



# PRESS RELEASE

Since 1992, the [World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action \(WABA\)](#) coordinates the [World Breastfeeding Week \(WBW\)](#) - a global campaign that aims to inform, anchor, engage and galvanise action on breastfeeding and related issues. Breastfeeding is one of the best investments in children's and women's health and survival. Breastfeeding could prevent [823,000 annual deaths in children younger than 5 years and 20,000 annual maternal deaths from breast cancer](#). However, workplace limitations remain the most common reason for women to never breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding earlier than [recommended by World Health Organisation \(WHO\) and UNICEF](#), or than they want themselves.

Only 10% of countries globally meet the [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) standards](#) on length, level of payment, and source of benefits of maternity leave. Even with adequate maternity and parental leave, lack of support for breastfeeding at the workplace can undermine breastfeeding. Only about 20% of countries meet ILO standards on provision of nursing breaks and facilities.

There is a need to improve access to paid maternity leave, and other breastfeeding services for women both inside and outside the workplace. Workers in the informal economy are particularly vulnerable and need attention because maternity entitlements remain inaccessible for many of them, especially in low- and middle- income countries.

Taking care of a newborn is a shared responsibility of all parents, thus the importance of the right to paternity leave to promote greater involvement of fathers in care responsibilities. Fathers need specified paternal leave, and parental leave should be granted, meaning the allocation of a period of leave to be shared between the two parents or partners. The purpose is to ensure that fathers or partners share childcare and domestic responsibilities equitably and reduce the gender gap.

**#WBW2023 focuses on breastfeeding and employment/work. It aims to show the effect of paid leave, workplace support and emerging parenting breastfeeding norms, as parents themselves see them.**

Target audiences, including governments, policymakers, health sectors, employers, communities and parents, will all see that they have critical roles in empowering families and sustaining breastfeeding-friendly environments in the post-pandemic work life balance.

Use the resources available on our [website](#), [Action Folder](#), [Poster](#), and [Social Media Kit](#) to spread awareness of #WBW2023. [Pledge](#) to participate in the #WBW2023 celebrations by sending us details of your virtual/physical activities. View events and activities planned for #WBW2023 on our [Pledge Map](#). Together, we can make a difference for working parents and enable breastfeeding.

## OBJECTIVES OF #WBW2023



### Inform

people about working parents' perspectives on breastfeeding and parenting



### Anchor

optimal paid leave and workplace support as important tools to enable breastfeeding



### Engage

with individuals and organisations to enhance collaboration and support for breastfeeding at work



### Galvanise

action on improving working conditions and relevant support for breastfeeding

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World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA coordinates the annual World Breastfeeding Week campaign.

## Key messages



All working mothers need adequate maternity leave if they are to practise optimal breastfeeding. They should receive appropriate breaks, work-site facilities and support to breastfeed and express and store breastmilk.



Breastfeeding is teamwork and both parents need information and support for their different roles. Access to adequate paternity and parental leave can allow the non-breastfeeding parent to have time to share household responsibilities and provide other support to enable the mother to breastfeed.



A supportive workplace includes providing maternity/paternity entitlements to parents will enable continued breastfeeding and thus improve child health. This results in less absenteeism and enhanced productivity at work which is beneficial for employers as well.



When maternity and parental leave policies are implemented, they can improve breastfeeding. There is a need to mobilise resources to advocate, monitor, evaluate, and enforce policies that promote, protect, and support breastfeeding and the rights of parents and children.



Parents need support from the whole society to enable breastfeeding. A Warm Chain of Support for breastfeeding needs to be established including the health sector, workplace and community.