

WORKING ON HUMAN RIGHTS

New thematic report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food on Agricultural Workers highlights the importance of breastfeeding

Released in July 2018 and officially presented to the UN General Assembly of October 2018, the last thematic report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food focused on the right to food of agricultural workers. IBFAN-GIFA was invited to take part in the informal consultations prior to the publication of the report and submitted a written contribution on behalf of IBFAN, highlighting the importance of breastfeeding as linked to agricultural workers' human rights, in particular to their right to health and right to food. IBFAN submission also reiterated the need for increased maternity protection for agricultural and food systems workers, as well as the responsibility of States to implement and monitor the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions.

As a result, the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur mentioned clearly the impact of the lack of maternity protection and breastfeeding support on children's right to health and right to food (§44-46), recalling [CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 34 on rural women](#) for more specific interpretations and recommendations related to rural women's rights (§41). The General Recommendation No. 34, adopted in 2016, addresses the need for rural women and girls to receive

adequate information related to health care, including on breastfeeding and its importance for child and maternal health; it also calls for effective regulation of marketing of breastmilk substitutes.

Concerning IBFAN's suggestions to include a reference to the International Code and WHA Resolutions in the thematic report, the Special Rapporteur did mention that "Private sector pressures further complicate efforts to educate women about the benefit of breastfeeding" (§40).

Documents available: [Thematic report on agricultural workers and the right to food; Written submission by IBFAN-GIFA](#), on behalf of IBFAN

79th session of the CRC: concerns remain over child malnutrition and IYCF

From September 17 to October 5, 2018, the CRC Committee held its 79th Session in Geneva and reviewed the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 4 countries: El Salvador, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mauritania and Niger. IBFAN submitted one alternative report on the situation of infant and young child feeding

in [Niger](#). Direct advocacy during the session allowed the Committee members to address relevant questions on the status of IYCF policies to the other countries under review.

In its [Concluding Observations](#), the CRC Committee referred specifically to breastfeeding for all the 4 countries under review. Child malnutrition was highlighted as a reason of concern in the concluding observations of all State parties. Additionally, the committee recommended Niger, Mauritania and Laos to fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

Document available: [Post-session report](#)

INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MARKETING OF BREAST-MILK SUBSTITUTES

Launch of the Italian 2018 report on Code violations

On November 16, [IBFAN Italy](#) organized a conference to officially present the 2018 report on the violations of the [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#) in Italy: Il Codice Violato. Speakers represented IBFAN Italy, the Italian Movement for Breastfeeding ([MAMI](#)), Save the Children and IBFAN-GIFA. The interventions touched several key issues around IYCF and the Code, with a specific focus on the Italian situation.

After an overview of the main violations reported in the Codice Violato 2018, participants were introduced to the [World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative](#) and were shown a summary of the results of the [first Italian WBTi assessment](#). Linked to that, possible instruments to fill the gaps highlighted in the assessment were explained and a presentation on the [Lactalis scandal](#) provided participants with strong and recent evidence about how serious the consequences of a weak legislation on the Code could be. Lastly, a presentation delivered by IBFAN-GIFA was aimed at explaining the connection between breastfeeding and human rights, while describing the last recommendations to Italy made by the CRC, CESCR and CEDAW Committees. In the final part of the presentation, IBFAN-GIFA introduced the [Italian version](#) of Prezi presentation "[Breastfeeding - A matter of human rights](#)", published in July this year and subsequently translated into Italian with the collaboration of IBFAN Italy.

IBFAN's comments after the Frankfurt meeting convened by Meridian Institute - October 2018

Despite IBFAN's November 2017 [Call to Action](#), Meridian Institute (MI) convened the Frankfurt meeting, a step in a process towards the initiative originally called Global Monitoring Mechanism (GMM). Analyzing the information contained in the report from the meeting, IBFAN continues to believe that this BMGF-sponsored "multi-stakeholder" initiative represents uncalled-for brokering of undue public-private entanglement at all cost. Were any public-private monitoring mechanism to result from it, it can be predicted to undermine decades of progress in building up legally-binding effective regulation of marketing practices, supported by industry-independent corporate accountability efforts.

The MI website remains silent. The report from the Frankfurt meeting has never been posted. Even its participants have not been revealed or whether any further meetings took place. Meridian only

informs that it "is continuing to work with the full range of stakeholder groups involved in this process to determine next steps".

Additional documents: [IBFAN's Call to Action signed](#) ; [IBFAN letter to the Meridian Institute](#); [IBFAN comments after the meeting, full report](#)

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on TNCs and OBEs with respect to Human Rights

The [4th Session](#) of the IGWG took place in Geneva in October 2018. This year, the basis for the negotiations was represented by the [Zero draft Treaty](#) and [Zero draft Optional Protocol](#). During the IGWG week, IBFAN-GIFA participated in a side event organized by on the role of transnational corporations and the right to health, presenting the experience of IBFAN with baby food companies and the impact of their practices on the right to health.

The Treaty Alliance organized a webinar to inform members about the negotiations and critical points in the draft treaty: some of these include corporate capture of the whole process, linked to the fact that the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Organization of Employers hold official ECOSOC status and therefore regularly participate in negotiations of the IGWG; divergences in the positions of States on the need for a Resolution for the IGWG to move on with the next sessions; pressure from the EU to remain at the UN Guiding Principles, without need for a binding instrument (while the EU Parliament is very much in favour of the Treaty); lack of stated primacy of human rights over existing trade agreements (only reference to future agreements); provision that implementation of the treaty be "in accordance with

national law” – this could be problematic; uncertainty about enforcement mechanism – the proposal in draft treaty follows the HR treaty bodies system, with a committee, and there are contrasting opinions about the need for an actual Court.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

World Breastfeeding Week 2018

As every year, Switzerland celebrates the WBW in September. Thanks to an initiative of the midwives at the university hospitals of Geneva ([HUG](#), Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève), three key activities have been organized from 10 to 14 September 2018:

1 – An information stand held by HUG lactation consultants and representatives from other associations, among which IBFAN-GIFA. Parents could find communication materials and answers to their questions. IBFAN-GIFA provided a brochure with the overview of the addresses and contacts for breastfeeding support in the region ([brochure Panorama du réseau pour l'allaitement](#));

2 – An exhibition on breastfeeding including scenes of babies breastfeeding and their families;

3 – Breastfeeding symposium on Thursday afternoon including 4 interventions, at the Paediatrics auditorium.

GIFA's Activities as partner of the Geneva Obesity Prevention Program

Breastfeeding is one of the key measures to prevent obesity, as well for the child as for the mother. The obesity prevention program MMM (Eat and move smart) – for which GIFA works since 2016 - includes many different activities to promote breastfeeding as part of healthy nutrition. During the second semester of 2018, two events can be highlighted on this matter.

First, in October, a lecture for Pharmacy Mastercourse Students was held about the importance of promoting breastfeeding and protecting it by respecting the Code. As future pharmacists, these students play a key role in understanding their position as health care providers – not just product sellers. In Switzerland, the « Code of behavior » (2017) sets a frame for marketing and selling formula, but it does not cover all aspects of the International Code (follow-up formula, bottles and teets are not included). GIFA's next objective will be to get partner Pharmacies to launch the italian initiative « Breastfeeding friendly Pharmacy, » a certificate inspired by the « Breastfeeding Friendly Hospital ».

Another key event was the second Breastfeeding platform meeting in November, gathering health care providers from different fields at GIFA's office in order to put cross-communication into action. The french speaking part of Switzerland has lesser breastfeeding rates, has no milkbank (whereas there are 7 of them in the german speaking part) and has fewer mother-to-mother support groups (although we are happy to announce that the first La Leche League group will be soon established in Geneva). The Breastfeeding platform will help networking and promoting breastfeeding.

Additionally, a very important part of our work for MMM is promoting breastfeeding within disadvantaged communities. Successful integration is better guaranteed when women of the community are empowered, and children are in good physical and mental health. Breastfeeding impacts positively these two factors, and GIFA works together with different structures involved in integration programs.

Last but not least, the WBTi Swiss was started in September, with no funding so far, we are actively seeking financial support for this activity which is not included in the MMM program. Please help us find sponsors. <https://www.gifa.org/international/initiative-wbti/>

NEWS FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

ANJE II Project: overview and first updates

ANJE II 2018-2020 is the second phase of the project ANJE 2014-2015, initiated by IBFAN-GIFA and funded by the City and the Canton of Geneva. ANJE II is a project for the promotion of optimal infant and young child feeding practices and it is conducted in partnership with the Francophone Africa regional office, IBFAN Afrique, and the national IBFAN groups in five targeted countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Niger, and Togo. Benin and Togo, initially absent in the first phase, were included in this second phase to extend the benefits of the project activities to their populations. Despite the fact that Gabon received proportionally less funding compared to the first phase, the national IBFAN group is carrying out several project activities to effectively use the funding available. The overall project strategy is based on four axes of intervention: training and capacity building, social mobilization and awareness raising, local and national advocacy, and international advocacy.

One of the key activities of the first year of the ANJE II project involved a training session held in Ouagadougou from 24-26 September 2018, gathering nine West African countries, on the monitoring of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions. Jointly organized by IBFAN, WHO and UNICEF, the training offered an overview of the situation in the different countries represented, while providing participants with specific tools for monitoring. Currently, IBFAN-GIFA is in the process of finalizing advocacy documents to summarize the most recent recommendations made by the United Nations treaty bodies to the project countries. Those documents will hopefully enhance their local and national advocacy efforts.