



code violations in asia-pacific 2008

Overview

IBFAN-ICDC launched its *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2007* (BTR 2007) to an enthusiastic audience end 2007. This was followed closely by a special focus report – *Look What They're Doing in Asia-Pacific*.

The recent 'melamine in milk' scare in China brought home the fact that more and more mothers are opting for formula feeding at a time when babies should, more than ever, be breastfed. IBFAN-ICDC therefore feels that this is an appropriate time to release snapshots of marketing tactics companies are engaging in the Asia-Pacific region which has a burgeoning baby food market and consumers with increased purchasing power.

While modern lifestyles have a lot to do with this trend, it cannot be denied that clever marketing by baby food companies have a lot to do with mothers turning their backs on breastfeeding. IBFAN-ICDC has, with the help of volunteers been able to collect many examples of aggressive marketing tactics by baby food companies which not only violate of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, but also of the national measures which countries in this region have implemented to regulate marketing practices concerning baby foods, feeding bottles and teats.

It is a sad fact that companies are breaking national laws because they can. This is due to weak legal systems and the low priority governments in this region give to programmes which protect breastfeeding. The 'melamine in milk' scandal underscores the need for governments to strengthen their legal mechanisms to protect the youngest members of their society.

As with previous reports of a similar nature, this report is not a comprehensive chronicle of marketing practices in the Asia-Pacific region, but a snapshot of what is taking place in the Asia Pacific region. Some countries and companies may appear worse than others, but this is wholly due to what we randomly receive from Code watchers, not so much where or whom we choose to focus on.

IBFAN-ICDC thanks the Code watchers who voluntarily contributed their efforts to make this report possible. Every bit of information they send opens a potential window of opportunity to compel governments and companies to perform and behave better respectively to protect children. As laws and standards differ from country to country, the yardstick for this report is grounded on the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent .

IBFAN-ICDC welcomes opinions, feedback, information and news—so if you have contributions to make on the issue of Code monitoring, IBFAN-ICDC would love to hear from you.

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Article 11.3 of the International Code

Independently of any other measures taken for implementation of this Code, manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code should regard themselves as responsible for monitoring their marketing practices according to the principles and aim of this Code, and for taking steps to ensure that their conduct at every level conforms to them.