



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2020

[Planetary health](#) - the health of human civilisation and the state of the natural systems on which it depends - is essential now more than ever. The interconnected nature of people and the planet requires that we find sustainable solutions that benefit both. Breastfeeding is a sustainable solution that is good for the planet and its people. Every year, the [World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action](#) (WABA) coordinates the [World Breastfeeding Week](#) (WBW) - a global campaign that aims to inform, anchor, engage and galvanise action on breastfeeding and related issues.

Depletion and destruction of natural resources and emission of major greenhouse gases are at their highest levels for [at least the last 800 000 years](#). We need to protect our planet and our own health by (i) using resources such as land, water and energy sources responsibly, (ii) conserving biodiversity and (iii) consuming with care.

Feeding with breastmilk substitutes from farm-to-table affects the environment and climate due to its production, packaging, distribution and preparation methods. Millions of tonnes of metal formula cans end up in landfills every year, degrading the environment. The breastmilk substitute industry is worth USD70 billion annually and [continues to market its products](#) that contravene international recommendations and national legislation. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, [violations by the industry](#) have escalated and are a cause of huge concern.

On the other hand, breastmilk production only requires the additional food that a mother needs to consume, therefore using fewer natural resources and resulting in almost no waste. Breastfeeding is one of the [best investments for saving infant lives and improving the health, social and economic development](#) of individuals and nations. Scaling up optimal breastfeeding could prevent more than 823 000 child and 20 000 maternal deaths each year. Not breastfeeding is associated with lower intelligence and results in economic losses of about USD302 billion, annually.



We need to see the whole of society as responsible and accountable for low breastfeeding rates, as one of several indicators, demonstrating whether we are orientated to planet health as well as human health.

Dr. Nigel Rollins, 2020



Despite international recommendations, only about 40% of all babies born annually are exclusively breastfed until six months of age and only 45% continue any breastfeeding for up to two years. Often, there is a lack of support to breastfeed, whether in the health system, workplace or community.

Any [crisis presents an opportunity](#) for positive, sustainable change and coordinated involvement of all. The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has taught us that we are all affected and an immediate coordinated societal response is required. Breastfeeding contributes positively towards planetary health in several ways - it is sustainable, ecological and good for human health. Now, more than ever, it is vital for [national governments to implement and align](#) national policies and crisis intervention methods with the [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#) and relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions. Additionally, we have a collective responsibility as advocates and members of civil society organisations to monitor and [report violations](#).

In supporting breastfeeding for a healthier planet and overcoming effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to create a [warm chain of support for breastfeeding](#). It is vital that we emphasise the importance of [providing skilled support to all breastfeeding families](#), especially those in [vulnerable/emergency situations](#). Governments, employers and businesses should be made aware of the [investment case for breastfeeding](#) as part of the global sustainable development agenda. Activists and celebrants can find creative ways to move the #WBW2020 campaign [online](#), to [stay informed](#), to advocate virtually and to engage with actors and stakeholders [beyond the breastfeeding movement](#). This [creates an enabling environment](#) that empowers all women/parents to breastfeed optimally.

The #WBW2020 campaign presents a framework for understanding the links between breastfeeding and planetary health. WABA has [outlined some of the challenges and present some possible solutions](#). Now, we need your commitment. Use the resources available on our [website](#), [Action Folder](#), [Poster](#), Social Media Kit and Media Kit to spread awareness of this campaign before, during and after #WBW2020. [Pledge to participate](#) in the #WBW2020 celebrations by sending us details of your virtual/physical activities. View events and activities planned for #WBW2020 on our [Pledge Map](#). Supporting breastfeeding for a healthier planet means leaving no one behind. Together, we can achieve a win-win situation for humanity and the planet.

For more information on the campaign, please contact Nisha Kumaravel at wbw@waba.org.my.

OBJECTIVES OF #WBW2020



INFORM

people about the links between breastfeeding and the environment/climate change



ANCHOR

breastfeeding as a climate-smart decision



ENGAGE

with individuals and organisations for greater impact



GALVANISE

action on improving the health of the planet and people through breastfeeding



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (WBW) 1-7 August 2020

www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org

SPONSORSHIP: WABA does not accept funds or gifts from companies manufacturing, distributing or marketing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment such as feeding bottles and teats, and complementary foods.

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA coordinates the annual World Breastfeeding Week campaign.

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