

## Legislation on Marketing

The *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent related Resolutions were adopted by the World Health Assembly to protect breastfeeding. To be effective, they must be made to work in each country through legislation. The International Code PROHIBITS

- Free samples to mothers
- Advertising to the public
- Promotion in health care facilities
- Gifts or samples to health workers
- Words and pictures that idealise bottle feeding
- Advice to mothers by company sales staff

## Maternity Protection

*Maternity protection is a precondition of genuine equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women.*

*ILO Maternity Protection at Work, pg. 51, 1997*

Working women need paid maternity leave during the six-month period of exclusive breastfeeding. This period is recommended by the World Health Assembly and UNICEF. After returning to work, they need paid breaks and access to facilities for either breastfeeding the baby or expressing milk.

However in practice, women employed in various work environments face many different obstacles to breastfeeding. For instance, maternity leave may only be available to formally employed women on annual or permanent contracts while agricultural workers, domestics and women working in the informal sector in many countries are not covered by existing laws.

## Special needs of working mothers

Even where women in theory are provided with maternity leave, they may not be able to take it if the pay during their leave is too low or if they worry that they will lose their job or seniority by taking their leave. Similarly, workplace with child care facilities may not be utilised by mothers with young babies if they do not have safe and comfortable means of transportation to and from work.

These needs are seldom addressed because the overall low social status and lack of organisation of women in many countries leads to lower priority to their needs.

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention 103 provides for 12 weeks of maternity leave and breastfeeding/nursing breaks on paid time during each work day. Convention 103 is currently being revised and the new one will probably be available for governments to adopt before WBW 2000.

## WABA's Role & the Innocenti Declaration

WABA was founded in part to strengthen action on the four operational targets of the Innocenti Declaration, adopted at a WHO/UNICEF meeting of high level policy makers from many countries in 1990 and approved by the World Health Assembly in 1991. The Declaration calls on all governments to appoint a national breastfeeding coordinator and a multisectoral national breastfeeding committee, to ensure that every facility providing maternity services fully practises the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* set out in a joint WHO/UNICEF statement (the basis for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative), implements the International Code and other related resolutions of the World Health Assembly, and enacts legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women.

