



**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**



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

### **Botswana**

#### **Session 45, January 2010**

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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 very brief report concerning information related to articles 11 and 12 in **Botswana**.

**1) Data (from UNICEF Breastfeeding indicators, State of the World Children, 2008)**

Exclusive breastfeeding:	Before 6 months:	34%
Timely complementary feeding:	6-9 months:	57%
Continued breastfeeding rate	20-23 months:	11%

These rates are very low. They seem to indicate the lack of access of parents - mothers in particular - to information concerning optimal infant and young child feeding and the risks of not breastfeeding, including for their own health and child spacing. Protection in the form of legislation, as well as support to mothers, is also lacking.

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

2003-2008 reported	330
Adjusted	380
Lifetime risk of maternal death: 1 in:	130

The CRC **recommendation (session 37, Sept. 2004)** concerning this included:

to “*strengthen its primary health care strategy by ...providing the highest attainable standard of health for all children... Lower maternal mortality rates by improving antenatal care services, and provide training of birth attendants in healthy midwifery practices.*”

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

The Maternity Protection Act allows 84 days (12 weeks) maternity leave to be taken as wished, either before or after or before and after confinement.

A circular DP.5/3 1(35) (of June 1982) from the Department of Public Service Management permits all working mothers to have one hour feeding break until the baby is one year, regardless of whether she is breastfeeding or not. Feeding breaks are allowed but their implementation is difficult.

Ratification of the ILO Convention (No 183) is mentioned in the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy, but the implementation process is still pending. Moreover, financial benefits are low (“not less than 25%”, whereas C183 stipulates not less than 66%) and covered by the employers (which can lead to discrimination as an employer may be tempted to refuse employing a woman of child-bearing age in case she should become pregnant and they were under the obligation to finance her leave - and replace her).

**4) IBFAN-GIFA’s recommendations:**

- **Implement policies and regulations on breastfeeding promotion, protection and support**
- **Provide reproductive health care and medication, including antenatal and post natal care as well as qualified assistance during delivery; Provide free access to these services for all women;**
- **Provide paid maternity leave for women working in all sectors of the economy, including the informal economy, that follows 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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