We share a common concern: Toxic chemicals are contaminating our children

If we tested every infant born today, anywhere in the world, we would find that s/he has a body burden of toxic industrial chemicals. Dioxins, PCBs, mercury, phthalates, pesticides and other dangerous substances are being passed from parent to child as early as the prenatal period.

Tiny doses of these chemicals can have a dramatic effect on the developing child. Levels of mercury that would have no impact on an adult can harm the developing brain of a foetus. A few trillionths of a gram of dioxin and PCBs can damage the developing immune and nervous systems. DDT, PCBs, dioxins and other persistent organic pollutants not only cross the placenta, they also enter into breastmilk.

We recognise the need to promote breastfeeding while we work towards ending the contamination of our communities

The contamination of breastmilk is one symptom of the environmental contamination in our communities. Responsibility for this problem belongs to the industrial sources of contamination, not to breastfeeding women. The individual decision to breastfeed must be promoted and protected while we work collectively towards eliminating the chemicals that contaminate the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the products we use.

Studies have shown that breastfeeding, even in a contaminated environment, has a positive impact on the development of children as compared to those who are artificially fed. Breastfeeding supports infant growth and health as well as maternal health in ways that breastmilk substitutes cannot. Indeed, breastmilk contains substances that help the child develop a stronger immune system and other protections against environmental pollutants and pathogens.

Therefore, educational and advocacy efforts to promote a toxic-free future for our children should recognise, encourage and support collective actions aimed at promoting breastfeeding, reducing chemical contamination and developing the strongest possible pollution prevention laws.

We share a vision of a toxic-free future and generations of healthy children

In Sweden, strong governmental programmes to eliminate persistent organic pollutants like DDT, dieldrin, PCBs and dioxin have resulted in dramatic decreases in contaminants in breastmilk. In the United States, bans on lead in gasoline and smoking in public places have resulted in dramatic decreases in the levels of dangerous chemicals in the blood of young children. These public health achievements show that reductions in the production, use and disposal of toxic chemicals, along with the destruction of toxic chemical stockpiles and reservoirs, can decrease the body burden in our children and in all of us. The United Nations Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the development of sustainable alternatives to dioxin-producing incineration, local and national efforts to restrict the use of pesticides or to phase out the uses and emissions of mercury, all deserve our energetic and sustained support.
We pledge to work together towards the day when our infants are born toxin free, and can grow and develop in a toxic-free world.

Updated list of Endorsers, May 2003

We will update the endorsers list regularly. We welcome your endorsement and also request you to share it with others.

Agenda for Environment and Responsible Development, Tanzania  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics, USA  
Alianza por Una Mejor Calidad de Vida, Chile  
Altruristic Leadership Institute (ALI), Malaysia  
Amininghâlpën (The Swedish Nursing Mothers’ Support Group)  
Aquamedia, Republic of Georgia  
Armenian Centre of Hygiene & Epidemiological Surveillance  
Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment  
ARNIKA Association, Czech Republic  
Arugaan, Philippines  
Asociación Argentina de Medivos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA), Argentina  
Asociación de Combate aos Pops (AC.PO), Brazil  
Associação de Consciência à Prevenção O cupacional, Brazil  
Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHIKA)  
Bahrain Faith, Malaysia, Malaysia  
Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation (BBF)  
Base Action Network (BAN), Washington, USA  
Brahma Kumaris Ipho, Malaysia  
Breastfeeding Information Bureau, Malaysia  
Breastfeeding Mothers Support Group (BSMG), Singapore  
Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)  
Breastfeeding Support Group of Thailand  
California Nurses’ Midwives Association, USA  
Campaign for Alternative Industry Network (CAIN), Thailand  
Camistas Manila, Philippines  
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)  
Cancer Action New York, USA  
Chemicals Weapons Working Group, Kentucky, USA  
Chintan, India  
Chris Mulford, IBCLC, USA  
Chomchonthai Foundation, Thailand  
Collectif de lutte contre les organochlorés (Joint Action Group against POPs), Quebec, Canada  
Common Ground, Kentucky, USA  
Commonweal, USA  
Community Against Toxics, Cheshire, UK  
Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), Malaysia  
Consumers International Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (CI-ROAP)  
Coordination Française pour l’Allaitement Maternel (CoFAM), France  
Cynthia Pang, IBCLC, Singapore  
Department of the Planet Earth, USA  
Development Indian Ocean Network (DION), Mauritius  
ECCO- Accord, Russia  
EcospHERE, Belarus  
Egyptian Medical Students for Social Responsibility Students, Egypt  
Environmental Health Fund, USA  
For Civil Society, Kyrgyzstan  
Foundation for Realization of Ideas, Belarus  
Great Lakes Health, New York, and Arkansas  
Health Care without Harm, Washington DC, USA  
Help Organisation for People, Environment & Society (HO PES), India  
Indigenous Environmental Council, Alaska, USA  
Information Port for l’Allaitement (IPA), France  
INSAF, Malaysia  
Institute for Children’s Environmental Health, Washington, USA  
International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)  
Penang, Malaysia  
International Campaign for Responsible Technology  
International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)  
International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, Egypt  
Irish Doctors’ Environmental Association (IDEA)  
Kentucky Environmental Foundation, USA  
KL Prondos, Malaysia  
La Leche League International (LLL)  
Malaysia  
Malaysia Hindu Sangam, Malaysia  
Marcia Ammandale, IBCLC, New Zealand  
Movement pour les Droits et le Respect des Générations Futures (MDRGF), France  
National Resource Defence Council, USA  
National Toxics Network Inc., Australia  
New Zealand Midwives (NZCM)  
Non-Stockpile Chemical Weapons Citizen Coalition, Kentucky, USA  
Pesticide Action Network Asia-Pacific (PANAP)  
Pesticide Action Network Central Asia (PANCA)  
Pesticide Action Network Germany  
Pesticide Action Network North America (PANA)  
Pesticide Action Network UK (PANUK)  
Pesticide Action Network, Philippines  
Peter Orris, University of Illinois, USA  
Public Interest Consultants, UK  
Pusat Penasihat Penyusuan Ibu Malaysia (PPPM)  
Queensland Lactation College, Australia  
Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAP-AL), Chile  
Red de Acción sobre Plaguicidas y Alternativas en México (RAPAM)  
Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM)  
Sai Baba, Malaysia  
Sandra Steingraber, Teacher, Ecologist, Author of “Living Downstream” & “Having Faith”, USA  
Sarvodaya Women’s Movement, Sri Lanka  
Sharyle Patton, International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), Co-Chair for Working Group on Community Monitoring, USA  
Soka Gakkai Malaysia, Malaysia  
Srishti, India  
Surakshita, India  
Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan  
Taiping Tourist Association, Malaysia  
Taiwan Watch Institute  
Tchala Songo, CADIC, Congo  
Ted Greiner, International Maternal & Child Health (IMCH), Upsala University, Sweden  
The Conservation Action & Information Network (TCAIN), India  
Theosophical Society, Malaysia, Malaysia  
The Nordic Workgroup for International Breastfeeding Issues, Sweden  
ToxicsLink, India  
Virginia Thorley, WABA International Advisory Council member  
WABA Steering Committee  
Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping, Malaysia  
Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Netherlands  
Women’s Environmental Network, UK  
World Information Transfer, USA  