

58TH CRC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS GOVERNMENTS TO REGULATE UNHEALTHY FOODS

The 58th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) took place from 19 September to 7 October in Geneva. The Committee reviewed the progress of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 6 countries: **Iceland, Italy, Republic of Korea, Panama, Seychelles, Syria.**

IBFAN presented [alternative reports](#) on the situation of infant and young child feeding, for all 6 countries under review. In 4 cases these reports were written by IBFAN groups in the countries (Iceland, Italy, Panama, and Seychelles). The reports on the Republic of Korea and Syria were written by the Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA).

In its concluding observations, the CRC Committee referred specifically to **breastfeeding** in 5 out of the 6 countries. With the exception of Korea, all the other countries received concluding observations on infant and child nutrition and breastfeeding in particular. Unfortunately in the case of Korea, the late submission of IBFAN's alternative report may have prevented the CRC Committee from making use of the information contained in the report.

The CRC Committee has shown a growing concern about the increasing rates of obesity among children both in developed and developing countries, due to unregulated marketing of foods to children and infants and early introduction of complementary foods. Thus the Committee has recommended that State parties establish regulations to restrict the marketing and advertisement of unhealthy foods and breastmilk substitutes for children and infants (Iceland, Italy and Seychelles).

The Committee has paid particular attention to **the awareness among the public** generally about the importance of breastfeeding and the risks of artificial feeding. It recommended concrete actions such as increasing access to materials on breastfeeding and to education and campaigns. The Committee also considers important **the sensitization of government officials, parents and staff working in maternity units.** It has also recommended that breastfeeding should be included in nursery trainings (Italy, Panama, Seychelles, Iceland, Syria).

The Committee has once more stressed the importance of the strict **enforcement of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes** by State parties including through strengthening of national laws whenever necessary, and the need for action in cases of violations (Syria, Seychelles, Panama, Italy, Iceland).

Moreover, the Committee has recommended that countries establish a National Breastfeeding Committee, improve data collection on breastfeeding and promote baby friendly hospitals (Syria).

On health more generally, the CRC Committee has focused on the need to improve equal access to health care services, and **decrease inequalities in access to health care** (Korea, Panama, Syria), with particular focus on children of immigrants (Iceland and Italy), disadvantaged areas, low income families (Korea). It has recommended that state parties increase their allocation to the health sector, with a focus on primary health care, and improve the training of their health personnel.

Summary of concluding observations on IYCF: CRC Session 58 - 2011

Country		IBFAN report	Summary of specific recommendations on IYCF
1	Iceland	Yes	<p><i>Direct</i> (Para 40-4): Very low rates of ebf; promote exclusive and continued bf; raise awareness to the public; enforce and monitor the IC.</p> <p><i>Indirect</i> (Para 36-37): The problem of obesity among children: continued education on health and nutrition and the negative impacts of obesity</p>
2	Italy	Yes	<p><i>Direct</i> (Para 49-50): Improve Ebf for six months; awareness raising, campaigns, information and training of government officials, maternity unit staffs and parents; strengthen and regularly monitor regulations about the marketing of foods for children and BMS; take action against violations of these regulations.</p> <p><i>Indirect</i> (Para 47-48): Problem of obesity; awareness raising programs on the importance of physical health and healthy eating practices; effective implementation of the National Prevention Plan 2010-2012.</p>
3	Korea	Yes	<p><i>Indirect</i> (Para 26-27 on <i>Child rights and the business sector</i>): lack of comprehensive framework regulating and mitigating the adverse HR impacts of companies in the country and abroad.</p>
4	Panama	Yes	<p><i>Direct</i> (Para 54-55): strengthen promotion of breastfeeding; enforce the International Code.</p>
5	Seychelles	Yes	<p><i>Direct</i> (Para 52-53): strengthen efforts to promote exclusive and continued breastfeeding; provide materials and education and raise awareness of the public on the importance of breastfeeding and risks of artificial feeding; strictly enforce the International Code.</p> <p>(Para 50-51 on <i>Health care and health services</i>): concerned about the increasing obesity among children; raise public awareness on the negative impacts of processed foods; establish regulations to restrict and monitor advertising of unhealthy foods.</p>
6	Syria	Yes	<p><i>Direct</i> (Para 63-64): establish a bf committee; systematically collect data on bf; ensure the enforcement of the International Code; promote BFHI; include breastfeeding in nursery trainings.</p> <p><i>Indirect</i> (Para 64): increase number of hospitals providing specialized services for children; improve the quality of nutritional education and counselling services.</p>