



WABA World Environment Day 2020 Statement

Together we can act #ForNature



On this [Environment Day](#) it is time we all act for Nature. The concept of planetary health has been defined as 'the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends'.

The interconnected nature of people and the planet requires that we find sustainable solutions that benefit both. Sustainable development meets the needs of the current generation without compromising future generations. Breastfeeding impacts positively on maternal and child survival, health, wellbeing and the environment. Ongoing health emergencies such as COVID-19 pose challenges that affect infant feeding. The WABA [World Breastfeeding Week 2020 \(#WBW2020\)](#) [Action Folder](#) highlights the links between breastfeeding and planetary health.



Depletion and destruction of natural resources and an increase in the emission of major greenhouse gases (GHG) are at their highest levels for at least the past 800,000 years. Three ways to protect our planetary health are:

- 1. Increase efforts to revitalize and protect our earth's fragile ecosystems and conserve biodiversity.** Breastfeeding is ecological compared to formula feeding. Formula production implies dairy farming that often puts pressure on natural resources and contributes to [carbon emissions](#) and climate change. [Sustainable production](#) and consumption patterns will safeguard our natural resources, our environment and help mitigate climate change.

2. **Think about what we buy and use.** Breastfeeding provides a healthy, viable, non-polluting, non-resource intensive, sustainable and natural source of nutrition and sustenance. It also entails less energy when compared to formula production industries as it reduces the need for water, firewood and fossil fuels in the home. [Breastfeeding](#) safeguards infant health and nutrition in times of [emergencies](#) as well as climate and environment related disasters.
3. **Build and change to sustainable business models, practices and financing.** Several of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide guidance for specific actions to combat environmental degradation and the climate crisis. Breastfeeding is linked to all of these [SDGs](#) and is key to achieving sustainable development. Breastfeeding is one of the [best investments](#) for saving infant lives and improving the health, social and economic development of individuals and nations.



Every step taken across our life-cycle to mitigate environmental degradation and the climate crisis counts. The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has taught us that we are all affected and an immediate coordinated societal response is required. We can all do something to reduce our carbon footprint and ecological footprint starting with how we feed our babies. We can all work together creating a [warm chain of support](#) for breastfeeding and contribute towards planetary health. We need to see the whole of society as responsible and accountable for low breastfeeding rates, as one of several indicators, demonstrating whether we are orientated to planet health as well as human health. Together, we can achieve a win-win situation for humanity and the planet by taking the following actions:

- Align national and [international policies](#) and guidance on breastfeeding and Infant and Young Child Feeding with the SDG agenda and other [environment/climate initiatives](#).
- Raise awareness among decision-makers to recognise the [contribution of breastfeeding](#) to food security and environmental sustainability and the need to [invest](#).
- [Sensitise journalists and the media](#) to stimulate public debate on the links between breastfeeding and the environment/ climate change.
- Engage [school children, students, youth](#) and [social media influencers](#) to spread awareness of the importance of breastfeeding for planetary health.

**#breastfeeding #COP15 #COVID19 #UNEP #ForNature
#WorldEnvironmentDay #SDG**



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to 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. 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 coordinates the annual World Breastfeeding Week campaign.

www.waba.org.my

