WN *The issue*

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The Anthropocene
We are living in a new era



This issue has three themes: the success of Big Food Watch; and the impact of climate change, and universal primary health care, in the context of the WHO World Health Assembly this month. Above from left: BFW convenor Fabio Gomes on moving and shaking Latin American Presidents. Roberto de Vogli proves that deregulation makes us fat. Thiago Herick de Sá on Coca-Cola and physical activity. Isabella Henriques on ending propanda to children. Tony McMichael and Colin Butler warn on climate change. Maria Hamlin Zuniga and (below, left) Claudio Schuftan say this is the time for Health for All. Geoffrey Cannon salutes Mike Davis. In Feedback, Barry Popkin on fast food in China, Michael Krawinkel on kwashiorkor, Patti Rundall and Gaye Palmer on Cicely Williams, and Claudia Roden on the history of Mediterranean food. And there is more!

Editor's note

People above are in bold type. Above: In *Update:* **Fabio Gomes** and *Big Food Watch* Latin American triumphs. **Roberto de Vogli** on deregulation as a driver of world obesity. **Thiago Herick de Sá** on Coke. **Isabella Henriques** on prohibition of all propaganda to children. And more! We run four commentaries this month. In one, **Tony McMichael** and **Colin Butler** on the impact of climate change on food systems and health. In another, **Maria Hamlin Zuniga** and (lower row at left) **Claudio Schuftan** on primary health care in the new era. **Geoffrey Cannon** is awestruck by professor and teamster Mike Davis. In another packed *Feedback* section, **Barry Popkin**. **Michael Krawinkel**, **Patti Rundall**, **Gaye Palmer** and **Claudia Roden**, on snacking in China, how to treat children with kwashiorkor, why Cicely Williams inspired the International Baby Food Action Network, and the story of Mediterranean food.



Cover features. Climate change

Nature's revenge



We are used to pictures of helpless people, indicating that climate change is causing food shortages. But when people are hungry and know this is unjust, they get angry. This means riots – and worse

The Issue team reports: Few middle-class people are now personally affected by climate change. It is hurting the 'other' people – populations who live in poverty, in low-lying areas of the world. But climate change means disruption and depletion of food and water systems. The result is severe food insecurity and deficiency. And in this era the result will be – and already is – riots, uprisings and wars. The consequences of climate change are not the only reason for the chaos that confronts us. But it is one reason, and all the signs point to a time not so far off now, when its impact on food and water will be irreversible.

Climate change is on the cover of this issue of *WN*. Inside we carry three contributions on the theme. The first is our *Editorial*, 'Staring into the abyss', which proposes that we all now need to think the unthinkable. The second in *Update*, is on *EAT Food*, a meeting of minds in Stockholm this month of May, designed to integrate knowledge, policy and action on food and nutrition with the circumstances of our times. In the third contribution Tony McMichael, Helen Louise Berry and Colin Butler summarise the conclusions of the IPCC *Impacts* report, published at the end of March.

Access the WN cover editorial on pages 408-410 here
Access the WN cover Update story on the EAT forum on pages 416-419 here
Access the WN cover commentary on pages 432-435 here.

Update. Deregulation and obesity
Why society is sick



Alan Greenspan (above) has been the most powerful champion of allowing banks and all other corporations do what they want without restraint. Here he is above, confessing that he was wrong

The Issue team reports: Deregulation of all sorts of corporations, including the Big Food transnationals, coupled with privatisation of public services such as those that serve health, continues to harm what are known as the '99 per cent' who do not benefit from this wild, irresponsible, reckless ideology. In *Update* this issue, Roberto de Vogli of the University of California (Davis), shows that deregulation of food and drink product corporations drives overweight and obesity throughout the world. 'The more a country deregulates its economy and so gives commercial freedom to food product manufacturers and caterers, the fatter its people are', he says. His analysis has been published by the World Health Organization. WHO nutrition department director Francesco Branca says: 'This study shows how important public policies are for addressing the epidemic of obesity'.

'Deregulation' is a term with a fairly friendly feeling. But what the term really means is governments giving corporations licence to act without constraints, inside (and sometimes outside) the law. Above is Alan Greenspan, who in his time between 1987 and his retirement aged 80 in 2006 as chairman of the US Federal Reserve during the Reagan, Bush, Clinton and younger Bush administrator, was the most powerful and effective deregulator in the world. His own philosophy was shaped by that of his close friend *Ayn Rand,* the champion and prophet of 'greed is good'. Above he is at a 2010 hearing of the US Congress, being questioned about the US and world financial collapse and continued chaos. He conceded that there was a 'flaw in the model that I perceived is the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works, so to speak... It was a rather fundamental flaw'.

Access the Update story on pages 418-421 here.



Big Food Watch

Free children from propaganda!



Marketing of unhealthy or unsafe products to children is obviously wrong. But regulators in Brazil go further, and have decided that children should be protected from all marketing of all products

The Big Food Watch team reports: Practically everybody concerned for the public interest agrees that advertising and promotion of dangerous and unhealthy products to children is abusive. A problem though, is how to define what is unhealthy or dangerous. The Brazilian National Council of Children's and Adolescent's Rights (CONANDA), which has the power to pass binding laws, has solved this problem. It has agreed that all advertising and promotion of anything, in all media, to children up to the age of 12, is abusive. Their decision draws on conclusive evidence that up to – and beyond – this age, children should be freed from all forms of propaganda.

Update this issue includes another *Big Food Watch* network member's testimony. Isabella Henriques of the Brazilian civil society organisation ALANA, which is dedicated to the protection of the rights of children, tells the story of the debates in Brazil that have led to the CONANDA decision. She assesses the risk of the decision, which has worldwide implications, being overturned because of pressure from transnational and national corporations and trade organisations whose business is to make propaganda at children, including for ultra-processed food and drink products. She says that much depends on the response from public bodies, from parents, and from relevant health professionals. This means you.

Access this Big Food Watch network member story on pages 428-431 here.



Big Food Watch

Nestlé's global master-plan – BenNaNa



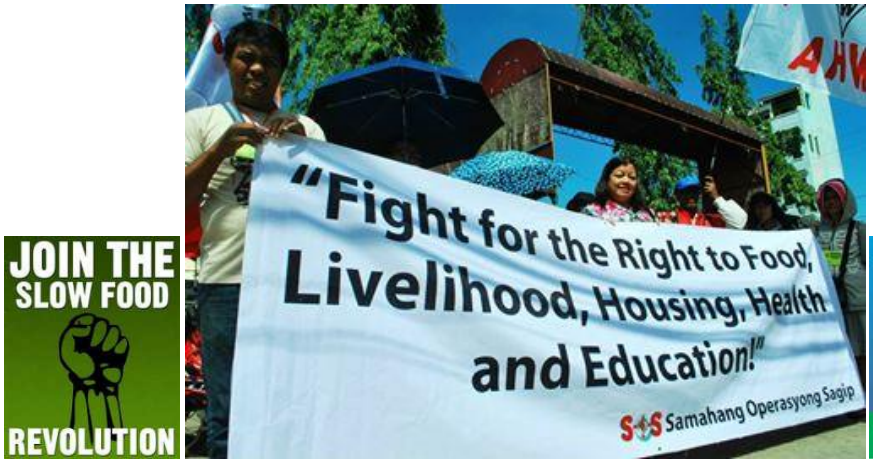
No, this isn't Ronald McDonald. It's the new fun-for-kids character dreamed up by Nestlé to promote the BenNaNa™, their world-wide smash hit peelable ice-cream on a stick, in China

The Big Food Watch team reports: In 1990 Nestlé was nowhere in ice-cream. Now it is the global leader, with 20 per cent of global manufacture and sale, with fellow transnational Unilever in the #2 spot. *WN* this issue tells the story of the BenNaNa™, the Chinese name for Nestlé's ice-cream on a stick whose special feature is that it is encased within an edible gel cover that looks like banana skin. It is also much more profitable than a banana. Nestlé has no business in fresh food. Above are kids in Beijing (in the rain) watching a Donald McRonald-type fun character promoting the product, pictured behind above. No, Nestlé has not gone bananas. This is a bottom-line master-stroke. It is part of its global strategy to teach the world to consume its branded products from birth to death.

The brilliance of Peelin'Pops™, as the product is called in some other countries, is that after investigation in collaboration with the national avalanche research centre in Switzerland, its patented gel 'thermos' stops the ice-cream melting. Provided the gel is intact, the ice-cream inside stays hard for hours, in the sun and in the tropics. So it can be sold not just in supermarkets and other places with freezers but also – well, everywhere. It is also aimed at 6-12 year olds, filling a crucial gap for Nestlé between its infant and young child products, and its older child and adult products. Nestlé also explains that the products is low in fat and low in sugar. A low sugar and fat ice-cream… what can it be made of? Our commentary reveals all.

Access this Big Food Watch commentary on pages 436-445 here.

World Health Assembly. Social movements
Beginning a new world



All over the world social movements are becoming larger and more outspoken, and some are committed to direct action The People's Health Movement is working for revival of Health for All

Maria Hamlin Zuniga and Claudio Schuftan report: The vision of *Health for All* – equal opportunity for all people to become, be and remain healthy – was bright in the minds of all World Health Organisation member states in 1978. This was the year of the Alma Ata Declaration, affirmed by all member states. But soon afterwards, in a calamitous reversal of policy and practice, universal health care became selective disease care, and *Health for All* became *Treatment for Some.*

Now though the flame of Health for All burns bright again. One of its champions is World Health Organization director-general Margaret Chan. Another is World Bank president Jim Yong Kim, who has repeatedly stated his commitment to universal primary health care. Both state that they are appalled by the gross inequities resulting in the last 30 years from the privatisation of public health, including its services to nutrition, which need proper support with public money.

Also, there is a new, vigorous and often militant mood shared by people of all ages and classes in most countries. The system of government whereby governments relinquish their responsibilities to corporations, has resulted in chaos and misery for the 99 per cent plus of the world's population. This is increasingly understood by conscious people. All over the world disaffected people are rising up and fighting for their rights, as the banner above from our own organisation, the People's Health Movement, shows. The bright hope for the world now is systems of genuine democracy in which all people can take part.

Access this commentary on pages 446-458

Network. The baobab
The tree and fruit of life



Here is the fruit of the baobab tree of Eastern Africa and Madagascar. The trees can be seen behind the gatherers. The value of tropical 'exotic' trees and fruits is well-known to local people

Fabio Gomes writes: Baobab trees are native to East Africa, Brazil has baobab trees too, whose seeds were planted up to 500 years ago by slaves. In arid areas the baobab is 'the tree of life'. Its trunk holds enough water to sustain a whole community in times of drought. Its fibres are used to make clothes and construct buildings, and when hollow there is enough space to hold meetings or shelter animals. Now its nourishing fruit, also known to have healing powers, is becoming known internationally, and the market is projected at $US 1 billion a year. The task here is to ensure that a fair proportion of this money is retained by the local people who guard the baobab, such as the gatherers shown in the picture above.

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Access Network on the baobab and its fruit on page 500 here.

Status

The issue is compiled and reviewed by members of the editorial team. Readers may use material here if *WN* is cited. Please cite as: Anon. The Anthropocene. We are living in a new era. [*The issue*] *World Nutrition* May 2014, **5**, 5, 401-407. Obtainable at www.wphna.org/worldnutrition/ Contributions to *World Nutrition* are the copyright and responsibility of their authors. They should not be taken to be the view or policy of the World Public Health Nutrition Association (the Association) or of any affiliated or associated bodies, unless this is explicitly stated.