

## **WABA Press Release: *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2013 LAUNCHED!***

**Oct 8, 2013** - WABA announces the launch of the global report *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2013*, focussing on *“Alternatives and Resistance to Policies that Generate Hunger”*.

Breastfeeding has a vital role in making food security a reality for millions of babies born every year. Breastmilk is the first food for babies, and breastfeeding also benefits women, families, communities, and our planet.

*“WABA believes that programmes related to food and nutrition, health care and development and, especially programmes on infant and young child feeding, should be free from commercial influence and conflicts of interest”* advocates Dato Anwar Fazal, WABA Executive Director; *“this is especially since optimal breastfeeding, including early, exclusive breastfeeding for six months, and continued adequate breastfeeding for up to two years or longer constitute the primary intervention to prevent child mortality worldwide.”*

*Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2013* points out that in recent years, several schemes related to food, agriculture and nutrition lead by the most powerful countries in the world in close cooperation with corporations have gained unprecedented influence. As international solidarity between states as well as UN resources have significantly decreased since the financial crisis in 2008, the new precept in international affairs appears to be that no major development project can be carried out without the active participation of major corporations and their front foundations/agencies, often in the form of public-private partnership (PPP). There is an urgent need to question this trend as it should be clear to everyone that the interests of corporations do not always align with public interests.

Concerned about the impact of industry on the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding, WABA's International Advisory Council member Dr Ted Greiner collaborated on article in *WATCH 2013*, focusing on the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Initiative. *“SUN is doing a lot of good things. It's helping to finally get nutrition the attention it deserves and directing resources to some of the countries that most need it. But doing it by inviting Big Food and Big Agriculture into policy making forums is a dangerous game in a world where they are part of the problem”* argues Dr Greiner.

The SUN Initiative emerged from a World Bank initiative in 2009, and calls itself a global “movement” that unites governments, civil society, businesses and citizens in a worldwide effort to end under-nutrition. But as Dr Greiner notes in the *WATCH 2013* article: *“Despite its insistence that it supports breastfeeding, we see no way in which SUN can prevent companies from using their public relations and their access to policy-making to damage the funding, support and protection of sustainable food cultures and optimal infant and young child feeding... We believe that the risks of what is said here need to be independently researched, acknowledged and addressed.*

Civil society groups and social movements worldwide offer sustainable alternatives founded on the participation of all people concerned and adapted to fit their needs. These self-organised actors are mobilising against the plundering of their resources, land and livelihoods with the aim of having their rights recognised and enforced by responsible authorities. The key message of *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* this year is that people's participation in the planning, development and implementation of alternatives to dominant policies in food, agriculture and nutrition is needed to challenge the current balance of power and effectively tackle hunger. It is of utmost importance to engage rights holders—people, communities and their organizations—in the design and implementation of policies that affect their daily lives.

WABA along with other members of the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Consortium* hope that all the initiatives presented in this 2013 edition of the *Watch* will enrich readers' understandings of the complex issues and foster many similar initiatives of resistance to challenge the current balance of power. Inspired by our shared experiences, exchanges of

ideas and strategies, we will build together sustainable alternatives for an improved system where all people will enjoy all human rights - including the right to adequate food and nutrition.

See WATCH 2013 publication for more information: <http://www.rfn-watch.org/>

See Right To Food and Nutrition Watch 2013 Press Release at: <http://www.rfn-watch.org/en/home/watch-2013/new-release/>

See WABA Position Paper on Public Private Partnerships at: <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/advocacy/pdf/PPP2011.pdf>



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The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide. WABA action is based on the Innocenti Declaration, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF & an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).