

This theme sought to raise awareness on the critical period after six months, and to help make the transition from exclusive breastfeeding to breastfeeding and eating with the rest of the family in a loving and caring way. The information disseminated stressed the fact that breastmilk continues to be an important source of nourishment for children after the first six months of life, particularly when mothers continue to practice breastfeeding, whilst feeding other foods. New focus was also given to the role of family foods and child-led feeding. Allowing a child to lead her/his own food intake and timing is part of the child's development process, eating smaller but more frequent meals or when hungry, tasting new foods, appreciating new textures and colours, are all part of learning and growing.

A significant development in terms of increased UN recognition and political support was the endorsement and a letter of support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for WBW.

WABA-UNICEF Colloquium on HIV & Infant Feeding (2002)

HIV, the human immuno-deficiency virus, and AIDS, the acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome caused by HIV, affects mainly sexually active adults. However, babies and children can also be infected through their mother and (indirectly) her sexual partner. HIV can be vertically transmitted to a baby before, during or after delivery, including through breastfeeding. Due to the risks to infant and young child survival posed by artificial feeding, this creates a dilemma for policymakers and healthcare workers in making recommendations

about how HIV-exposed babies should be fed.²⁵ The WABA-UNICEF Colloquium on HIV was the first meeting ever to bring together HIV and breastfeeding communities, where a decade long conflict existed between those who were trying to prevent HIV/AIDs and those who were trying to have the best overall public health outcomes for infant and young children.

The Colloquium delved into the main dilemmas and debates around HIV/AIDS and infant feeding practices. The key themes focused on issues of "if and how to breastfeed", and addressed confusion



25. Understanding International Policy on HIV and Breastfeeding. A comprehensive resource. Section 1. WABA.