

Support for Breastfeeding Women



Is your government supportive of breastfeeding women?

Check if your country has ratified the following Conventions and acted on the Innocenti targets.

For more details, visit WABA website at www.waba.org.br/countryfiles1.htm

	CRC	CEDAW	CESCR	ILO (C. 3)	ILO (C. 103)	Maternity Leave (Days)	Leave Paid/Not Paid	THE CODE	BFHI % of BF hospitals
Australia	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	364	N	●	ID
Brazil	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	120	Y	●	3.36
China	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	91	Y	●	47.10
Honduras	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	70	Y	◐	12.50
Malaysia	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	60	Y	●	86.73
Norway	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	126	Y	●	58.33
Saudi Arabia	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	70	Y	◐	1.16
South Africa	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	84	Y	◐	0.63
Uganda	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	56	Y	●	2.53
UK	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	126	Y	●	ID
USA	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	84	N	○	ID

LEGEND

- ✓ Party
- ✗ Non-party
- Law
- ◐ Many provisions law / Policy or voluntary measure
- ◑ Few provisions law / Some provisions voluntary
- ◒ Draft law / Being studied
- No action
- ID Insufficient Data

Governments should:

- Recognise that women and children have rights to food and health.
- Provide for adequate maternity leave (at least 4, but preferably 6 months) after giving birth to facilitate exclusive breastfeeding.
- Provide for flexible work hours (by law) for mothers returning to work, including breastfeeding breaks.
- Call on employers to provide facilities at the workplace to enable working mothers to continue to breastfeed or express and store milk under appropriate conditions.
- Support better provisions in the revision of the ILO Convention No. 103 on Maternity Protection.
- Support implementation and awareness of existing rights.
- Protect woman's right to breastfeed in public places.
- Provide accurate information on the advantages of breastfeeding to health workers and pregnant women to enable the latter to make informed decisions.
- Provide training for health workers, including doctors, midwives and nurses in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, including sound breastfeeding management.
- Ensure that all facilities providing maternity services practise the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" promulgated by WHO and UNICEF as part of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- Prevent any form of promotion of breastmilk substitutes, bottles or teats to health care workers and the public, but especially to women prior to or just after birth.

What if my right to breastfeed is hindered?

Every country that is party to an international agreement must report to the United Nations periodically about what it has done to ensure that everyone enjoys the specific rights included. These reports are sent to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and discussed by Committees responsible for overseeing the implementation of these agreements in public sessions with government representatives. If the government does

not respect and protect mothers' right to breastfeed, it is in breach of its obligations according to these agreements. There are a number of actions that can be taken by national organisations:

- Put pressure on the government to honour its obligations.
- Send information to the UN Committees about the breastfeeding situation in their country².
- Contact your national NGO coalition on the CRC.
- Encourage member NGOs to add breastfeeding as a right to their advocacy agendas.
- Lobby governments in drafting legislation that will enable women to breastfeed after returning to work.
- Get trade unions and workers organisations to bring the issue of breastfeeding women being discriminated against in the work place to the International Labour Organization.
- Monitor the implementation of the International Code and inform governments that violations of the Code are also violations of mothers and children's right to breastfeed.

Universal Recognition

The protection, respect, facilitation, and fulfillment of these rights require universal recognition of the importance of breastfeeding as a social function, supported by public funds. Every woman should be able to count on full support from those around her to enable her to initiate and sustain breastfeeding. It is the responsibility of the entire community to see that the best possible nutrition and health is available to all of its members, beginning with its youngest. Women feel supported when the community welcomes them to breastfeed in public, provides help to overcome difficulties, offers facilities to breastfeed at the work place; when health care facilities are "baby friendly"; and when health professionals take an ethical stand against the promotion of breastmilk substitutes and use their influence to support women to breastfeed.

2 The UN Committees most relevant for this information would be: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. For further information about the Committees and procedures for sending information to them, please contact Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (see 'Resources' for contact info)