

## Mass Breastfeeding Wave

*In conjunction with World Breastfeeding Week 2008*

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**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning, Selamat Pagi,

### Breastfeeding – An act of love

Breast milk is gold. There is no food more natural in the world and proven safest for human babies than breast milk, and no choice most natural and proven safest than breastfeeding.

Breast milk is nature's free vaccine. It is the perfect, irreplaceable gift a mother can give to her baby. It is the best start a baby can have in life.

But breastfeeding is much more than just feeding and nourishing your baby, nutritionally. Breastfeeding is in fact the magic moments that you share with your baby, ... moments that no one can take away from you, or replace you with.

Breastfeeding captures the close bond between you and your baby. Your sacrifice and your baby's total dependence on you are expressed in one of the most tender of moments in human life. It is probably the single most beautiful act of love one human being can express to another.

## Breastfeeding – A gift from God

Yet, somewhere in the evolutionary journey, many men and women have become uncomfortable with the functional role of breasts, probably because some view women's breasts as sexual objects instead of seeing breasts as the wonderful means God created to feed and comfort babies.

The fact is female breasts evolved to nourish babies. This is why women's breasts begin producing milk after she gives birth. The milk of life is a gift that only a mother has the pleasure and privilege of bestowing on her child.

Despite the immense health and psychological benefits to a child and mother, and the beauty in the act of pure love shared between a parent and child, breastfeeding in public places today is generally not approved of.

Upward mobility within our society, the push by manufacturers of baby formula and foods, and the increasing proportion of women in the workforce have together created a social atmosphere in which breastfeeding in public places is seen by many as not only inconvenient, but something less than civilized.

Unfortunately for babies, the psychological discomfort of adults and the sexual objectifying of women's breasts have put a stop as to when, where and how they get fed.

At the end of day, it is our youngest and most vulnerable who suffer and pay the price for our adult insecurities, obsessions, and irrationalities! And just as worse, the magnificence of motherhood, once revered and celebrated, is cheapened and stripped to the raw.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## Breastfeeding – A Baby's Right no matter where

For the preservation of life, for the future of nations, and in defense of the most beautiful act in the world, we must protect the dignity of motherhood.

We must be bold, and innovative with our actions to institutionalize support for the practice of breastfeeding and establish a culture of breastfeeding as the normal, natural and preferred method of feeding infants and young children, regardless of location.

Depriving an infant of his or her most natural, most nutritious and safest form of sustenance should be viewed as an act of criminality as an infant does not suckle at mother's breast according to the schedule of adults. An infant suckles or breastfeeds when hungry, and when in need of comfort.

While it is mothers who breastfeed, we all have a duty to share in her responsibility. As fathers, brothers and sisters, as members of society, as policy makers and as employers, as friends and as colleagues, we must step forward in defense and in support of mothers who breastfeed.

The times they are changing. The issues of breastfeeding and raising a child with the right start are on the front burner, thanks to organisations like the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action and local NGOs such as yours, Mother-to-Mother Peer Support.

Today's Mass Breastfeeding Wave is a step in the right direction, showing to your sisters in Malaysia and around the world, that there is no shame in the gift of life.

Thank you.