Three decades on, baby milk companies still break rules

The world’s leading baby milk companies still flout a global code against marketing their products to under-twos, three decades after its adoption, new research has shown.

Nestlé and Danone, the top two baby milk distributors, were the worst offenders, according to the International Baby Food Action Network (Ibfan)

Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010 accuses 11 major companies of breaching the code, which was adopted in 1981

“The biggest problem now is the use of claims,” said Annelies Allain, an Ibfan director in Malaysia.

Ibfan said it would keep up the pressure on Swiss-based Nestlé with an ongoing legal action.

... in response to this report, Danone has said actions it will put in place will account for 50 per cent of the 134 allegations of a breach of the code.

Brady told a Geneva news briefing.

He said Nestlé had said it would address four out of 134 allegations of a breach of the code.

Danone did not wish to comment on the allegations it breached the code more than 100 times.


“Obviously, we take these allegations very seriously as we take any allegations concerning the code very seriously. We fundamentally disagree with their [Ibfan’s] interpretation of the code. How can they take the code seriously if they breach it?”

Ibfan said the trend was to use seductive marketing as the baby milk companies competed in a market worth $50 billion.

“Companies are competing with breastfeeding and if breastfeeding rates increase, the market for complementary foods.

The World Health Organisation, a UN agency, endorses the baby milk code. The agency recommends breastfeeding and complementary foods.