

Report of the India launches “The Need to Invest in Babies” 10th December 2013



Dr Arun Gupta, Dr Syeda Hameed, Sh. Montek Singh, HE Eivind Homme, Ms Nita Chowdhury, Dr Julie Smith

The silence on the need to protect, promote and support breastfeeding was broken yesterday/ on 10th December 2013 when the Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission of India, Montek Singh Ahluwalia launched the *World Breastfeeding Costing Initiative (WBCi)* Report “The Need to Invest in Babies” by IBFAN.

The Report calls upon governments and global communities to invest at least US\$ 17.5 billion annually if they genuinely want to improve optimal breastfeeding practices. Women need support for breastfeeding, and this support has to take into account maternity benefits, especially for women living in poverty, strict enforcement of the International Code for Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, massive media promotion, creating baby friendly health systems and communities, where every woman has access to counseling and support for carrying out optimal breastfeeding and central coordination system that oversees implementation of the interventions.

The Report is accompanied by an excel-based **WBCi Financial Planning Tool**, which helps governments and planners to accurately budget interventions for improving breastfeeding rates in their country at both national and sub-national levels.

Terming the Report as “excellent”, Ahluwalia stressed that the “there is no reason for not acting”. The health benefits of proper breastfeeding are well known, and now there is increasing evidence how it can protect women from dangerous diseases like breast and ovarian cancer. Campaigns need to be directed at not just the poor, but also the elite, who set the fashion for infant feeding. He also called for strong campaigns to highlight the dangers of formula



feeding, as is being done for tobacco.

HE Evind Homme, Ambassador of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, urged governments and civil society to work together to support women to breastfeed. His country has shown that this is possible, that breastfeeding is the norm.

Ms. Nita Chowdhury, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI, stressed on the commitment of her ministry to mainstream breastfeeding in India's premier programme – the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

Concluding the launch, Dr. Syeda Hameed, Member Health, Planning Commission of India, appreciated the WBCi tool which will not only help in tracking the financial resources made available for improving breastfeeding practices, but also make the system and the functionaries accountable for implementation of policies and programmes.



Media made it widely covered!

[Media Coverage: 12.Dec.2013](#)

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7. News Track India

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18. This is my India .Com

<http://www.thisismvindia.com/xml/india-news.html?id=97702>

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<http://www.newkerala.com/news/story/99881/175-bn-global-investment-needed-for-optimal-breastfeeding-report.html#.UqleQdIW2So>

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