

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

Many events in recent years have created this opportunity for global action.

In May 1981, the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* was adopted by the World Health Assembly as a recommendation for all governments to implement nationally. The Code, and subsequent WHA resolutions on infant feeding, seeks to regulate marketing practices that promote artificial feeding and the use of artificial feeding devices such as bottles and teats (rubber nipples). Learn more about the Code and find out if the provisions of the Code have been introduced as national legislation in your country by contacting the International Code Documentation Task Force. Then, write to your head of State in support of this government action.

In 1989, a joint statement by WHO and UNICEF was published. The statement, entitled *Protecting, Promoting, and Supporting Breast-feeding: The Special Role of Maternity Services*, was prepared to increase awareness of the critical role that

health services play in promoting breastfeeding, and to describe what should be done to provide mothers with appropriate information and support.

On 20 November 1989, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Article 24 recognizes "the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health". One of the provisions for the implementation of this right is "to ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of...the advantages of breast-feeding...." Ensure this spirit of international cooperation continues by supporting organizations working toward this goal.

On 1 August 1990, policy makers from 32 governments and 10 UN and other agencies developed and adopted the *Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breast-feeding* at a WHO/UNICEF meeting co-sponsored by USAID and SIDA. The goals included a call for governments to act and create an environment enabling all women to practice exclusive breastfeeding, and all infants

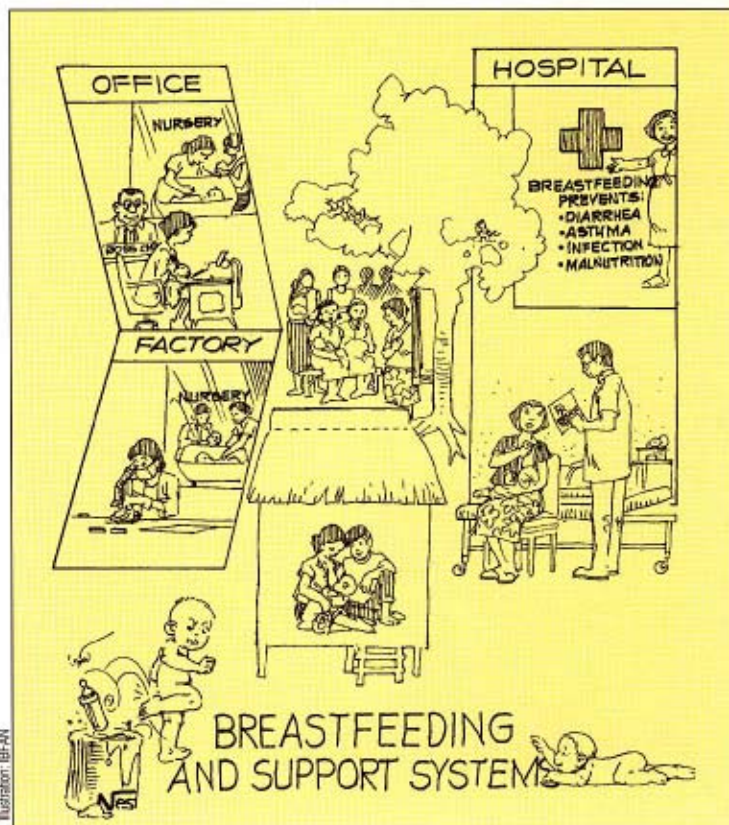


Illustration: BFAW

to feed exclusively on breast-milk from birth to 4-6 months of age, and to continue breastfeeding with adequate complementary foods for up to two years. A commitment was made for each country to develop a national strategy to implement the meeting's recommendations. Write to UNICEF or the WABA Secretariat for a copy of the *Innocenti Declaration* and to learn what is happening in your country to achieve the Declaration goals.

On 30 September 1990, 71 heads of State gathered for the World Summit for Children at the United Nations. Since the Summit, many additional heads of State have promised to work towards the Summit's goals which include implementing the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and strengthening the role and status of women through several measures including the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

The commitment has been made, now is the time for action. It is time for all of us to urge governments and societies to make the changes needed to create a baby-friendly world with support systems where breastfeeding is:

Protected-by legislation, ensuring adequate maternity leave and the establishment of crèches/childcare in or near the workplace and, prohibiting the inappropriate marketing practices by artificial baby milk manufacturers and others.

Supported-by hospital policies and health worker practices consistent with the WHO/ UNICEF Joint Statement and by a national strategy for the establishment and support of women's breastfeeding support groups.

Promoted-by every member of society, with each national government playing a leading role, as stated in the *Innocenti Declaration*.

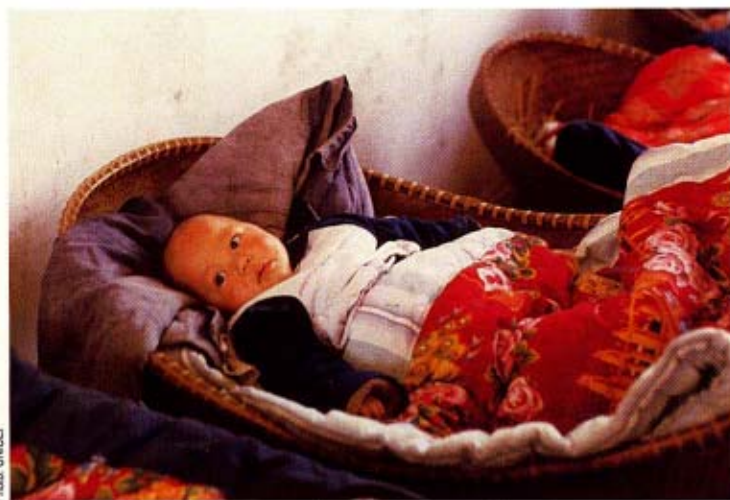


Photo: UNICEF

Breastfeeding is easier with crèches/child-care in the workplace.