



breastfeeding. Breastmilk is under scrutiny, and not just because of transmission of HIV: media reports scream 'Toxic chemicals in breastmilk transmitted by breastfeeding'. This may seem secondary in comparison to HIV – but is it really a minor issue?

In 2002, WABA had just published Penny van Esterik's book 'Risks, Rights and Regulations: Communicating about Risks and Infant Feeding'. The book formed the basis of two workshops in Arusha on the theme of Breastmilk and the Environment. The discussions facilitated by Anwar and Penny led to the collaboration of WABA's Core Partners on the publication in 2003 of 'Towards Healthy Environments for Children: Frequently Asked Questions on Breastfeeding in a contaminated environment'. The text was revised in 2005 to include chemicals banned under the then recently adopted Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, called the POPs Treaty.

WABA's Core Partners therefore campaigned on two fronts: First, IBFAN's 2013 "Statement on Chemical Residues and Infant and Young Child Feeding" provided scientific evidence on how breastfeeding mitigates the negative effects of exposures to chemicals in utero. Second, we emphasise the shared responsibility of men and women to press for the elimination of toxic chemicals from our environment. We have moved away from using titles such as 'Contamination of Breastmilk' to 'Chemical Residues in Every Body', as shown by the articles on IBFAN's website: <http://ibfan.org/chemical-residues-in-every-body>

However, the mountain still beckons us to go farther and higher – and reminds us that Kilimanjaro is a volcano, even if extinct. The problem of toxic chemicals in human bodies is ready to flare up at any moment and we need to be well prepared. WABA and its Core Partners have successfully campaigned for ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection to defend the rights of women workers. We need to campaign in the same way for the implementation of ILO Convention 184 of 2001 on Health and Safety in Agriculture.²¹ This Convention includes Article 18 on protection of women workers and rural women: "Measures shall be taken to ensure that the special needs of women agricultural workers are taken into account in relation to pregnancy, breastfeeding and reproductive health." Furthermore, Article 17 on Young Workers and Hazardous Work addresses the protection of health and safety of young workers. These are the mothers and fathers of tomorrow and we must work to prevent their exposure to the toxic chemicals used in agriculture, and the effects on their children. As the late Director of UNICEF used to say, we are no longer talking about 'the farmer and his wife', but instead about 'the African farmer and her husband'.

– Alison Linnecar, former Women and Work Task Force Co-Coordinator

21. Few member states have ratified ILO 184 and WABA should push for wider ratification of this Convention: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312329