



International Baby Food Action Network - IBFAN
Red internacional de grupos pro alimentación infantil
Réseau international des groupes d'action pour
l'alimentation infantile

Geneva Infant Feeding Association - GIFA

1998 Recipient of the Right Livelihood Award



IBFAN-GIFA Recommendations to CEDAW regarding Maternal Health and Work-related issues,

United Arab Emirates

Session 45, January 2010

Members of the CEDAW Committee

Geneva, 11 January 2010

Dear Members of the CEDAW Committee,

For the very first time we would like to send your Committee a brief report concerning information related to CEDAW articles 11 and 12 in **the UAE**.

1) Data (from UNICEF Breastfeeding indicators, State of the World Children, 2003)

Exclusive breastfeeding:	Before 6 months:	34%
Timely complementary feeding:	6-9 months:	52%
Continued breastfeeding rate	20-23 months:	39%

These rates are low. There is a lack of information to parents - mothers in particular - concerning optimal infant and young child feeding, and very poor compliance with the International Code of Breast-milk Substitutes – in fact the UAE is considered an extremely promising market for firms producing and distributing breast-milk substitutes.

2) Data on Maternal mortality rate (from UNICEF Breastfeeding indicators, State of the World Children, 2008)

2003-2008 reported	3
Adjusted	37
Lifetime risk of maternal death: 1 in:	1000

There is room for much improvement as these rates are low.

3) Maternity Protection at work (Source: IBFAN-GIFA report, sent to CRC in Sept 2004, session 37)

Maternity Protection legislation in the UAE is discriminatory as it gives national and non-national workers different entitlements. Approximately 70-80% of the workforce is composed of non-nationals. Female national workers are given 8 weeks maternity leave; non-nationals are allowed 6 weeks. Moreover, whereas nationals are covered by social security, non-nationals have to contribute to a private insurance health scheme. Lastly it is important to underline the high proportion of women (from the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India) working as domestic servants in private homes and lacking most forms of protection

4) IBFAN-GIFA's recommendations:

- **Implement policies and regulations on breastfeeding promotion, protection and support; a marketing code should be enacted and implemented.**

- **Provide free reproductive health care and medication, including antenatal and post natal care as well as qualified assistance during delivery to all women living in the UAE;**
- **Provide paid maternity leave for women working in all sectors of the economy, including the private sector and the informal economy. Maternity protection should follow the provisions of ILO C183, 2000 as a minimum standard.**

We thank you for your assistance and understanding, and hope that it will be possible to bring up these issues during the country review.

Yours sincerely,

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