and malnutrition. Failure to breastfeed significantly increases the risk of diseases because the lack of clean water and infrastructure make it difficult to ensure safe and efficient preparation of baby food without adequate refrigeration and clean boiled water, which compound the already unstable access to infant formula in times of crises. Also during emergencies, it is critical to support and invest immediately in smallholder farmer recovery to re-build a base for local and national self-determination, and food and nutrition sovereignty”**.

Dr Arana also states corporate control of aid programs has facilitated the indiscriminate distribution of breast-milk substitutes by corporations and other actors, including governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). **“Donations and untargeted distribution of breast-milk substitutes and ready-to-use foods (RUFs), together with the distribution of globally marketed seed varieties, create dependence, discourage breastfeeding by interfering with women’s options to decide the best manner in which to feed their children, erode local food culture, and undermine food sovereignty”**, he contends. **“In the process towards the restoration of self-reliance following crisis situations, women’s knowledge concerning infant and young child feeding must be at the centre as it is precisely this local knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation enabling communities to feed themselves, and supporting women’s independence and empowerment”** concludes Arana.

The contributions in the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014 reveal, among others, that: Efforts towards the realisation of the right to food are undermined by the lack of a holistic approach, which would require a greater focus on access to, and control over food production resources, as well as providing direct links for those defending worker’s rights for the urban poor, nutritional-well being and the rights of future generations, within the food sovereignty framework.

WABA is a member of the Watch Consortium and the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition, which are closely linked since the majority of their members participate in both. This synergy ensures that the Watch is the most prominent monitoring tool of the Global Network. Members of both platforms hope that the initiatives and issues presented in this 2014 edition of the Watch will enrich readers’ understanding of the progress, limitations and challenges that lie ahead with regard to the progressive realisation of the right to food and adequate nutrition. Together we will continue to fight for sustainable and human rights-based alternatives for improved systems where all people will enjoy all human rights – including the right to adequate food and nutrition.

Notes:

Dr Marcos Arana Cedeño is member of IBFAN and WABA. He is Director of the Training and Education Centre of Ecology and Health for Peasants (CCESC) in Chiapas, Mexico; researcher of the National Institute of Nutrition and Medical Sciences of Mexico; and Co-Founder of aliMente project.

See Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014 [Press Release](#) in [WABA Advocacy section](#)

See [WATCH 2014 publication](#) in [WABA Advocacy section](#)

See WABA's World Breastfeeding Week 2009 Action Folder on Infant Feeding in Emergencies [here](#).



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals & organisations concerned with the protection, promotion & support of breastfeeding worldwide. WABA action is based on the Innocenti Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the Global Strategy for Infant & 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 & an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

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