

Putrajaya Call to Action *on* **Breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding**

One Asia Breastfeeding Partners' Forum – 11
2-5 November 2015 - Putrajaya, Malaysia



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The 11th One Asia Breastfeeding Partners' Forum brought together over 150 participants from 21 countries of Asia. The participants represented governments, civil society, professionals, breastfeeding organisations, health providers, peoples organisations and movements, international NGOs and individuals from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong SAR, Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Nepal, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, UK and Switzerland.

Theme of the Forum was **"Maternity Protection for all women at work"**. A 57 country report on status of maternity protection titled, "Labour Lost" was released at the Forum. The Forum was organized by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia, Malaysian country representative Breastfeeding Information Bureau (BIB) Malaysia with the technical support of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Family and Community Development Government of Malaysia.

The Forum 11 participants, having discussed the gaps in policies and programmes on maternity protection and infant and young child feeding;

Deeply concerned with the changing global economic and labour scenario, when more women are forced to work outside homes for economic reasons, and at the same time more than 800 million women workers or 41% still do not have adequate maternity protection, yet trade treaties like Trans-Pacific Partnership overrule health and wellbeing of women and children and put profits before health;

Alarmed that the women bear the brunt of globalized trade as exploited workers and consumers and this happens even as more than 90 years have elapsed after the adoption of the first ILO convention on maternity protection in 1919;

Deeply concerned at the report on the status of the maternity protection in 57 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Arab World revealing poor implementation of policies and programmes;

Having noted the poor state of maternity protection for women in unorganised sector in Asia;

Deeply concerned about the lack of food security and ongoing undernutrition in women and children being a major public health problem in Asia, more so in South Asia;

Deeply concerned about the burden of obesity and non communicable diseases which continues to growing and same companies which are responsible continue to enjoy policy making directly or indirectly;

Seriously disturbed about the ongoing push of ready to use foods for use on treatment and prevention of severe malnutrition in developing countries without addressing underlying problems of food health and care;

Deeply concerned of the marketing exploitation of malnutrition by food and beverages industries; freshly cooked, home-based foods being replaced by pre-processed and packaged foods;

Noting that countries are failing to invest in the interventions needed for protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding which is fundamental to child health, growth and development;

Concerned that in Asia and Pacific, < 40 % babies are exclusively breastfed during first six months, < 50% children continue to breastfeed at two years of age and about one-third children do initiate semi-solid or solid food at 6-8 months of life even 34 years after the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, 25

years after the Innocenti Declaration and 13 years after the adoption of the Global Strategy for Infant and young Child Feeding;

Deeply concerned with rise in formula feeding, especially in the emerging economies of Asia, which is deleterious to the health infants and young children; and damages the environment;

Concerned that implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk substitutes is far from satisfactory, providing unhindered promotional activities of the baby food manufactures;

Concerned that public-private partnerships and involvement of private sector in policy making and programme implementation is creating conflict of interest;

Call upon all concerned to take action to:

1. Ensure labour rights of all women, with job security without discrimination.
2. Implement maternity protection laws in all countries urgently by increasing the coverage to all women especially in the informal sector.
3. Enhance the maternity leave to at least 9 months, and monitor and assess the situation of maternity protection on a regular basis.
4. Provide cash support in lieu of leave to women in the informal sector.
5. Provide respectful, non-judgmental and unbiased, free from commercial interest information and support to women on pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding along with normal gentle birthing facilities, avoiding unwanted/unnecessary caesarean sections.
6. Ensure that children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) receive the culturally appropriate and adequate home cooked food, health and care they need as a strategy, and NOT the ready to use therapeutic foods(RUTFs); which are not the solution.
7. Ensure that child nutrition and health policy development at all levels should be kept free from conflicts of interest.
8. Enact/strengthen national legislations to fully implement and enforce the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (Code) and relevant subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions on infant and young child nutrition, as well as ensure regular monitoring of the national laws/Code in each country on a regular basis.
9. Provide information on risks of artificial milk/ formula feeding, safe feeding to parents as well as that on GHG emissions related to it.
10. Invest in all relevant policies and programmes to support all mothers to practice optimal breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices.

All participants commit themselves to the Call to Action



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