

# Asia is a victim; strong paradigm shift to healthy nutritional policies needed

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FOLLOWING the opening ceremony of the 10th One Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum yesterday at the Al-'Afiyah Hall of the Ministry of Health, a keynote speech was presented by the Co-Founder of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and World Alliance For Breastfeeding Action (WABA), Dato Anwar Fazal of Malaysia.

The presentation entitled 'Feeding the Future: Challenges and Opportunities' focused on the politics of breastfeeding.

Dato Anwar Fazal explained that the World Breastfeeding Charter describes 20 attributes of breastfeeding.

Living in a world that breeds violence, manipulation and waste, the Co-Founder of IBFAN highlighted that it has been estimated by the United Nations (UN) that there are various dangers to breastfeeding where some 3,000 to 4,000 babies die daily due to a lack of action to support mothers and children because of ignorance and neglect. This then requires a generation of health professionals, activists and progressive governments to get the UN to finally put in place a newer version and standard for infant and child feeding, as well as maternal support in which the International Labour Organisation is now participating.



Her Royal Highness Princess Hajah Masna listens to a keynote speech during the officiation ceremony for the 10th One Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum yesterday. – PHOTOS: BAHYIAH BAKIR



Co-Founder of International Baby Food Action Network and World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, Dato Anwar Fazal of Malaysia, discusses the challenges and opportunities for feeding the future

“But despite all the evidence that we have we’re still very low and we still need much more action, activity and vigorous commitment. We’ve got an international code, we’ve got subsequent resolutions, we’ve got a global strategy but we still continue to fail and are deficient in action,” stressed Dato Anwar Fazal.

“There is a huge need for a new surge forward to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and mothers against commercial malnutritions created by commercial interest that undermine health, specifically children’s health, through all kinds of unhealthy practices and unhealthy food.

“We know that one of the dramatic stories of this decade has been that there are now more people in the world suffering from obesity than those suffering from malnutrition and hunger, even among poor people.

“This is due to the way in which unhealthy food has become a big business, and sadly, Asia is one of the big victims.

“We therefore have to make very strong paradigm shifts to nutritional policies that are just healthy. We must move forward strongly and bravely,” Dato Anwar Fazal concluded.