*(file name : 2015 IBFAN contribution to PAN submission to questionnaire)*

**Elements for responses to questionnaire from the UN Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes**

**The Right of access to information in the field of hazardous substances includes those with human toxicity, acute or chronic, such as Bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates.**

BPA and phthalates are industrial chemicals with well-documented endocrine disrupting effects. In the same way as other Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs), they impersonate or mimic the natural female hormones which regulate the body’s immune and reproductive systems. These synthetic hormones can compromise the neural circuits that regulate specific bodily functions ; they are hormonally active even at low doses and even small exposures can have a cumulative effect. Canada classifies BPA as a toxic substance.

**Vulnerable populations include newborns, infants and young children, unborn babies in the womb.**

All these groups are at a vulnerable stage of development when their immune and reproductive systems are still maturing. The feminising effects of exposure to BPA and phthalates affect males and females in different ways, and the reproductive health of future parentsmay be compromised. There is evidence that the effects may be trans-generational and thus also affect subsequent generations.

**Cumulative exposures in newborns, infants and young children caused by the use of feeding devices.**

Exposures in devices include phthalates used in medical equipment such as plastic tubing for parenteral feeding, the use of polycarbonate plastic in feeding bottles and food utensils, the epoxy resins containing BPA used in the linings of tins or cans containing formula, as well as in the kettles and thermos flasks used to boil and store hot water to prepare formula feeds. Even minute amounts can accumulate after leaching from polycarbonate plastic utensils and can linings, especially if these are scratched or heated.

IBFAN, the International Baby Food Action Network, explains these cumulative exposure routes in the pdf ‘Submission by IBFAN to Stakeholder meeting WHO FAO on BPA : <http://ibfan.org/chemical-contamination-of-infant-feeding-products>

**United Nations Conventions: Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ILO c 184.**

Under article 24, States Parties to the CRC shall pursue the full implementation of Every Child’s Right to the highest attainable standard of health. This implementation includes measures « to combat disease and malnutrition … taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution ; » The CRC was adopted by States Parties in 1989 and since then has been ratified by 195 States. During these years, the concept of malnutrition has expanded to include over-nutrition as well as under-nutrition. Scientific evidence has shown the contribution of EDCs to obesity and other endocrine-related conditions, particularly in girls. The negative health impact of environmental pollution, including toxic chemicals, has been further documented.

ILO Convention 184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture contains articles on sound management of chemicals and on young workers and hazardous work : <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312329>

However, only 15 ILO Member States have ratified this Convention.

**Specific questions 1-2 :**

IBFAN, a global network of national groups, gathers and distributes information on national legislative measures. Governments have different legal processes, including acts of parliament, government or ministerial decrees, rules or regulations. Likewise each government may have different measures to make this information available to the public. To date, IBFAN has received information on government action to restrict the use of BPA in infant feeding bottles in Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, European Union, France, Malaysia, Sweden, Turkey, USA. Reports from the UAE are unconfirmed. Some governments extend the ban on use of BPA to include all food contact and packaging materials for foods for children under the age of 3. Denmark had planned to ban the use of four phthalates in infant feeding equipment, but the ban was postponed as against EU rules under the REACH Directive.

**Specific questions 3-4:**

* IBFAN submits extensive NGO reports to the CRC Committee on article 24 of the CRC, with focus on government action under CRC article 24 (d) on the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding through the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. These ‘shadow’ NGO reports could be extended to include article 24 (c) to fulfil and protect every child’s right to be protected against the adverse impacts of toxic chemicals.
* Information is provided by governments in official documents and reported in media articles. This information is used by national groups in the IBFAN network to inform about measures and to monitor them. Groups organise campaigns, for example in the Philippines, with the aim of inciting other governments in the region to enact measures by providing precedents such as those in Malaysia, or to extend the restrictions already in place.
* Information sharing includes email alerts to IBFAN groups to provide materials for advocacy with policy-makers and the media. Website articles for parents and carers of infants and young children and health professionals explain the risks of BPA and phthalates and how to take steps to minimise the risk to infants and young children and to diminish the risk of exposures in adults which may impact their own reproductive health and that of their future children.
* Monitoring includes collecting information about the risk of dumping of BPA-containing feeding bottles in third countries : see <http://ibfan.org/chemical-contamination-of-infant-feeding-products>. An important component is monitoring the strong opposition of the plastics/chemicals industry and their trade associations and their attempts to derail planned legislation or influence scientific opinions.

**Submitted by Alison Linnecar, on behalf of IBFAN’s Global Working Group on chemical and microbiological contamination of infant feeding products**

**INTERNATIONAL BABY FOOD ACTION NETWORK**

**- 1998  RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD RECIPIENT –**

**IBFAN - the International Baby Food Action Network consists of more than 250 public interest groups working around the world to promote the health and well-being of infants, young children and their mothers through the protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding practices. IBFAN works to eliminate the irresponsible marketing of breastmilk substitutes and feeding bottles through full and universal implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions.**