

# DAWN

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## Call to finalise regulations on breastfeeding

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Aug 27: Health experts at a seminar held on Thursday urged the government to finalise rules and regulations of Breastfeeding Ordinance 2002 as soon as possible.

They also highlighted the importance of breastfeeding in achieving MDGs and its role in saving lives of infants. They called for issuance of notification of rules and regulations of Breastfeeding Ordinance 2002.

The seminar 'Breastfeeding: a key element to achieve MDGs and save lives in emergencies' was organised by the Network for Consumer Protection.

Speaking on the occasion, Unicef Country Representative Martin Mogwanja urged the need for working hard to protect, promote and support breastfeeding practices for children's health.

He said in Pakistan's context, optimal infant feeding practices would contribute directly to the achievements of the MDGS. "Infant feeding practices can help Pakistan achieve eradication of extreme hunger and reduce under five-year mortality by two-third," he

added.

He said breastfeeding rate in Pakistan was the lowest among South Asian countries, standing at 37.1 per cent. "These indicators are thought provoking for the health professionals as this is our responsibility to create awareness and set ourselves as role model for others," he said.

Dr Arif Azad, executive officer the Network, expressed disappointment at holding up of the rules and regulations related to breastfeeding. He said delay in approving the proposed rules would damage the efforts of civil society regarding promotion and protection of breastfeeding practices.

At the seminar, the ministry came under fire for delaying the final approval of the much-awaited rules and regulations.

Director General Health Dr Rasheed Juma on the occasion said after removing loopholes in the proposed law, the rules would be notified.

He said Health Secretary Khushnood Lashari had approved the rules but later after consultations with experts, the decision of notifying the proposed rules was reverted.