

Children's Environmental Health International Initiatives

This is an international mailing list provided by [WHO](#) and [UNEP](#)
dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children

May 2010

Global Plan of Action for Children's Health and the Environment

The call for action to address children's environmental health at the Third WHO International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment in Busan, Republic of Korea (June 2009) asked WHO to facilitate the development of a global plan of action to improve children's environmental health and regularly monitor and report on its progress.

This draft Global Plan of Action is designed to provide a road map for WHO, governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and all concerned stakeholders to contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development declarations, commitments and goals, in particular those related to reducing infant mortality (MDG 4) and ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

As recognized in the Busan Pledge, the successful implementation of this global plan of action requires strong partnerships and close networking. Collaboration between and among WHO collaborating centres and international organizations, such as UNICEF and UNEP, national and regional organizations, regulatory bodies, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations is essential for putting into action the specific components of the proposed plan and gaining the most benefit from

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Press Releases

[WHO calls for protection of women and girls from tobacco](#)

In observance of World No Tobacco Day 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) is urging global action to protect women and girls against the sickness and suffering caused by tobacco use.
WHO (28/05/2010)

[Positive health, dignity and prevention for Adolescents living with HIV](#)

UNICEF, and the World Health Organization in partnership with the Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS, FHI, Uganda Paediatrics Association and the Makerere University – John Hopkins Research Collaboration jointly convened the Second Global Consultation on Service Provision for Adolescents Living with HIV. UNICEF (28/05/2010)

[World Bank Grants Help Haitian Children Get Back to School Following Earthquake](#)

Two World Bank grants amounting to US\$27 million will help more than 600,000 Haitian children get back to school and provide rural communities with basic services and infrastructure following Haiti's devastating January 12 earthquake.
World Bank (27/05/2010)

[Water Issues: Contributing to the Success of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development](#)

An input from UN-Water and the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and

limited resources.

Children's environmental health activities have multiple links with other parallel activities, such as environmental protection, climate change adaptation, primary health care, specialized hospital-based health care, emergency response, disaster risk reduction, school activities and housing initiatives, and many other activities. It thus becomes clear that collaborative links have to be set up for each one of the objectives in this plan. Also, strong collaboration across WHO programmes and with the WHO Regional and Country Offices will be necessary in order to ensure success.

[Global Plan of Action for Children's Environmental Health: 2010-2015](#)



If you would like to contribute to the Global Plan of Action, please respond to childrensvhealth@who.int identifying the specific part(s) of the plan to which you can contribute.

[Sixty-third World Health Assembly closes after passing multiple resolutions](#)

The delegates at the World Health Assembly adopted resolutions on a variety of global health issues. Among the resolutions were two resolutions on the improvement of health through safe and environmentally sound waste management, and the improvement of health through effective management of obsolete pesticides and other chemicals. Both resolutions were adopted after delegations underscored the role the health sector plays in addressing chemicals of concern, and strengthening intersectoral action and partnerships. In addition, the delegations expressed the need to tackle problems such as electronic waste, hazardous

Sanitation to the fourth implementation cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development. UN (14/05/2010)

[UNICEF hands over water project in Somalia](#)

In an effort to boost access to basic services in Somalia, UNICEF is strengthening local capacity in the northeast region of the country to provide safe drinking water to children and their families. UNICEF (11/05/2010)

[Better care for newborns crucial for Millennium Development Goal on child deaths](#)

The World Health Statistics 2010 shows that globally about 40% of deaths in children under five years old occur in the first month of life. WHO (10/05/2010)

[Climate Change Adaptation - Enabling people living in poverty to adapt](#)

This report draws on case studies from around the world and Oxfam's experience working with rural communities to set out what is needed and a range of interventions that are available, to enable people living in poverty to adapt to climate change. Nonetheless, there are limits to adaptation, and without rapid and significant global mitigation, these options will be quickly lost. Oxfam (May 2010)

[World Environment Day – June 5](#)

Commemorated on 5 June since 1972, World Environment Day (WED) is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages broad-based action. This year's host country, Rwanda, was chosen for its environmental progress and leadership. A new website <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/> shows what is happening to make the UN more sustainable and provides advice to UN staff on how they can reduce the environmental footprint of their work. UNEP (May 2010)

pesticides and lead in paint. The resolutions call on countries to undertake a range of actions, including adopting policies, legislation and comprehensive national implementation plans; enhancing social responsibility through awareness-raising; regulating chemicals throughout their life-cycle to prevent accumulation of obsolete chemicals; and cooperating regionally and internationally to address problems. WHO (22/05/2010).

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Air Pollution

[Particulate Matter-Induced Airway Hyperresponsiveness Is Lymphocyte Dependent](#)

Exposure to airborne particulate matter (PM), a major component of air pollution, has been associated with increases in both exacerbations of and hospitalizations for asthma. The authors conclude that exposure to PM increased the pathophysiological features of asthma via activation of lymphocyte-dependent pathways. These results provide a plausible biological mechanism for the strong association between PM exposure and the increased severity of asthma. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

[Indoor Contamination with Hexabromocyclododecanes, Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers, and Perfluoroalkyl Compounds: An Important Exposure Pathway for People?](#)

This review underlines the importance of indoor contamination as a pathway of human exposure to hexabromocyclododecanes (HBCDs), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), and perfluoroalkyl compounds (PFCs). *Environmental Science and Technology*

[Prenatal Exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution and Ultrasound Measures of Fetal Growth in the INMA Sabadell Cohort](#)

Traffic-related air pollution is associated with intrauterine growth restriction, low birth weight, and preterm birth, but studies to determine the most harmful pollutants and the most susceptible periods for exposure have been inconclusive. In this study

In the Media

[Dangers of heaters in schools concealed](#)

The secret government-funded study into the effects of unflued gas heaters on children in public schools seriously underestimates the level of pollution in classrooms.

The Sydney Morning Herald (31/05/2010)

[Current cigarette laws too weak – experts](#)

The Chinese government must do more to cut tobacco production and reduce cigarette consumption. China Daily (31/05/2010)

[The Plastic Panic](#)

Environmental hazards that may cause lasting harm to children

The New Yorker (31/05/2010)

[Natural births better for babies](#)

Babies born by caesarean section are more vulnerable to asthma, allergies and infection as they miss out on receiving their mothers' good bacteria during birth.

The Sydney Morning Herald (30/05/2010)

[The Hard Sell on Salt](#)

High blood pressure is rising among adults and children. Government health experts estimate that deep cuts in salt consumption could save 150,000 lives a year.

The New York Times (30/05/2010)

[Third-hand smoke can harm your kids](#)

Mumbai seems to have successfully implemented the ban on smoking in public places, but homes still remain a danger zone for non-smokers, especially children. The Times of India (30/05/2010)

[Johnson & Johnson blasted for recalls](#)

Johnson & Johnson was blasted by lawmakers for its massive recall of children's medicines, as regulators said a string of recent manufacturing lapses could lead to civil or criminal charges. Late last month, J&J recalled 40 widely used non-prescription products for children and infants, such

exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and aromatic hydrocarbons was associated with fetal growth among 562 pregnant women in the Spanish INMA Sabadell study cohort. Exposure to aromatic hydrocarbons during early pregnancy was inversely associated with growth in biparietal diameter during weeks 20–32. The authors conclude that exposure to traffic-related air pollutants during early pregnancy may affect fetal growth during mid-pregnancy. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

Chemicals

[Prenatal Exposure to PBDEs and Neurodevelopment](#)

The authors initiated a longitudinal cohort following the World Trade Center attack on 11 September 2001 to evaluate associations between concentrations of individual PBDE congeners and neurodevelopmental indices. Animal studies suggest that prenatal PBDE exposure may result in adverse neurodevelopmental effects. Outcomes were evaluated in approximately 100 children with PBDE concentrations measured in cord blood samples. After adjustment for potential confounders, higher concentrations of BDEs 47, 99, or 100 were associated with lower scores on tests of mental and physical development at 12–48 and 72 months. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

[Blood Lead Levels and Delayed Onset of Puberty in a Longitudinal Study of Russian Boys](#)

This study investigated the association of blood lead levels with pubertal onset in a longitudinal cohort of Russian boys. Higher blood lead levels were associated with later pubertal onset in peripubertal Russian boys. *Pediatrics*

[Maternal Dioxin Exposure Combined with a Diet High in Fat Increases Mammary Cancer Incidence in Mice](#)

Early-life exposure to environmental pollutants such as 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD) or diets high in fat has been associated with an increased risk of cancer. The authors of this study investigated how developmental exposure to TCDD and a high-fat diet (HFD) might interact to alter breast cancer susceptibility in a laboratory animal model. They conclude that HFD may increase breast cancer

as Tylenol and Motrin, after Food and Drug Administration inspectors found filthy equipment and contaminated ingredients at a Pennsylvania factory. *The Marlborough Express* (28/05/2010)

[9/11 link to rise in male foetal death rate](#)

A study in *BMC Public Health* found 12% more male babies were lost in September 2001 after the 20th week of pregnancy than in a "normal" September. *BBC* (24/05/2010)

[Chemicals play role in mental health](#)

A recent study has linked exposure to pesticides with a greater risk of children developing attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. *Journal Sentinel* (24/05/2010)

[Phthalates: Are They Safe?](#)

Recently the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, put phthalates on a list of chemicals that "may present a risk" to the environment or human health. That's because they disrupt hormone activity and some preliminary studies show that they may be causing a slow and steady demasculinizing of men. *CBS* (23/05/2010)

[Vietnam's struggle with Agent Orange](#)

Thirty-five years after the end of the Vietnam War, its most contentious remaining legacy is Agent Orange. *WPRI* (23/05/2010)

[A special report on water: Enough is not enough - it must also be clean](#)

Discussion on water and sanitation around the globe *The Economist* (20/05/2010)

[Autism link with migrant parents](#)

Researchers have discovered that where you used to live could affect your child's chances of being autistic by up to five times. *BBC* (20/05/2010)

[Many vaccines at once OK for kids' brains: study](#)

Parents can rest assured that getting kids their vaccine shots on time will not hurt their mental skills later on. *Reuters* (20/05/2010)

in offspring with maternal TCDD exposure by altering estrogen metabolism. These results suggest a potential mechanism linking early-life TCDD exposure and HFD to breast cancer in humans. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

[Developmental Neurotoxicity Study of Dietary Bisphenol A in Sprague-Dawley Rats](#)

This study was conducted to determine the potential of bisphenol A (BPA) to induce functional and/or morphological effects to the nervous system of F1 offspring from dietary exposure during gestation and lactation.

[The Good, the Bad, and the Volatile: Can We Have Both Healthy Pools and Healthy People?](#)

Swimming is a healthful activity that comes with increased risk of exposure to pathogenic microorganisms and disinfection agents/byproducts. This article gives an overview of the long- and short-term measures needed to ensure that we can have both healthy pools and healthy people. *Environmental Science and Technology*

[137Cesium Exposure and Spirometry Measures in Ukrainian Children Affected by the Chernobyl Nuclear Incident](#)

The short-term effects on the lung and pulmonary system following acute high-dose exposure to radiation are relatively well known but little information is known on the long-term health effects. After the Chernobyl accident in 1986, children of the contaminated Narodichesky region of Ukraine were exposed to 137cesium (137Cs) in contaminated soils, air, and food. The authors report that chronic exposure to low-dose radioactive contaminants found downwind of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was associated with airway obstruction and restriction in children living in the Narodichesky region. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

Water And Sanitation

[Arsenic Inhibits Neurite Outgrowth by Inhibiting the LKB1–AMPK Signaling Pathway](#)

This study evaluated the role of the LKB1–AMPK pathway in arsenic-induced developmental

[Chemicals and Cancer](#)

The role synthetic chemicals in the human environment play in causing cancer has been grossly underestimated.

Bangor Daily New (24/05/2010)

[Destination brain](#)

Inhaled pollutants may inflame more than the lungs – it may affect the brain. *Science News* (22/05/2010)

[Up in smoke: Indonesian child-teen smokers rising](#)

Child advocates are speaking out about the health damage to children from secondhand smoke, and the growing pressure on them to pick up a cigarette in a country where one-third of the population uses tobacco and single cigarettes can be bought for a few cents. *The Associated Press* (21/05/2010)

[Report on safety of school heaters kept secret](#)

The NSW government is being accused of a cover-up after refusing to release test results it admitted showed "health effects" from unflued gas heaters on children in public schools.

The Sydney Morning Herald (20/05/2010)

[Hurricanes cleaned up lead-laden New Orleans](#)

The sediment washed into New Orleans by the floods accompanying the storms may have blanketed over heavily polluted, lead-laden soil in the city, leading to a decrease in lead levels in the bloodstreams of children across the city.

New Scientist (19/05/2010)

[Climate Outlook Raises Concerns for Haiti](#)

The already challenging humanitarian relief and rebuilding efforts in earthquake-ravaged Haiti may become even more difficult, if a recent climate outlook verifies. *Climate Central* (18/05/2010)

[China rejects reports on deadly indoor air pollution](#)

Chinese authorities have rejected state media reports which quoted a government study saying more than two million youths die in China each year from health problems related to indoor air pollution. *MYSinchew* (18/05/2010)

neurotoxicity using Neuro-2a neuroblastoma cells as a model of developing neurons. The authors conclude that reduced neurite outgrowth induced by arsenic results from deficient activation of AMPK due to a lack of activation of LKB1, and that oxidative stress induced by arsenic plays a critical role in blocking the LKB1–AMPK pathway. These studies may provide insight into the mechanisms underlying arsenic-induced developmental neurotoxicity. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

Global Change

[Modeling the Effects of Weather and Climate Change on Malaria Transmission](#)

This study illustrates the role that dynamic process-based mathematical models can play in providing strategic insights into the effects of climate change on malaria transmission. The authors report that rainfall patterns were strongly associated with malaria endemicity, invasion, and extinction. Temperature had a more complex relationship with transmission and a stronger influence on the rate of disease spread and survival. The results of this study could improve understanding of the effects of temperature shifts on the global distribution of malaria in at-risk regions and the rate of malaria transmission within vulnerable populations. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

Reproductive Health

[PBDE Concentrations in Women's Serum and Fecundability](#)

This study investigated the associations between maternal concentrations of serum polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) during pregnancy and time to pregnancy characteristics among 223 women from a predominantly Mexican-immigrant community in California. The authors report that all four PBDE congeners measured (BDEs 47, 99, 100, 153) were detected in more than 95% of the women studied. Fecundability odds ratios were inversely associated with BDE-100, BDE-153, and the sum of the four congeners, indicating that higher exposures were associated with a longer time to pregnancy. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

[Can dirt do a little good?](#)

Exposure to a variety of bacteria, viruses and other microorganisms may prime the immune system and protect against certain diseases. The Wall Street Journal (17/05/2010)

[Few people know their name, but these chemicals have become EPA priority](#)

Short-chain chlorinated paraffins that can persist in the environment, accumulate in human breast milk, can kill small aquatic creatures and travel to remote regions of the globe have become the subject of scrutiny from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Environmental Health News (17/05/2010)

[Preservatives Under Fire](#)

Preservatives added to skin creams, shampoos, and eye makeup to protect users from infections, rashes, and other microbial attacks may also be endocrine-disrupting and cancer-causing agents. Chemical and Engineering News (17/05/2010)

[Combating childhood obesity may start in the womb](#)

Children whose mothers developed diabetes while pregnant are at increased risk of being overweight by age 11. The study also found that children born to obese mothers are more likely to have a weight problem than children born to lean mothers. Reuters Health (14/05/2010)

[Regulators fear ban on BPA in bottles would make matters worse](#)

Health officials say substitutes may also be toxic
A proposal by Governor Deval Patrick's administration to ban baby bottles and toddler sippy cups containing a chemical suspected of hampering childhood development drew scrutiny yesterday from public health regulators, who expressed worries that the plastic ingredient might be replaced with something more dangerous. Boston.com (13/05/2010)

[Waste tip blamed for cancers, birth defects](#)

A hazardous waste landfill site in Dandenong has been declared to be safe, despite residents' call for a

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Sixty-third World Health Assembly](#)

17 – 21 May 2010. Geneva, Switzerland

[17th International Conference on Children's Health](#)

20 – 21 May 2010. Legnica, Poland

Email: fundacijakonferencja@wp.pl

[Third European IRPA Congress](#)

'Towards safer and effective use of radiation in pediatric healthcare' 14 – 18 June 2010, Helsinki, Finland

[4th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health](#)

19 – 22 June 2010. University of California, San Francisco, USA

[Global Humanitarian Forum - Youth Forum 2010](#)

28 June – 1 July 2010. Geneva, Switzerland

[Workshop on Children's Health and the Environment](#)

Held immediately before the 26th International Congress of Pediatrics; 4 August 2010. Johannesburg, South Africa

[The 8th Annual Conference on Children's Health and the Environment](#)

Healthy Homes, Healthy Schools

24 September 2010, Washington DC

[Children First Symposium](#)

Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child

1 October 2010, University of California, San Francisco

[6th World Environmental Education Congress](#)

19 – 23 July 2011. Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

health study over claims of birth defects and lung cancer. ABC News (13/05/2010)

[Parent stress, air pollution up kids' asthma risk](#)

Children with stressed-out parents may be more prone to developing asthma associated with environmental "triggers" such as high levels of traffic-related pollution and tobacco smoke, hints a study published today. The Gazette (10/05/2010)

[Global IT brands urged to be more accountable for pollution in China supply chain](#)

Investigation by coalition of Chinese environmental groups accuses global IT brands of supply chain links to heavy metal poisoning cases in China. The Guardian (6/05/2010)

[Alcohol in pregnancy may boost child's leukemia risk](#)

Women who drink alcohol while pregnant raise the risk that their child will develop a rare type of blood cancer called acute myeloid leukemia. Reuters (6/05/2010)

[Turning to Greener Weapons in the Battle Against Malaria](#)

Rather than attempt to destroy mosquitoes and parasites outright, these new methods call for subtle manipulations of human habitats and the draining of local water bodies — from puddles to irrigation canals — where malarial mosquitoes hatch. Environment 360 (3/05/2010)

[Most of Continent's Water Sources Are Polluted with Toxic Matter](#)

Water quality in sub-Saharan Africa is on the decline. Most water resources have unacceptable levels of toxic substances -- heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants and biological contaminants. All Africa (3/05/2010)

[WorldStove: Transforming Haiti and the World](#)

The use of WorldStove in Haiti the safer option in Haiti. The Huffington Post (01/05/2010)

[Links to past issues and how to subscribe](#)

Have news for us?

If you would like to submit information to future HECANET issues, email us at heca@who.int with the subject line "INFORMATION FOR HECANET".

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