

WABA brought together Core Partners at the 2008 *Global Breastfeeding Partners Meeting (GBPM)*. Prior to the GBPM, a 2-day technical workshop on '*Complementary Foods and Feeding (CFF) and Continued Breastfeeding beyond six months*' was held. Together with the key players in this field including MSF and ENN who shared their field experiences, the WABA GBPM involving 56 persons from 21 countries developed a mutually-supportive strategy that advanced the work and goals of the emergency groups, without jeopardising the goal of promoting optimal breastfeeding from 0–24 months. The participants of the Technical Workshop developed a joint statement calling upon everyone involved in improving the health and development of infants and young children to take steps to ensure that continued breastfeeding 6-24+ months is protected, promoted and supported. Twenty steps for action encompassing communication, education, practical support definitions and monitoring were described.

The Technical workshop on CCF was a significant advocacy achievement, considering the impending threat posed by RUTFs being promoted vastly by international organisations, including the UN, as a quick solution to deal with severe childhood malnutrition. While there is a role for RUTFs in cases of severely malnourished children, its success in specific cases has led to campaigns for a wider rollout of such foods even in preventing malnutrition in children under two years of age. WABA and its partners responded in a timely and proactive manner to this impending threat by building a strong alliance with leaders in the emergency network, so that a mutually satisfying global approach and shared protocols would become available to the global community.



*Breastfeeding in a safety of a tent after an earthquake in Peru.*

### **Breastfeeding: A Vital Emergency Response (WBW 2009)**

At the 2008 GBPM held in Penang, the International Baby Food Action Network and Geneva Infant Feeding Association (IBFAN-GIFA) along with the ENN representing an international collaboration of UN agencies and NGOs petitioned the WABA General Assembly to safeguard the important role of breastfeeding in emergencies. Emergencies can happen anywhere and anytime in the world. Infants and young children are especially vulnerable to malnutrition, illness, and death in these situations. Whatever the nature of the emergency – from earthquakes to conflicts, from floods to the flu pandemic – the message is the same: breastfeeding is a lifeline and a shield that protects infants in emergencies.