

## **Anwar Fazal – Message to IBFAN’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 12 Oct 2009**

**Dear brothers and sisters,**

**30 years ago, I had the honour to announce the birth of IBFAN at the closing of the WHO/UNICEF Meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding , a very special global multi-stakeholder event, the first of its kind under the UN 'halo' , and prompted by the deep commitment of the late US Senator Edward Kennedy.**

**It was a truly revolutionary birth; among the parents were a small Swiss student activist group, a global consumer organisation, a small activist development group that published "The Baby Killer", one of the largest development and humanitarian aid group, a magnificent grassroots group that challenged corporations through boycotts and a church based centre interfaith centre for corporate responsibility. Born in the bosom of the John Knox International Centre in Geneva , this special unique potpourri of civil society blossomed into a the first 'network' of it kind ever and generated a magnificent proliferation of global people power that was quite unprecedented in those times.**

**The structure was unique - more a love affair than a marriage, where the periphery was the centre and it greatest strength was the passionate flow of soft links that were nourished by a open, light, participatory and, most of all, action oriented framework that had multiple identities and was everywhere its own and yet together!**

**We shall never forget IBFAN, and its Geneva home, GIFA, for five very special things:**

- 1) you reminded the world constantly of the " Power of the Breastfeeding Five " - medicine, nutrition, ecology, economics and, most of all, love.**
- 2) you ensured that breastfeeding remained on the agenda of world bodies and the people's imagination at all time.**
- 3) you saw the development of the worlds first international consumer interest Code ever and showed civil society that 'we the people' can do it.**
- 4) you inspired and multiplied a series of similar global consumer movements around pharmaceuticals and pesticides -- Health Action International(HAI) and Pesticide Action Network(PAN) and these, like IBFAN, still are flourishing public interest movements.**
- 5) you created at least three excellent tools that acted as incubators, catalysts and multipliers:**

**# the red and blue SOCs - the State of the Code by Country and Company in the colors of WHO and the Swiss flag**

**# the Nestle boycott - the longest and most extensive consumer boycott in history**

**# the International Code Documentation Centre, the fantastic training of “Code experts” from all over the world and the classic Code Handbook - the best and most authoritative of its kind. (the author is in the room: Ellen Sokol, please stand up so we can applaud you !)**

**Such leadership in civil society is quite unprecedented .You took charge of creating the next generation of change-agents!**

**Thank you IBFAN.**

**Thank you, for saving the lives of millions of babies.**

**Thank you, for empowering women everywhere to breastfeed.**

**Thank you, for being an inspiration to global civil society.**

**And thank you GIFA, for being one of the key and "constant" hubs of IBFAN: you enabled so much to happen, so well.**

**A generation has passed but our work for nurturing the future must continue like never before. A world in crisis, financial and environmental also tells the world that BREASTFEEDING IS EVER MORE IMPORTANT TO PROTECT, PROMOTE AND SUPPORT. "**

**Professor Anwar Fazal**

**Director, Right Livelihood College,**

**Co-founder of IBFAN,**

**Chairperson Emeritus, World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action(WABA)**