On 8 October 2005, during the holy month of Ramadhan at approximately 8.50 am local time, a major earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale, hit Pakistan with the epicentre in the Pakistan administered region of Kashmir. It was the strongest quake to hit South Asia in 100 years and is similar in intensity as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

The UN reported that more than 4 million people are directly affected as winter snow starts. Many of them are at risk of dying from cold and the spread of disease.

As in any disaster, it is the children who are affected the most. Half of those killed are likely to be children, and at least 1.6 million children have been left homeless, many of whom live in the most inaccessible and impoverished areas in the region. Most of the affected areas are in mountainous regions and access is impeded by landslides that have blocked the roads.

UNICEF has warned that as many as 10,000 children could die of hunger, hypothermia and disease in the coming weeks. Damaged infrastructure and the onset of winter means access to areas will become even more of a challenge.

This is an appeal from Blue Veins (Women Welfare & Relief Services) one of WABA’s Seedgrant recipient from Pakistan: Blue Veins expresses its concern and solidarity with the victims of this disaster and wishes to highlight the need to protect infant lives through adequate feeding practices. There is an very urgent need to protect infant lives through adequate feeding practices & providing relief to breastfeeding mothers in the effected areas.

Blue Veins is taking an initiative to protect infant lives through adequate feeding practices & providing relief to breastfeeding mothers in the effected areas. We request all friends to join hands & let us know how possibly can they assist & collaborate in this regard.

Qamar Naseem
Programme Coordinator
bveins@hotmail.com
Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week Around the World
Breastfeeding and Family Foods
Loving & Healthy

WABA would like to thank each and every individual and group from all over the world who were involved in the World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2005 celebrations. The WABA Secretariat is currently compiling all the wonderful stories and reports from around the globe and will publishing a WBW Report for 2004/2005. If you would like to see your celebrations showcased in this publication, hurry, send in your reports and materials now. The closing date for submission is 31 December 2005. In the meantime, here are some of the highlights:

MADAGASCAR

"Mothers, show proof of love. Take good care of your child at birth. Give him breastmilk so he will grow well and be strong," sings the number one female pop star in Madagascar.

To improve breastfeeding practices in Madagascar, the AED project LINKAGES and its local partners invited the pop star to be their national Breastfeeding Ambassador. She recorded 3 songs on breastfeeding that were broadcast nationwide on television and radio. Cassettes of the song were distributed to taxi drivers.

AFGHANISTAN

While most Afghan mothers do breastfeed their newborn children, it is common for many mothers to discard the colostrum which is known to contain antibodies and growth agents that are of critical importance in the early days of a child's life. In addition the introduction of inappropriate foods such as tea and breads at too early a stage in an infant's development and the delay in introducing nutritious foods are both known to be the common bad practices in the country.

A special WBW launching ceremony was held and a series of events were organised which includes radio and television broadcasts, round table discussions, school competitions and special teachings during Friday prayers - bringing home the message that breastfeeding is essential to a child's health development and that improved feeding practices are critical to a child’s survival.

Below is an excerpt of an article by Karen Dawn who runs the animal media advocacy watch DawnWatch.com in the Los Angeles Times.

Dairy cows have overtaken automobiles as the No.1 air polluter in parts of California, according to a Los Angeles Times article. A New York Times editorial discussed "the eye-stinging, nose-burning smell of cattle congestion in rural California," acknowledging that something had to be done. What nobody wants to say, in this land of milk and cookies, is that we shouldn't be drinking cow's milk.

In the last edition of his "Baby and Child Care" bible, Dr. Benjamin Spock made it clear that cow's milk is for baby cows, not for the human child. He wrote that it was "too rich in saturated fats that cause artery blockages" and that it "slows down iron absorption." He suggested that it may cause ear and/or respiratory problems, and may be linked to childhood onset diabetes. He stressed that infants should drink only human breastmilk and older children should try soy and rice milk products.

Dairy industry spends millions of dollars telling us that milk consumption will help us loose weight and would rather we didn't see a study in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine which found hat children who drink more than three servings of milk daily are prone to becoming overweight even if it is low-fat milk. Neither does the industry advertise the Harvard School of Public Health finding that 15% of whites, 70% of African Americans and 90% of Asians are lactose intolerant.

The industry prefers to scare us with tales of brittle bones, hoping we don't notice studies showing that people in Asia who consume no dairy products have significantly lower hip fractures than people in America. Consistent with those results is Harvard University's 1997 Nurses Health Study which followed 78,000 women over a 12 year period and found that those who consumed the most dairy foods broke the most bones.

A study in August International Journal of Cancer found 13% increase in ovarian cancer risk in women who increased their lactose intake in amounts equivalent to one glass of milk per day.

Source : rense.com 15 Aug 2005
**Fat Content of Breastmilk Increases with Time**

The longer a mother breastfeeds, the higher the fat and energy content of her breastmilk.

The researchers said that the study was the first to analyse the fat and energy content of breastmilk of mothers who breastfeed for longer than a year.

“There are more and more women who choose to breastfeed for longer time periods and not many studies about the nutritional value of their milk during this prolonged lactation”, said Dr Ronit Lubetsky, co-author of the study, from the Department of Pediatrics at Dana Children’s Hospital in Israel.

“This nicely done study which looked at a question that really needed to be answered,” added Dr Ruth Lawrence, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. “I think, many people’s general impression is if you continue to breastfeed beyond a year, probably the nutrient value drops, and this is quite different information and very important’.

To determine the energy content of human breastmilk at longer periods, Lubetsky and colleagues sampled the breastmilk of 34 mothers who had been breastfeeding for 12 to 39 months and compared that with milk of 27 mothers who had been breastfeeding for only 2 to 6 months.

They found a startling difference: the fat content in the mothers who had breastfed for longer periods of time was 17.5 percent versus only 5 percent in the short term group.

Source: www.forbes.com/lifestyle/health

**Preventing Cancer with Mother’s Milk**

A team of scientists has found that an ingredient in the milk of humans, cows and rats could be the key to preventing and treating breast cancer.

The team from the Czech Academy of Science and University of Louisville spent the last 10 years experimenting with procathepsin D and its relative cathepsin D which are molecules called peptides, found inside cells and are controlled by hormones.

Their research into controlling the cellular ingredient in procathepsin D could help in the fight into ovarian and prostate cancer.

The research builds on earlier studies which suggested that women who breastfeed and those who were breastfed apparently have a lower risk of developing cancer.

Since procathepsin D is found in mothers milks as well as in the milk of cows and rats, the researchers theorised that it may play a role in naturally immunising a woman against cancer.

Source: The Sun, Aug 15 2005

**Mothers exposed to misleading formula milk advertisements**

Formula milk manufacturers are confusing mothers with clever marketing that posts misleading messages about formula milk through advertising which exploits a loophole in the UK law.

A survey of 1000 new mothers and pregnant women suggests that manufacturers are finding ways around regulations banning the promotion of infant formula for babies.

According to Andrew Radford, Director of UNICEF UK’s Baby Friendly Initiative, "When the advertising ban was introduced, it didn’t cover follow-on formula. The manufacturers have since changed the way they package and promote follow-on formulas so that they’re almost identical to the regular infant formula. This means that a supposedly legal, TV or magazine advert on a follow-on formula will also promote a company’s infant formula”.

The researchers found that:

- 60% of the women believed they had seen or heard infant formula advertising even though its been banned for ten years
- 30% said that advertising gave the impression that infant formula milk was "as good as or "better than" breastmilk. This is despite the overwhelming evidence that bottle-feeding carries health risks.
- nearly one in five mothers who used follow-on milk (which is only suitable for infants over six months) said they started before their baby was three months old, even though it’s unsuitable for children of this age.

Source: NCT/UNICEF 19 Sept 2005
News from the Secretariat, Penang, Malaysia
Secretariat News, Project Development and Outreach

Aug • Julianna Lim Abdullah and Satnam Kaur attend the Malaysian National Launching of WBY in Kuala Terengganu • Julianna Lim delivers the keynote address at the Complementary Feeding Symposium organised by PPFIM • WABA Secretariat attends the WBY launching at the Penang Hospital, at Tesco Penang in which Julianna Lim delivers a speech on behalf of WABA • Liew Mun Tip participates in WBY celebrations and has dialogues with breastfeeding partners in Caracas, Venezuela • Pamela Morrison gave talks to the Secretariat staff over 3 days on the subject of Mothers Milk and HIV, The Politics of Infant Feeding Choice - transcultural issues and Lactation Management 101 • Susan Siew and Satnam Kaur attend the IAF Annual Conference "The Magic of Facilitation" in Kuala Lumpur • Anwar Fazal, Susan Siew and Koh Kah Ling attend the National Consumer Convention in Kuala Lumpur

Sept • Global Breastfeeding Partners Meeting 4 was organised and held in Lone Pine Hotel in Penang • WABA Steering Committee Meeting was held after the GPBM 4 • Sarah Amin and Liew Mun Tip attend the TMF Monitoring and Management Workshop in Netherlands and also meeting with DGIS • Satnam Kaur and Julianna Lim successfully completes the 18 hour Breastfeeding Course conducted by Penang Hospital • Liew Mun Tip and Felicity Savage in dialogue with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Kubang Kerian, Kelantan on lactation management training and Felicity gave a presentation on Breastmilk as Brainfood at the USM Brain Awareness meeting. • Sarah Amin, Koh Kah Ling and Lakshmi Menon attend IWHM in New Delhi. A WABA booth was set-up and they all took part in Pantomime Mums performance. Informal meetings were held with various women’s groups and WABA joins the WGNNR Taskforce on HIV • Anwar Fazal hands over the directorship of WABA to Sarah Amin and Susan Siew. The Secretariat records its deepest gratitude and thank him for his wonderful leadership and guidance over the past 2 years. • 2 Gender publications were published; Against all odds - Gendered Challenges to Breastfeeding (Edited by Radha Holla-Bhar) and Breastfeeding - A Reproductive Health and Rights Issue by Lakshmi Menon and Sarah Amin. The Gender brochure was also updated and printed.

Oct • The Secretariat welcomes back Sarah Amin and Susan Siew in their roles as WABA Co-Directors and Liew Mun Tip as Deputy Director. • Gender Workshop for IBFAN Africa was conducted in Penang • Sarah Amin and Lakshmi Menon attends the AWFU Forum in Bangkok, where a WABA booth was set-up and a Visual Essay was presented • Susan Siew attends the South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum 2 in Kathmandu, Nepal. • The Secretariat welcomes back Sarah Amin and Susan Siew in their roles as WABA Co-Directors and Liew Mun Tip as Deputy Director. • Gender Workshop for IBFAN Africa was conducted in Penang • Sarah Amin and Lakshmi Menon attends the AWFU Forum in Bangkok, where a WABA booth was set-up and a Visual Essay was presented • Susan Siew attends the South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum 2 in Kathmandu, Nepal. • The Secretariat welcomes back Sarah Amin and Susan Siew in their roles as WABA Co-Directors and Liew Mun Tip as Deputy Director. • Gender Workshop for IBFAN Africa was conducted in Penang • Sarah Amin and Lakshmi Menon attends the AWFU Forum in Bangkok, where a WABA booth was set-up and a Visual Essay was presented • Susan Siew attends the South Asia Breastfeeding Partners Forum 2 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Visitors to the Secretariat
- August: Ines Fernandez, Arugaan, Philippines; Pamela Morrison, England • September: Audrey Naylor, Wellstart, USA; Beth Syer, USA; Nomajoni Ntombe, Linkages, Zambia; Felicity Savage, ICH, England; Marta Trejos, Cefemina, Costa Rica; Jose Gorrin Peralta, ABM, USA; Pauline Kisanga & Ray Maseko, IBFAN, Swaziland; Ana Parilla, IBFAN, Puerto Rico • October: Associate Prof. Dr. Zalina Ismail, Deputy Dean, School of Health Science, University Sains Malaysia, Kelantan, Malaysia

WABA, PO Box 1200, 10850 Penang, Malaysia • Tel: 60-4-6584816 • Fax: 60-4-6572655 • Email: waba@streamyx.com • Website: www.waba.org.my

Editor: Julianna Lim Abdullah • Editorial Assistant: Michelle Jambu • Advisor: Sarah Amin and Susan Siew

2006 Seedgrant Programme for Maternity Protection (MP) & Global Initiative for Father Support (GIFS)is now open
For the application package, write to the WABA Secretariat or download from the WABA website at:
http://www.waba.org.my/womenwork/seedapply.htm for MP Seedgrant
The closing date is 15 January 2006.