



International Baby Food Action Network
Red internacional de grupos pro alimentación infantil
Réseau international des groupes d'action pour l'alimentation infantile

1998 RECIPIENT OF THE RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD

Ann Veneman
C/o Nestlé SA
Avenue Nestlé 55
1800 Vevey
Switzerland

12th April 2011

OPEN LETTER REGARDING MEMBERSHIP OF THE NESTLE BOARD

Dear Ann Veneman,

IBFAN has long been in correspondence with Nestlé senior management in an attempt to persuade them to respect the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly and to stop the systematic violations of these measures that the company continues to employ to increase profits.

Given your past involvement with UNICEF, the UN agency that has done more than any other to urge this company to respect and abide by these measures, we were surprised and saddened to see that you are considering joining Nestlé's Board of Directors, granting this company a powerful Public Relations coup.

It was during your tenure in 2007, when UNICEF Philippines was publicly criticised for producing the film Formula for Disaster that exposed Nestlé's marketing malpractice. We were very pleased to see that you defended your staff at this time. As you may be aware, since then Nestlé has become even more aggressive. We are thus concerned that your acceptance of a seat on the company's Board of Directors will lead the public to assume that you - and by association, UNICEF - now consider Nestlé's policy and practice to be in line with the Code and thus in line with UN policy. Is this the understanding you would wish to emphasize?

We are writing to you before you take the position on the Nestlé Board of Directors to make sure you are aware of the outstanding concerns public interest NGOs like ours have and that you reconsider accepting this position.

We are aware that this would not be your first engagement with this particular company as you are a member of the advisory board of the Nestlé Creating Shared Value reports. Thus you may know that Baby Milk Action and other organisations have filed complaints with the UN Global Compact Office about these particular reports and about Nestlé's systematic violations of the Global Compact Principles. Baby Milk Action has also raised concerns directly with Mr. Paul Bulcke, Nestlé Chief Executive Office, and Mr. Peter Brabeck-Letmathé, Nestlé Chairman, and Dr. Gayle Crozier-Willi, Nestlé Global Public Affairs Manager. These Nestlé executives have neither addressed our concerns nor accepted our four-point plan which aims to save infant lives and should lead ultimately to the end of the Nestlé boycott.

Baby Milk Action, having explored all the above avenues, has finally written to the Nestlé Ombudsman and we attach for your information, the letter which outlines many of our key concerns. The Ombudsman has not investigated our case as per his mandate but simply forwarded the matter to Dr. Crozier-Willi, the subject of the complaint, asking her to respond. This example demonstrates that there is no Nestlé system, independent of the company executives, in place for handling complaints regarding their actions or violations of the Code and Resolutions by the company.

It is our experience that Nestlé makes changes only when forced by binding regulations or by public campaigns that shine a light on the company practices that are at odds with international rules or national measures. We therefore hope that you will recognise the risks of accepting the seat on the Nestlé Board of Directors and will refrain from doing so, making it clear to the company that it is untenable for a former Executive Director of the Nobel Peace Prize winning UN agency which defends children's rights, UNICEF, to sit on its Board while the company continues to



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perpetrate such practices. Such an action on your part would send an extraordinary and powerful message that would do much to protect infant health.

If, on the other hand, you genuinely believe that your participation will influence Nestlé's practices positively - perhaps you would like to make your membership of the Board known to be linked to a set of conditions, fulfilment of which would clearly demonstrate Nestlé's intention to make the necessary fundamental changes, such as the implementation of the above mentioned four-year plan elaborated by us.

Sincerely,

*Patti Rundall, OBE
Policy Director
Baby Milk Action, UK*

*Lida Lhotska, Ph.D.
IBFAN Regional Coordinator for Europe*

*Joyce Chanetsa
IBFAN regional Coordinator for Africa and
Chair of the IBFAN Coordinating Council*

Enclosed:

- 1 Letter from Mike Brady, Campaigns and Networking Coordinator, Baby Milk Action, to Jean-Marc Duvoisin, Deputy Executive Vice President, responsible for the Nestlé Ombudsman System, copied to Senior Nestlé Executives. 4th March 2011
- 2 International Nestlé Boycott Committee, Four Point Plan to end the Nestlé Boycott.