



1998 RECIPIENT OF THE RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD

WHY IBFAN HAS NOT SIGNED ON CIVIL SOCIETY PLEDGE OF 'A RENEWED PROMISE' INITIATIVE

On June 14-15, 2012, several governments and other partners, including civil society representatives, gathered in Washington, D.C. at the Child Survival Call to Action – a high-level forum convened by the governments of Ethiopia, India and the United States, in collaboration with UNICEF. The forum launched a new initiative, [A Promise Renewed](#) which represents a renewed commitment to child survival.

The [International Baby Food Action Network \(IBFAN\)](#) was invited to join [the Civil Society Pledge](#), which will be announced at the time of the UN General Assembly in New York, September 2012.

IBFAN is committed to working with UNICEF and other organisations that promote sustainable child survival strategies. IBFAN supports the aims of the Child Survival Call to Action and understands that this initiative is a genuine attempt to scale up action in this important area. We are committed to actions that garner greater commitment to child survival and child health by relevant obligated parties. One of our flagship programmes is the global Breastfeeding Initiative for Child Survival (gBICS) whose aim is to reduce child mortality and undernutrition and improve child growth and development as well as maternal health, through the protection, promotion and support of optimal infant feeding practices (i.e. early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months followed by safe and adequate complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding for 2 years or beyond)- thus contributing to MDGs 4&5.

IBFAN is committed to the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (2002), and to the universal implementation of the 1981 International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (International Code) and relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly to the fullest extent and to ensuring that corporations are held accountable for International Code violations. It is our position that any corporate conduct that is in violation of the International Code is a human rights violation, and we continue to monitor the baby food industry and report misconduct in this regard.


This mandate has made it necessary for IBFAN to take a very strong stance on conflicts of interests including in relation to public-private partnerships. We believe that, in line with a human rights based approach, setting policies in the area of infant and young child feeding is an obligation of governments as duty bearers. The 2002 Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding was very clear in limiting the role of manufacturers to conforming at every level with the International Code and meeting the specific quality, safety and labelling standards set by the Codex Alimentarius. This is all the baby food companies need to do: no less and No More, especially not in the policy field.

However, IBFAN's experience with assisting governments to implement the International Code shows how corporate influence over public policy-making and implementation has increasingly lead to policies favouring industry and public initiatives promoting commercial interests, at the expense of public health and human rights.

In this respect, IBFAN finds it difficult to sign the Civil Society Pledge as it stands, because **Commitment no 5** in the [Civil Society Pledge](#) places the Private Sector at the same level as governments and furthermore the **4th bullet** of this commitment calls for building civil society capacity by the private sector among others.

In IBFAN's view, this pledge makes it quite confusing to distinguish among private for-profit sector and public interest actors, and does not take into consideration the potential conflicts of interest that private sector involvement carries with the risk of jeopardising child's rights to survival and development.

For this reason, IBFAN requested for the words 'private sector' to be removed from Commitment 5 of the Civil Society Pledge, of [A Promise Renewed](#). Until this will be done, IBFAN regrets that it cannot sign the pledge.



Joyce Chanetsa:
IBFAN Africa and Chair Global Council



Annelies Allain:
Director, International Code Documentation Centre & Council Member



Arun Gupta:
IBFAN Asia & Council Member



Patti Rundall:
Baby Milk Action & Council Member



Marta Trejos:
IBFAN Latin America & Council Member