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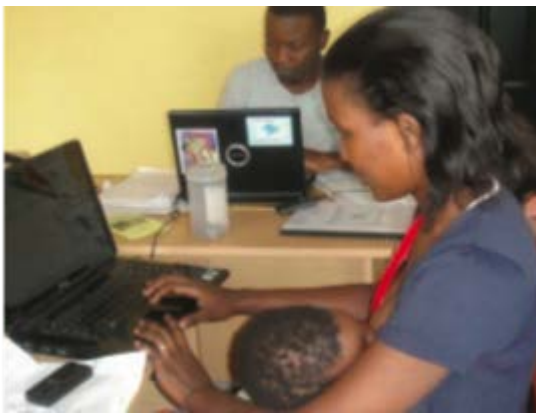
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WABA International  
Labour Day Message  
1 May 2025



World Alliance for  
Breastfeeding Action

## Maternity Protection is a Social Justice Imperative



Breastfeeding offers infants the best possible start in life, providing optimal nutrition and protection while delivering significant health benefits to both mothers and babies. Globally, **breastfeeding rates have been rising**, with exclusive breastfeeding reaching 48% in 2024—putting the world on

track to meet the WHA target of 50% by 2025. However, progress remains uneven: 29 countries have reported declining rates, underscoring the need for stronger policies and targeted interventions to ensure equitable improvements. There is also a need to sustain the improvements in countries that have reached the WHA target.

A major obstacle to breastfeeding is still a lack of adequate paid maternity/parental leave and workplace breastfeeding support. To meet the new global targets of **60% exclusive breastfeeding by 2030—and the more ambitious 70% goal** set by the Global Breastfeeding Collective (GBC)—greater political commitment and investment are urgently needed.

The **2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit's Four Smart Breastfeeding Commitments** call for at least 18 weeks, ideally 26 weeks of publicly funded, paid maternity leave, covering mothers in formal, informal, and self-employed work with breastfeeding-friendly workplace policies to support mothers upon their return to work. Despite these recommendations, to date only **44 countries have ratified ILO Convention C183**, leaving a significant protection gap globally.



Maternity protection is not just a health issue—it is a matter of social justice, ensuring vulnerable groups, like breastfeeding mothers, are safeguarded. This Labour Day, the **World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)** urges governments, employers, trade unions and non-governmental organisations to collaborate in expanding paid maternity/parental leave for all parents and implementing clear workplace breastfeeding policies. Only through collective action can we accelerate progress toward higher breastfeeding rates in every country and maintain the upward trajectory.



**Prioritise Breastfeeding**  
Create sustainable support systems  
WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2025

Join the **#WBW2025** campaign to prioritise breastfeeding by creating sustainable support systems!

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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](http://www.waba.org.my)

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