

HECANET * February 2008 - March 2008**
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ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

In air pollution solar cooking helps to combat upper respiratory tract infections in women and children. Fragrances and cleaning products not only trigger allergic reactions, but a recent study shows that exposure to pregnant women may also cause asthma in developing fetuses. Ozone and black carbon pollution and deaths are expected to rise if governments continue to wait to take action. Scientists estimate that ultrafine air pollution causes more than 60,000 deaths in the US alone. Tobacco use in women, particularly pregnant women, is on the rise in developing countries as WHO warns that tobacco could kill one billion people in the twenty first century and issues suggestions for combating the epidemic.

Chemicals in children's products from plastics to diaper rash cream lead this issue's chemical section. As Jordan decides to ban leaded gasoline, new research emerges suggesting sex-specific linkages to neurodevelopmental problems related to prenatal lead exposure. Pesticides appear in unexpected places including Beijing parks and Pilipino water. New studies show that genetically modified (GM) crops increase pesticide usage and that children who eat organic have significantly lower levels of pesticides found in their blood. The debates regarding DDT and healthy fish eating continue to rage. Autism is linked to Mercury, affecting vaccine policies around the world.

Bangladesh makes strides in its sanitation program, while a new invention helps to make its water arsenic safe. As World Water Day passes, analysts question the world's ability to meet the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Environmentalists offer natural, less costly solutions to the sanitation problem.

A UN Conference suggests that global climate change threatens the human rights of millions of people, while another study shows that children will be most affected. Global warming is shown to have cut deaths in the UK, but continues to rampage the world's fish stocks and food security.

Ontario bans smoking in cars with children, while judges in the US force the EPA to re-evaluate their stance on methyl mercury. Farmers in Argentina and Paraguay worry about pesticides as natives in Peru fight against an oil company over pollution. In Asia, Beijing works to clean up its air, while Yellow dust from its Gobi desert closes schools in Korea and Japan. In Lebanon a toxic dump continues to pour into the sea while Iraq's environment and people suffer the effects of the war. Africa's Sahara wind worsens air quality, while Zimbabwe attempts to clean it

up. Zambia introduces a new sanitation campaign and a new report shows the effects of climate change on health in Africa. In Europe, the European Commission pushes for stricter rules on toys and European Parliament pushes to ban mercury imports.

Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**
- (2) CHEMICALS: (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury**
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) GLOBAL CHANGE (a) General, (b) Food Security**
- (5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**
- (6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) Americas (b) Asia (c) Africa (d) Europe**

Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

HECANET is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

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EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

(1) HECA Developments

For more information on HECA's latest developments, please visit the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance website: <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>

International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage: http://www.who.int/household_water/en/

(2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) Newsletter and Upcoming International Workshop

The CEHI Newsletter has been set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). To sign up to the newsletter, to contribute information or to find out more, please visit the website [WHO | Children's environmental health indicators newsletter \(CEHI\)](http://www.who.int/cehi/newsletter) or contact: cehindicators@who.int

The International Workshop on Children's Environmental Health Indicators: Five Years After the Global Commitment at the World Summit on Sustainable Development occurred in Hammamet, Tunisia from 10-11 April 2008. The workshop assessed progress made to date on developing children's environmental health indicators and outlined directions for future work. The goals of the workshop were to review of efforts to date on developing and reporting children's environmental health indicators around the world; to review the initial findings from the evaluation of CEHI development and implementation mechanisms; to identify lessons learned and best practices; to review a draft version of the report "Children's Environmental Health Indicators - Presenting regional successes, learning for the future"; and to plan for continued improvement in children's environmental health indicator development and reporting in view of integrating activities into national systems. For follow up and outcomes, go to the conference [website](#) or contact cehindicators@who.int

(3) World Health Day 2008: protecting health from climate change

World Health Day occurs on 7 April marking the founding of the World Health Organization and acting as an opportunity to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health each year. In 2008, World Health Day focused on the need to protect health from the adverse effects of climate change. The theme "Protecting health from climate change" raised the profile of health dangers posed by global climate variability and change. It was selected because overwhelming evidence shows that climate change presents growing threats to international public health security - from extreme weather-related disasters to the wider spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue. Through increased collaboration, the world will be better prepared to cope with climate-related health challenges. Actions that must be taken include strengthening surveillance and control of infectious diseases, ensuring safer use of diminishing water supplies, and coordinating health action in emergencies.

The World Health Day [web site](#) emphasizes the importance of this theme, provides information and tools to help organize activities in local areas, and features information from around the world about how the Day was recognized. It will continue to be updated regularly throughout 2008. The site also provides a place for communities to share what they did to mark World Health Day, and build global momentum to "protect health in a changing climate". The World Health Day 2008 toolkit to help organizers of activities is also available on the web site. For enquiries, email whd2008@who.int

(4) World Water Day 2008

This year, World Water Day coincides with the International Year of Sanitation, challenging us to spur action on a crisis affecting more than one out of three people on the planet. Every 20 seconds, a child dies as a result of the abysmal sanitation conditions endured by some 2.6 billion people globally. That adds up to an unconscionable 1.5 million young lives cut short by a cause we know well how to prevent. Poor sanitation combines with a lack of safe drinking water and inadequate hygiene to contribute to the terrible global death toll. Those who survive face diminished chances of living a healthy and productive existence. Children, especially girls, are forced to stay out of school, while hygiene-related diseases keep adults from engaging in productive work. Leaders who adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 envisioned halving the proportion of people living without access to basic sanitation by the year 2015 -- but we are nowhere near on pace to achieve that Goal. Experts predict that, by 2015, 2.1 billion people will still lack basic sanitation. At the present rate, sub-Saharan Africa will not reach the target until 2076. While there have been advances, progress is hampered by population growth, widespread poverty, insufficient investments to address the problem and the biggest culprit: a lack of political will. With the right resolve, there are many steps that members of the international community can take. The Commission on Sustainable Development in 2005 outlined a series of measures aimed at securing meaningful progress, holding Governments of affected countries primarily responsible. It also called for international support through a conducive policy environment, financial resources and the transfer of technology to countries in need. If we take up the challenge, the positive impact will reverberate far beyond better access to clean water. Every dollar invested in water and sanitation yields an estimated seven dollars worth of productive activity. And that comes on top of the immeasurable gains in cutting poverty, improving health and raising living standards. "[World Water Day](#) offers a chance to spotlight these issues, but this year, let us go beyond raising awareness -- let us press for action to make a measurable difference in people's lives." - Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General

The official UN-Water World Water Day website - focusing this year on sanitation - is available online at <http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday>

(5) 10th Special Session of UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

The [10th Special Session of UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum \(GC/GMEF\)](#) took place between 20 and 22 February 2008 in Monaco. The theme was "Globalization and the Environment- Mobilizing Finance for the Climate Challenge". Ministers undertook wide-ranging discussions on how that might be accelerated and the barriers broken down. Governments emphasized their concern that all countries, in particular developing countries, face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change, and stressed the importance of addressing adaptation needs. In order to maintain the spirit of international solidarity and commitment generated by the Bali Roadmap, governments requested the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to consider making 2010-2020 an International Decade for addressing Climate Change. They reaffirmed their commitment to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, which they noted are interlinked with efforts to reduce significantly the loss of biodiversity, promote desertification control, eradicate

extreme poverty and famine, promote sustainable development and improve the lives of affected and vulnerable populations.

GC/GMEF also approved a decision authorizing the UNEP Executive Director to utilize a Medium-Term Strategy in formulating UNEP's programme of work. The strategy will focus the organization's activities across six cross-cutting thematic priorities aimed at strengthening and focusing UNEP's response to climate change but also disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; resource efficiency-sustainable consumption and production; and harmful substances and hazardous waste. GC/GMEF also adopted a decision on chemicals management, mercury and waste management.

Governments also welcomed the fourth Global Environment Outlook report, expressing concern over the evidence of unprecedented environmental changes, and encouraging timely action to prevent, mitigate and adapt to such changes. They acknowledged that current environmental degradation represents a serious challenge for human well-being and sustainable development. The progress that has been made on several fronts to address the challenges outlined in the report was welcomed by governments, who also encouraged greater sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

(6) Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2008: "Sustainable Development and climate change". Delhi, India. 7-9 February 2008.

[The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit](#) (DSDS) is an annual event which has become the most important gathering of leaders drawn from various parts of the world concerned about global sustainable development. According to IPCC, 'Sustainable development can reduce vulnerability to climate change, and climate change could impede nations' abilities to achieve sustainable development pathways'. The problem of climate change is a global problem requiring a collective solution, which has developed as a consequence of intensified unsustainable patterns of development since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Hence, to address the problems of climate change DSDS 2008 focused on "Sustainable Development and Climate Change". The two processes of the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC as well as of the 13th Conference of the Parties under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) added great value in the deliberations of DSDS 2008. DSDS also benefited from leaders of public opinion and global stature who contributed to the substance of the discussions towards a post 2012 era. The event was co-organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (Government of India) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

(7) 6th Respiratory Symposium of Respiratory Diseases Study Group Sri Lanka. Colombo, Sri Lanka. 9-10 February 2008

Respiratory Diseases Study Group Sri Lanka held its 6th Respiratory Symposium on the 9-10 February 2008 at Hilton Hotel Colombo, Sri Lanka. For more information, contact Dr Kirthi Gunasekera at 94 777 878747

(8) Indoor Air Quality and Health. Teleconference. 12 February 2008

The quality of our indoor environments affects our well-being and productivity. In addition, the risk of disease is increased by factors such as indoor air pollutants, toxins and microbes on surfaces, and human contact. John Spengler, Ph.D., Harvard School of Public Health's Department of Environmental Health lead the Indoor Air Quality and Health teleconference. The seminar started with a brief summary of current understandings of ambient air pollution health concerns. Contrasting outdoor air to indoor air as a public good, it is seen that the policy debate about regulating indoor environments is still quite confused. A pollutant-specific framework rather than a comprehensive framework has characterized public and private responses to indoor air quality to date. Examples include formaldehyde, asbestos, radon and now moulds. Contemporary topics of moulds and synthetic organic compounds illustrate the continuing concerns about the health of indoor environments.

For more information on the teleconference, please go to www.ehinitiative.org or contact Laura Abulafia at Laura@aaidd.org

(9) Second Annual Meeting of NewGeneris. Athens, Greece. 11-14 February 2008.

Closing its 2nd year of life, [NewGeneris](#) held its Annual meeting in Athens, at the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF), on 11-14 February 2008. The meeting brought together more than 130 collaborating senior and junior scientists coming from the 25 institutions of 16 European countries which participate in the project consortium as well as members of the external advisory bodies (Scientific, Ethical and External Advisory Board).

The last day of the meeting was devoted to a Workshop on "Systems biology approaches to biomarkers of environmental health", which was co-organised by NewGeneris and the Institute of Biological Research and Biotechnology of the National Hellenic Research Foundation.

(10) Second International Conference on Health & Biodiversity. Galway, Ireland. 25-28 February 2008

The [Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity](#) took place from 25-28 February 2008 in Galway City, Ireland. This unique event brought 170 delegates from over 70 countries together, from all disciplines and backgrounds, to collaborate on new approaches for protecting human health and well-being through the conservation and sustainable use of the world's biological diversity.

The conference discussions explored recent research on the links between health and biodiversity, with case studies of action programmes and policy experience under three key thematic areas - Disaster Prevention, Relief and Recovery; Food Resources, Diet and Nutrition, and Emerging Infectious Diseases. Related developments in international and regional policies on biodiversity, public health and the U.N. Millennium Development Goals were considered, including the outputs and impacts of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and recent reports of the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change.

The conference aimed to produce a series of evidence-based reports on key issues, for consideration at subsequent multilateral meetings on the environment, health and development. These reports are currently being finalized.

(11) The 4th Annual Brussels Climate Change Conference 2008. Brussels, Belgium. 26-27 February 2008

After a series of high profile events related to climate change throughout 2007 such as the G8 summit or the major economies meeting, the climate change negotiations during the COP13 in Bali have accepted a roadmap for the negotiations for a post-2012 climate change agreement. After taking stock of the state of negotiations, this joint Centre for European Policy Studies/Epsilon conference explored the key issues for the post-2012 agreement. [The 4th Annual Brussels Climate Change Conference](#) focused upon EU and global issues relating to climate change, and in particular looked at the following issues: post-2012 after Bali and before the Hokkaido G8 summit; progress of EU integrated energy and climate package, burden-sharing renewables and technology; EU Emissions Trading Review with a focus on investment; transport.

(12) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: "Let's Go Outside for Health – Health Professionals' Roundup Meeting". Arlington, U.S. 29 February 2008.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Let's Go Outside for Health – Health Professionals' Roundup Meeting" took place on 29 February 2008 in Arlington, Virginia, U.S. The goal of this meeting was to continue outreach to health and healthcare professionals regarding the health and conservation benefits of regular outdoor play in a natural environment. Information from this meeting will be used to develop a "Let's Go Outside for Health" toolkit for health professionals. Climate change and poor health trends in our children are the best indicators of the importance of the interrelationship between human and environmental health. A new report entitled, "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds" from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) concludes that free and unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient. This important conclusion from a leader in the health community substantiates claims made by environmentalist, Rachel Carson, when in 1959 she stated, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

During Let's Go Outside for Health – Health Professionals' Roundup Meeting, participants wrote outreach messages that will raise the awareness of health professionals regarding the importance of outdoor activity and contact with nature for overall health and well-being; wrote sample prescriptions that a health professional can use to prescribe regular outdoor activity and contact with nature to clients; outlined three national level activities that will raise national awareness among health professionals regarding regular exposure to nature. In addition, noted speakers including Dr. Howard Frumkin, from the Centers for Disease Control and Dale Hall, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided perspectives on the connection between human and environmental health. For more information, please contact robin_bunch@fws.gov

(13) Reclaiming Our Healthy Future: Political Change to Protect the Next Generation. Berkeley, USA. 14-16 March 2008.

An exciting [national gathering](#) of pesticide experts and activists took place on March 14-16, 2008 at the

University of California, Berkeley. Workshop topics included children's health, community monitoring, farmworker organizing, healthy and just food systems and much more. Featured speakers included Dr. Paul Saoko, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Kenya, Tyrone Hayes, Professor of Integrative Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Ted Schettler, Science Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network - among many others.

(14) Short course: Improving accessibility to water and sanitation facilities for physically vulnerable groups in low-income countries. Loughborough, UK. 17-19 March 2008.

Physically vulnerable people might include a range of users who experience difficulty using ordinary facilities, such as frail older people, disabled people, small children, pregnant women and people who are injured or sick, including people living with HIV/AIDS. The focus of this course was on both individual household and communal, public and institutional facilities in poor rural and peri-urban areas of low/ middle-income countries.

The [course](#) aimed at providing an introductory course to increase awareness of the issues of accessibility for physically vulnerable people to water and sanitation facilities, possible approaches to improving accessibility, and practical starting points for their own work. Participants left with a better understanding of: the obstacles and challenges facing physically vulnerable people in accessing and using water and sanitation facilities; possible approaches, including technical solutions and service delivery processes, to address these issues; plans and practical starting points for implementation to improve inclusion. The course format included lectures, whole/ small group discussions, problem solving scenarios, role-play, and practical small group activities. Participants were from a range of backgrounds, including from the WATSAN engineering and public health sectors, and from disability/gender/ social development sectors. For more information, contact Tracy Wootton at wedc-admissions@Lboro.ac.uk

(15) 3rd Euro-Asian Conference on Hazardous Waste & Human Health. Istanbul, Turkey. 27-30 March 2008.

The Euro-Asian Association for Children's Environmental Health and the Organizing Committee of the 3rd Euro-Asian Conference on Hazardous Waste and Human Health held the 3rd Euro-Asian Conference on Hazardous Waste and Human Health in Istanbul, Turkey in March 2008. The conference in Turkey was the third of a series of conferences designed to identify solutions to human environmental health problems and to facilitate the establishment of sustainable collaborative programs around the world. The previous conferences were held in 2005 and 2006 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The subjects of this conference covered all aspects of human disease resulting from exposure to environmental contaminants, both those due to chemical agents and infection, and also included information regarding the impacts of climate change on human health. The conference consisted of plenary sessions, symposiums, workshops and poster sessions. The WHO Training Package for the Health Sector on children's environmental health was used to train over 120 participants. For more information, please visit the [conference website](#).

(16) National Environmental Education Week. 13-19 April 2008.

[EE Week](#) seeks to enhance the educational impact of Earth Day (April 22nd) by creating a full week of environmental education lessons and activities in classrooms, nature centers, zoos, museums, aquariums, and parks around the U.S.

This year's EE Week theme is Carbon Footprints, and the EE Week website will offer dozens of resources to support lessons on climate change, including an online student Carbon Calculator and special climate lesson plans from the Earth Day Network.

(17) ISEE-EAC 2008: Opportunities and Challenges of Environmental Health in Asia. Jeju, Korea. 17-19 April 2008.

The Second East Asia Conference of the ISEE in conjunction with the Third Scientific Conference of Regional Initiative will be hosted by the Korea Environmental Health Forum (KEHF) with support from the Korea Ministry of Environment, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific and the United Nations Environmental Programme in Jeju Island, Korea, April 17-19, 2008. This conference will focus on the "Opportunities and Challenges of Environmental Health in Asia." Speakers include Dr. M. Neira, WHO Director of Public Health and Environment. For more information, please see the conference [website](#).

(18) National Healthy Schools Day. USA. 28 April 2008.

National Healthy Schools Day is a day to celebrate and take action for healthy school environments for all children Pre-Kindergarten -12. In 2007, there are more than 40 events in 20 states and Washington DC in the U.S. that promote healthy school environments as local practice and as policy. For more information, see the [website](#), or call Coordinator Jen Sentar at 518-462-0632.

(19) 2008 National Asthma Forum: Sharing, Learning, and Taking Action Together. Washington DC, U.S. 1-2 May 2008

The [2008 National Asthma Forum](#) will bring together asthma leaders from across the U.S to discuss the most effective community-based strategies for managing asthma and achieving positive outcomes and results.

(20) ICNIRP/WHO/BfS International Workshop on Risk Factors for Childhood Leukemia. Berlin, Germany. 5-7 May 2008.

The increased incidence of childhood leukemia observed in epidemiological studies at low-level magnetic fields or near nuclear facilities is puzzling experts in radiation protection. The findings will be considered in the light of other possible risk factors and of new data on the complex origin of childhood leukemia in the upcoming workshop on "Risk Factors for Childhood Leukemia".

The international workshop, called by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, ICNIRP, the World Health Organization, and the German Federal Office for Radiation Protection, BfS, will be held in Berlin, Germany, May 5 to 7, 2008.

For more information contact ICNIRP at info@icnirp.org or visit the conference [website](#).

(21) Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum: Water & Cultures in Dialogue. Turin, Italy. 20-25 May 2008.

In the Framework of the Year 2008 of Inter-Cultural Dialogue and as part of the "Water our Common Future" initiative, the [Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures](#) in collaboration with [Piedmont Regional Government and Paralleli Euro-Mediterranean Institute](#) are organizing a Euro-Mediterranean Youth Forum. This project is part of the ALF "[1001 Actions for Dialogue](#)" Campaign.

The scope of the Forum is focusing on water as a vector for intercultural dialogue, focusing on three specific themes: Water, Heritage and Intergenerational Dialogue; Water, Spirituality and Emotion; Water, Sustainable Development and Civil Society.

Call for Candidatures and Application Form are available on the [official site](#) of the initiative

(22) Actual Problems of Ecological Pediatrics: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. 22-23 May 2008.

The Kazakh National Medical University S.D. Asfendiyarov and the National Center on Problems of Ecology and Public Health "Urpak" will present a practical conference with participation of the international organizations called "Actual problems of ecological pediatrics: yesterday, today, tomorrow".

Within the limits of conference, work of the following sections is planned: Environmental problems of preservation of the environment; Indicators of an environment and health; Health protection of mother and the child; Clinical medicine and an environment; Advanced achievements in pediatrics (cardiology, hematology, nephrology, endocrinology, pulmonology, gastroenterology, children's neurology, children's surgery, nutritiology); Basic research in clinical medicine (immunology, genetics, biochemistry, pathophysiology, toxicology, morphology, cytology), Rendering of medical aid to the population in modern conditions. The working languages of the conference are Russian and Kazakh.

For more information, please contact the responsible secretary Dr. Davletgildeeva Zukhra Galibovna (+77773625595) or email urpak@itte.kz or sarsenbaeva37@mail.ru

(23) Terra Futura 2008. Florence, Italy. 23-25 May 2008.

The Cultural Foundation "Responsabilità Etica", on behalf of the Banca Etica system (Banca Etica, Consortium Etimos, Etica SGR, the review "Valori"), by Adescoop - Agency for Social Economy - and many others partners,

both public and private, have organized the fifth edition of the international conference and exhibition Terra Futura 2008 ("Our Common Future Earth").

Terra Futura is the most important Italian event that acts to promote cultural and commercial synergies between subjects acting and working in the many different fields of sustainability.

For more information contact Institutional relation and Cultural programme Organization event ADESCOOP segreteria@terrafutura.it or Fondazione Culturale Responsabilità Etica Piazza dei Ciompi fondazione@bancaetica.org

(24) FAO: High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy. Rome, Italy. 3-5 June 2008.

The recent thirty-fourth session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Conference called for a series of expert meetings on climate change and bioenergy and two stakeholder consultations aimed at civil society organizations and the private sector. The expert meetings and stakeholder consultations will be followed by a [High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy](#) to take place 3-5 June 2008. The High-Level Conference will be informed by work undertaken and findings which emerge from the expert meetings and stakeholder consultations.

(25) Children and Injuries International Conference. Cape Town, South Africa. 31 August 2008 - 3 September 2008.

The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Southern Africa, together with its partners will host the founding [Conference of the International Society for Violence and Injury Prevention](#) (ISVIP) in Cape Town, from 31 August to 3 September 2008, at the University of Cape Town.

In most countries around the world, health policies are increasingly recognizing prevention as the necessary and essential complement to effective cure and care of injured patients. Global programs on Safety Promotion and Injury Prevention have resulted in the foundation of the International Society for Violence and Injury Prevention during the 7th International Safety Conference in Durban, South Africa, 2006. We are now delighted to celebrate and substantiate this achievement with the founding ISVIP Conference on Alcohol, Children and Injuries.

Injuries rank first among childhood deaths, third among the major causes of adult death and second in terms of years of life lost due to premature death. The major aim of this conference is to bring together all people who carry at heart the wish to make the world a safer place for children and are prepared to make a difference. Violence and Injury prevention can only be achieved by collaborative involvement and effort of all role players: Society itself, Policy Makers, NGOs and Scientists. The environment in many low- and middle Income countries is far less safe than in high Income countries, due to a myriad of causes, including socio-economic, health factors and education. Especially children fall victim as a consequence. It is estimated that 90% of all trauma deaths occur in the low- and middle Income countries.

Therefore, the organizers have chosen "Children and Injuries" as the central theme of this conference. The major challenge for the ISVP is to make a substantial contribution to international policies and become a global role player in decreasing unnecessary suffering from trauma and injuries. It is envisaged that this Conference will produce clear and founding guidelines regarding violence and injury prevention globally but also specific for Sub-Saharan Africa.

(26) Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008

Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008. An overview of the agenda topics is available on the [IFCS Forum VI website](#). Information on the working groups preparing the plenary agenda topics is available on the [IFCS website](#)

The IFCS Forum Standing Committee Working Group preparing the Forum VI session on the topic of substitution and alternatives is compiling case studies, examples and tools relevant to substitution and alternatives. Contributions are welcome. Please send information – published papers, reports, presentations or web sources of information – to the IFCS Secretariat at ifcs@who.int

IFCS Award of Merit will also be presented at sessions of the Forum. The Award recognizes a person(s) or

organization(s) for outstanding contributions to international activities in chemical safety.

The complete information and nomination/candidature forms are now available in English, French and Spanish along with the information forms in Arabic, Chinese and Russian. For those nominators who speak Arabic, Chinese or Russian, please use the nomination form in the language which is most convenient. The forms can be found on the [website](#) along with further information.

(27) American Academy of Pediatrics 2008 National Conference and Exhibition. Boston, USA. 11-14 October 2008.

American Academy of Pediatrics 2008 National Conference and Exhibition. Boston, USA. 11-14 October 2008. For more information, please contact Dr. Ruth Etzel, fax 907-729-6199 retzel@earthlink.net.

(28) 3rd Central and Eastern European Conference on Health and the Environment. Cluj-Napoca, Romania. 19-22 October 2008.

The topics of interest center around three major themes: responsible mining, risk assessment and management, and environmental health. Similar to the two previous conferences, participation of graduate students, post doctoral fellow and experienced researchers from Central and Eastern European countries, ex-Soviet states, and developing countries, is encouraged. Please visit the [website](#) for more information or to register online.

(19) EcoHealth: Healthy Environments, Healthy People. Merida, Mexico. 1-5 December 2008.

Human health and development are dependent on healthy ecosystems. Yet, global ecosystems continue to deteriorate under increasing pressure from human development activities and patterns of consumption. Thus, the need is urgent to understand the linkages among public health, ecosystems, and social and economic conditions. The need to devise interventions to reconnect people and ecosystems to protect both is our goal. The quest for healthy ecosystems and sustainable human health requires innovative thinking across disciplines and professions. New research and policy partnerships, community participation and empowerment, and more effective and integrated mechanisms for communicating concerns in the public interest are needed.

In December 2008, in Mérida, México, the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) of Mexico will host the International EcoHealth Forum 2008 in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada), the International Association for Ecology and Health (IAEH), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Brazil (FIOCRUZ), and the Institute of Ecological Research, Brazil (IPE). The Forum will promote research, theory and practice internationally to consolidate the growing community of researchers, policy makers, and civil society representatives. It will bring a better understanding of the holistic links between ecosystems and human health and the identification of pathways for more sustainable action and interventions. The role of transdisciplinary approaches towards discovery and sustainable solutions will be emphasized throughout.

IEF 2008 will showcase evidence of theory and practice regarding our dependence on ecosystem health. Evidence of the impact of social and ecological changes on the global environment and, in turn, on human health, will be discussed among the Forum's delegates. Special emphasis will be placed on EcoHealth research in developing countries, fostering exchanges of lessons learned between developing and developed countries.

Conference participants - researchers, policy makers and practitioners - will learn how project outcomes have been used by other policy makers, stakeholders and community representatives to effect improvements in ecosystem management, disease prevention and environmental protection. Experiences on research and practices, including methodological gaps, as well as opportunities for intervention and policy development will be presented. Renewing and establishing networks will further our capacities to continue promoting healthy ecosystems and, in turn, healthy people. Conference delegates are invited to plan now to contribute with paper, video and oral presentations to the development of new approaches and ideas in EcoHealth by being an active participant in IEF 2008.

For more information, contact Jaime Grace Engel at ecohealth2008@insp.mx . Symposia and abstracts may be submitted electronically to the [website](#).

(30) 5th World Environmental Education Congress. Montreal, Canada. 10-14 May 2009.

The topic of this congress, Live together on Earth, invites the participants to contribute to the most important project of our humanity: to learn to live in better harmony with the Earth, developing an earthly fraternity within

our Oïkos, this “house” divided between the humans and the other forms of life. The search of this “better living together” implies to tackle the questions of identity, solidarity and socioecologic action. We will explore the links between ecology, economy and ecosophism. We will consider the way how the environmental education can help to fastening between them these three dimensions of our relationship with the world.

The general objectives of the Congress are to highlight and to stimulate the role of environmental education in the search of meaning and human identity; to highlight and to stimulate the contribution of environmental education to the social innovation for the assumption of problems of socioecological nature and ecocodevelopment of the society; to highlight and to stimulate the contribution of environmental education to the development of the public policies, about the big stakes of our contemporary society.

For more information, please contact the Secretariat of 5th World Environmental Education Congress – JPdL, or 5weec@jpdL.com or the International Secretariat World Environmental Education Congress secretariat@environmental-education.org or visit the [website](#) .

(31) Activities of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) and Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA)

ISDE Workshop on Health and Environment. Salsamaggiore, Parma, Italy. 17-20 April 2008. It will include a session on Climate Change and Health.

NEW REPORT: Doctors for the Environment Australia's national report: "Climate Change Health Check 2020"

Released on World Health Day (April 7, 2008), this report tries to define those ways in which medical practice in Australia is expected to accommodate climate change. It will be used to influence government and educate the public about how climate change will affect them and their children by 2020 in terms of personal health.

For more information on these and other news and projects, please visit: www.aamma.org and www.isde.org

(32) Chemical Health Monitor Website

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL, Brussels, Belgium) is pleased to announce the launch of its new [Chemicals Health Monitor Website](#). This new website is being launched as a part of a project called “Chemicals Health Monitor”. It provides a comprehensive compilation of recent information and evidence about the links between chemical contaminants in the environment and ill-health.

(33) New Children's Environmental Health Tool

The Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN) today announced a new communications tool the Children's Environmental Health Article of the Month to translate scientific findings in this emerging field to families, educators, health care professionals and others.

"Scientists are just beginning to understand the many ways in which substances in a child's environment can harm her developing systems," said Dr. Cynthia Bearer, Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Neurosciences at Case Western Reserve University, CEHN Board member and Chair of the CEHN Science Committee. "As lead and mercury research has shown, exposures that cause little or no harm in an adult can lead to irreversible damage in a child." CEHN Board Chair Ramona Trovato cited lead in toys, plastic additives, asthma, and climate change as examples of current children's environmental health issues. Trovato previously headed the U.S. EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection.

The Article of the Month is geared towards increasing awareness and communication within and outside of the field of children's environmental health. Read the first [Article of the Month](#).

The Children's Environmental Health Article of the Month is produced in partnership with nationally recognized experts in academia, government, and the medical and public health professions, including Bearer and Trovato.

(34) New Asthma Trigger Management Video

A new asthma trigger management video is available online, produced by Dave Blake at NW Clean air. It can be seen at <http://www.nwcleanair.org/> .

(35) Video: Nutrition for ADHD - Is your child's brain starving?

An excellent 120 minute [video](#) is available on Youtube called: Nutrition for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) -- Is your child's brain starving? This lecture, presented by Dr. Michael Lyon from Mount Royal College, Calgary, discusses nutrition for the brain as well as many neurotoxins in the environment.

(36) Keynote Address for the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education

UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner presented a [keynote address](#) during the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education, addressing the notion of a well-prepared society within the context of environmental education and climate change.

(37) Managing Chemicals in a Changing Climate to Protect Health

The emerging and unprecedented public health threat of accelerating climate change may significantly alter global and local development, use, distribution, and degradation of chemicals in ways that could affect human health. Little has been published to date addressing issues of climate change and chemical safety. In this [brochure](#) we explore how climate change may alter human exposure to chemicals, identify who may be at particular risk of harm, and suggest actions that can be taken now to reduce adverse health impacts.

(38) Indoor air pollution from solid fuels and risk of low birth weight and stillbirth

This [publication](#) reports on a symposium held at the Annual Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) in Johannesburg in September 2005. The findings are complemented by a PubMed search of the link between indoor air pollution from solid fuel use and low birth weight and perinatal mortality.

(39) Indoor air pollution and lower respiratory tract infections in children

This [publication](#) reports on a symposium and workshop held at the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology, Paris, 4 September 2006. It presents preliminary results of a randomized intervention trial in Guatemala and discusses the implications for policy, advocacy and future research.

(40) Presumption of Safety: Limits of Federal Policies on Toxic Substances in Consumer Products

This [report](#) identifies four reasons why the US government regulatory system for protecting the public from toxic substances in toys and other products is inadequate, allowing potentially harmful products to end up on store shelves.

(41) Environmental Threats to Children: Understanding the Risks, Enabling Prevention

Toronto Public Health (TPH) has a longstanding interest in how the city's biophysical and built environment affects the health of its children. Our vision is that all of Toronto's children, as well as future generations of children, should enjoy the highest achievable level of health and well-being. This vision recognizes that the determinants of health are complex, and include potent influences such as safe and nutritious food, adequate shelter, education, financial resources, peace, equity and social justice. However, this vision also recognizes the importance of a healthy sustainable ecosystem in which children are protected from environmental hazards. As a result, Toronto Public Health embarked on studies to understand what needed to be done to better protect the health of children. The results of this study are presented in this [report](#).

(42) Scientific Consensus Statement on Environmental Agents Associated with Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative published the Scientific Consensus Statement on Environmental Agents Associated with Neurodevelopmental Disorders. This [statement](#), signed by more than 50 scientists and health professionals nationally and internationally, summarizes the latest science about environmental contaminants associated with neurodevelopmental disorders, such as learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),

intellectual disabilities and developmental delays.

(43) A Decade of Children's Environmental Health: Highlights from EPA's Science to Achieve Results Program

This new [report](#) focuses on 10 years of research funded or performed by EPA's National Center for Environmental Research's Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grants program. The report highlights scientific findings in epidemiology, exposure science, genetics, community-based participatory research, interventions, statistics and methods. This body of work has impacted policy in the United States and influenced scientific directions internationally.

(44) Pesticides: A toxic time bomb in our midst

Marvin Levine has written a pragmatic [book](#) for physicians, health workers, and the general public. Frequently and throughout this volume, the author attempts to balance industry and environmental points of view and actions. He notes the eternal conflict between the need for economic productivity and reasonably priced food, with the possible short- and long-term damage to human health from the use or misuse of various chemicals.

(45) Essay competition 2008: Young voices in research for health

The Global Forum for Health Research and The Lancet are holding their third joint essay competition for the under-30s on the theme: Climate change and health: research challenges for the health of vulnerable populations. Click [here](#) for details.

(46) Climate Change and Health Good Practice Award

Addressing the public health challenge presented by climate change and our high carbon lifestyles requires local and regional action. That is why, on the occasion of this year's World Health Day 2008: protecting health from climate change, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and the European Regional Health Authorities (EUREGHA) network are jointly launching a Good Practice Award for local and regional projects that simultaneously promote human health and protect the climate. If your region, health facility or university has any experience in the field of climate change and health that you would like to share, we warmly invite you to enter our good practice competition. Your contribution could help to empower other institutions to follow a low carbon future and better prepare for climate change. For more details, see www.env-health.org/climatechangeawards

(47) 2nd Annual Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Intergenerational Contest

EPA, Generations United and the Rachel Carson Council, Inc. are teaming up for the Second Annual Rachel Carson Intergenerational Poetry, Essay and Photo Contest. The contest is designed to increase environmental stewardship and public awareness of environmental issues and encourage intergenerational interactions. Click [here](#) for more information.

(48) The National Children's Study Accepting Proposals

The National Children's Study today announces another major step toward the Study's full implementation with the issuing of a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for additional Study Centers. The Study plans to establish another wave of new Study locations and Centers across the US. Fifty-eight previously identified Study locations that have not been included in past awards are included in this solicitation. The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (the Study's home Institute at NIH) has issued this RFP to solicit proposals by interested organizations to serve as Study Centers. To view the RFP, please visit the [website](#).

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Asthma in Children Linked to Cleaning Products and Air Freshener Use during Pregnancy](#) "Expectant mothers who use a lot of household cleaning products may increase the risk of their child developing asthma." Researchers claim to have found a link between wheezing and asthma in young children, and their mothers' use of cleaning products during pregnancy. [Medical News Today](#). 13 March 2008.

[Introducing Solar Cooking to the World](#) All over Asia, Africa and Latin America, you can see women and children carrying up to 40 lbs of wood on their heads and backs. Burning wood releases very fine particles of carbon into the air that are directly responsible for one million deaths and are a significant contributor to global warming. Solar cookers can help. S. Carana. [Gather.com](#). 18 February 2008.

[Fragrances Foul for Many](#) Fragrances are the most obvious indoor air pollutants second only to tobacco smoke. Although scented products can trigger serious health problems for many, it's especially troublesome for those with lung disease and asthma or COPD. They also contribute significantly to the increase in respiratory disease. M. Bernardo. [The Sault Star](#). 7 February 2008.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Curbing soot could blunt global warming: study](#) Each year, more than 1.6 million deaths among women and children worldwide, are attributed to smoke inhalation during indoor cooking using biofuels, an important source of black carbon (soot). Reducing black carbon emissions would not only save lives, but also has the potential to mitigate the effects of global warming. [Yahoo](#). 23 March 2008.

[The deadly cost of inaction](#) An OECD report suggests that delaying concerted action to fight pollution would be costly. If current policies prevail, by 2030 ozone pollution alone is likely to cause four times more premature deaths, per head of population, than it did in 2000 with Asia and North America hardest hit. Deaths from particulate-matter pollution would double. [The Economist](#). 5 March 2008.

[The Smallest of Pollutants are Linked to Outsize Health Risks](#) While air pollution comes in many forms, scientists are increasingly concerned about its most minute constituents. These ultrafines, are ubiquitous near roadways and are emerging as one of the most dangerous components of air pollution, which kills an estimated 60,000-plus Americans a year. A. Voiland. [US News](#). 27 February 2008.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Tobacco poses threat to moms in developing world](#) Pregnant women's exposure to tobacco in developing countries is growing at an alarming rate, U.S. government researchers said. "Pregnant women's tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke threaten to impede or reverse ongoing efforts to improve maternal and child health in the developing world." J. Steenhuysen. [Reuters](#). 28 February 2008.

[UN: 'Tobacco epidemic' could kill 1 billion in 21st century unless governments act now](#) "We hold in our hands the solution to the global tobacco epidemic that threatens the lives of one billion men, women and children during this century. The cure for this epidemic is dependent not on medicines or vaccines, but on the concerted actions of government and civil society." E. Gartner. [AP](#). 8 February 2008.

[How to Save a Billion Lives](#) In recent years, smoking has been sharply restricted in some unlikely places. In recent years, as rich countries have clamped down on smoking, tobacco firms have shifted their focus to poorer places. Countries must take evasive action because the tobacco industry is getting the world's poor hooked before governments can respond. [The Economist](#). 7 February 2008.

(2) CHEMICALS:

(a) General

[Are alternatives any safer than plastics?](#) Many environmentalists are giving substitute materials a favourable nod, but some of the newer chemicals used to replace polycarbonate haven't been studied in depth to fully verify their safety, and Canada's regulatory system has loopholes that allow products to be sold without much testing. M. Mittelstaedt. Globe and Mail. 11 March 2008.

[Chemicals in Baby Products Linked to Reproductive Problems in Children](#) A new study brings to light a potentially dangerous link between chemicals used in ordinary products, such as baby shampoos and lotions, to reproductive problems in children. The chemicals, called phthalates, have been under attack by some environmental advocacy groups. J. Hurley. Natural News. 4 March 2008.

[Nonprofit finds big problems in kids' products](#) "Lead is getting the attention, but there's a bigger picture." The problem is not just imported plastic, Green said. True, CEH has found more problems with imports, but the issue is really about consumer demand. "It's really not about China. It's about us. We're the ones who have to protect our kids," he said. D. Fischer. Oakland Tribune. 3 February 2008.

(b) Lead

[Jordan: Public health boost as country switches to unleaded petrol?](#) The government decided to switch to unleaded fuel in a bid to improve public health, especially that of children. Environmentalists, however, say a hazardous chemical compound used to convert leaded fuel to unleaded could cause cancer and poses serious risks to humans and the environment. IRIN. 25 March 2008.

[Prenatal Lead Exposure in Mice: Age-Related, Sex-Specific Effects Observed](#) There was a significant inverse relationship between lead exposure and body weight for male GLE mice. Male GLE mice also exhibited significantly less exploratory activity particularly in the low-exposure group. This group also had significantly poorer balance and coordination. J. Barrett. EHP. March 2008.

[Associations of Bone Mineral Density and Lead Levels in Blood, Tibia, and Patella in Urban-dwelling Women](#) In adjusted analysis, higher BMD was associated with higher tibia lead levels. BMD was not associated with levels of lead in blood or patella. There was evidence of effect modification by BMD on relations of physical activity. K. Theppang, et al. EHP. 26 February 2008.

(c) Pesticides

[GM crops increase pesticide use](#) Planting genetically modified (GM) crops is causing an increased use of harmful pesticides in major biotech crop producing countries. The main conclusions of the 2008 report "The Rise in Pesticide Use" include: GM crops are not 'green.' GM crops on the market today have also failed to tackle hunger and poverty. Africa Files. 13 February 2008.

[Is DDT Making a Comeback?](#) Globally, more than 500 million individuals are infected with malaria every year, of whom more than a million die, mostly babies and pregnant women. Some argue that the judicious application of DDT is precisely what's needed to loosen malaria's death grip, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Are they right? K. Larsen. OnEarth Magazine. 1 February 2008.

[Greenpeace report finds fertilizer in Philippine drinking water](#) Drinking water contaminated by fertilizer has been found on farms in the northern Philippines, environmental group Greenpeace said. The group said it was caused by nitrogen-based fertilizer runoff, which poses health risks, especially to children. There is a need to shift away from the industrial agriculture system. AFP. 1 February 2008.

[Contamination of soils with organochlorine pesticides in urban parks in Beijing China](#) DDTs have caused high pollution levels in the soils of some parks. This study suggested that open spaces like urban parks were not as sound as was expected and that there was potential for exposure of visitors/workers in the parks to organochlorine pesticides. XH Li, et al. Chemosphere. February 2008.

[Seattle study shows striking toxicity gulf between kids who ate organic and conventional foods](#) Government

promises to rid the nation's food supply of brain-damaging pesticides aren't doing the job. The peer-reviewed study found that the urine and saliva of children eating a variety of conventional foods from area groceries contained biological markers of organophosphates. [The Oregonian](#). 30 January 2008.

(d) Mercury

[Mercury's Blowback - Autism](#) "Information about fish and mercury should be made available to pregnant women and mothers, especially targeting groups who are likely to be frequent consumers of fish and who use fish in weaning and infant foods. Health promotion activities could also be informed by surveillance of blood or hair mercury levels in infants. R. Bystryanik. [Health Sentinel](#). 10 March 2008.

[First Autism-Vaccine Link: How Hannah Made History](#) Federal health officials have concluded that childhood vaccines contributed to symptoms of the disorder in a 9-year-old Georgia girl. While government officials continue to maintain that vaccines don't cause autism, advocates say the settlement of the girl's injury case shows otherwise. A. Young. [Atlanta Journal Constitution](#). 3 March 2008.

[Mercury in Fish: Two Views](#) Two experts agree that fish — the right kind in the right amounts — is good for you. Both agree that mercury is harmful to the neurological development of unborn and young children, and both support the government's 2004 recommendation that certain groups limit their consumption of fish and avoid certain types. C. Hoyt. [NY Times](#). 16 February 2008.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[Making the World's Water Supply Arsenic Safe](#) Arsenic poisoning affects nearly 100 million people living in Bangladesh and West Bengal. While the problem may seem complex, the solution is easy to operate and culturally compatible. That solution is arsenic removal units (ARUs), and was named a top finalist for the 2008 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award. [idswater](#). 17 March 2008.

[Clean break from cycle of disease](#) Bangladesh has the highest population density of any nation on the planet and a half of its people are without adequate sanitation. As a result, the rivers and fields are polluted with human waste that enters the food chain. According to figures from Water Aid, 125,000 children under the age of five die each year from diarrhoeal diseases. [BBC News](#). 15 March 2008.

[Not a drop to drink](#) Today's "crisis in water and sanitation is - above all - a crisis of the poor. "People living in the slums face shortages of clean water, but their neighbors in high income suburbs... keep their lawns green and swimming pools topped up. (The poor) pay five to ten times more for water per unit than those in high-income areas of their own cities." H. Tacio. [Davao Sun Star](#). 4 March 2008.

[Proper sanitation - Nearly two-thirds of Africans lack access](#) Of the 2.6 billion people without toilets in their homes, nearly 1 billion of them are children. At the current rate, 2.4 billion people will still be without basic sanitation in 2015. "The absence of adequate sanitation has a serious impact on health and social development, especially for children." [Accra Mail](#). 25 March 2008.

[Better sanitation has huge economic spin-offs](#) Every dollar spent on improving sanitation -- ranging from digging latrines or building sewers -- would have \$9 in benefits such as higher economic growth or lower hospital bills. Spending \$10 billion a year would enable the world to reach a 2015 goal of improved sanitation in developing countries with huge spin-offs. A. Doyle. [Reuters](#). 20 March 2008.

[World sanitation goals slip; nature can help](#) Experts say a part of the solution, especially to cut water-borne diseases for the rural poor, may lie in renewed and smarter exploitation of nature. An example? An artificial wetland outside of a Mombasa prison where plants will act as a sewage processing plant in an experimental \$117,000 scheme, also to include a fish farm. A. Doyle. [Reuters](#). 16 March 2008.

(4) GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

(a) General

[Children most vulnerable to climate change](#) Emphasizing that children become extremely vulnerable in emergency situations, Dr Nurse made a strong call for the development of child-centred interventions which should include child friendly shelters and early education of children about the realities of climate change as part of the re-programming process. Guyana Chronicle. 18 March 2008.

[Climate Matters in Health](#) The main discussion points were how climate information could be used for malaria early warning and related activities and the possible explanations of why there were no malaria epidemics in the last three years. It also suggested ways governments can work together and with civil society to prevent future epidemics. UNEP: Addis Ababa Highlights. March 2008.

[Climate change affecting fish stocks](#) Climate change is emerging as the latest threat to the world's fast declining fish stocks, which could affect millions of people who depend on the oceans for food and income. Projections suggest that climate pressure could result in reef loss and a decline in fish availability for per capita consumption of approximately 15 percent by 2015." IRIN. 26 February 2008.

[Climate change threatens human rights of millions](#) United Nations officials said rising sea levels and intense storms, droughts and floods could force scores of people from their homes and off their lands. This threatens the human rights of millions of people who are at risk of losing access to housing, food and clean water unless governments intervene early. L. MacInnis. Reuters. 19 February 2008.

[Climate Change Will Erode Foundations of Health](#) "The core concern is succinctly stated: climate change endangers human health," said Dr Chan. "The warming of the planet will be gradual, but the effects of extreme weather events will be abrupt and acutely felt. Both trends can affect some of the most fundamental determinants of health: air, water, food, shelter and freedom from disease." WHO. 7 April 2008.

(b) Food Security

[The New Face of Hunger](#) The price of food is soaring. The threat of hunger and malnutrition is growing. Millions of the world's most vulnerable people are at risk. Many governments have issued export bans and price controls on food, distorting markets and presenting challenges to commerce. This is the new face of hunger. B. Ki-Moon. Washington Post. 12 March 2008.

[U.N. sees more hunger, unrest over food inflation](#) "Higher food prices will increase social unrest in countries which are sensitive to inflationary pressures and are import-dependent. We will see a repeat of the riots we have already reported on the streets." "Our assessment is that the current level will continue for the next few years, probably at least until 2010." D. Ennis. Reuters. 6 March 2008.

[Ethiopia: Climate Change Catalyst for Increased Rate of Malnourishment](#) Children aged five years or less are 36% more likely to be malnourished and 41 % more likely to be stunted if they were born during a drought season in Ethiopia. The report said this was translated in to two million children born malnourished in the country in the year 2005, alone. B. Girma. The Daily Monitor. 26 February 2008.

[FAO unveils new bioenergy assessment tool](#) A decision-support tool developed by FAO will help ensure that countries can enter the rapidly growing field of bioenergy industry to produce benefits for the poor. The analytical framework allows governments interested in entering the bioenergy sector to calculate the effect of their policy decisions on the food security. FAO. 8 February 2008.

(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

[Concerns over decreasing male fertility rates](#) Research published in the journal Fertility and Sterility on the anti-impotence drug Viagra concluded that men taking the drug could be damaging their sperm and lowering their ability to conceive. Another study suggests that pollution from chemicals such as dioxin can lower a man's sperm count. C. Maden. BioNews. 10 March 2008.

[Sperm damage 'passed to children'](#) Scientists say fathers who smoke and drink should be aware they are potentially not just damaging themselves, but also their heirs. It suggests that a father's health plays a greater role in the health of future generations than has been thought. The chemical altered genes in the sperm, including a number associated with human prostate cancer. [BBC News](#). 19 February 2008.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS

(a) Americas

[Peru tribe battles oil giant over pollution](#) "A whole generation had their health damaged. How can we keep quiet as our parents did? We can't allow this, we're a new generation, we know how to read and write and we have to help our people because they didn't have the knowledge to defend themselves against the oil companies. But now we do." D. Collyns. [BBC News](#). 24 March 2008.

[Paraguay: Fighting for Survival in a Green Desert Wonderland](#) The majority of local children suffer from skin ailments like lesions and rashes, as well as headaches, nausea and vomiting, which also affect adults. The residents blame these health problems on the indiscriminate use of agrochemicals on the surrounding soybean plantations. D. Vargas. [IPS](#). 11 March 2008.

[Ontario to ban smoking in cars with kids](#) Ontario wants to become the second province in Canada to ban smoking in cars with children. It's the "next logical step" in the province's campaign to reduce smoking, which still claims the lives of 13,000 Ontarians a year. Mounting evidence shows smoking in the car is worse for children than smoking in the home. K. Gillespie. [The Toronto Star](#). 5 March 2008.

[Thrown back: Judges stand up for our health, the rule of law by rejecting Bush mercury stance](#) Prenatal exposure to methyl mercury, even at very low doses, causes neurological and other developmental damage, even if the mother does not appear ill. As many as 637,000 babies born each year in the United States are in jeopardy from mercury in their mothers' bodies. R. Steinzor. [Baltimore Sun](#). 21 February 2008.

[Health-Argentina: Danger in the Fields](#) A study conducted in different regions with the coordination of the Argentine Association of Doctors for the Environment (AAMMA) warns of the indiscriminate use of pesticides, a lack of protection for farm workers and for their families, and the accumulation of contaminated containers on farms, plantations and orchards. M. Valente. [IPS](#). 18 February 2008.

(b) Asia

[Lebanon: Political rivalries prevent clean-up of toxic rubbish](#) Air pollution from the mountain, located near schools, hospitals and apartment blocks in Lebanon's third biggest city, has meant Sidon's children suffer more from asthma than children anywhere else in Lebanon. The mountain has repeatedly caught fire and at least three times partially collapsed into the sea. [IRIN](#). 21 March 2008.

[Iraq's wrecked environment](#) While Iraq was sanctioned during the 1990s, the root cause of child mortality and other health problems was no longer simply lack of food and medicine, but the lack of clean water and of electrical power, problems that have continued into this war. Depleted Uranium also poses a threat to children and the environment. J. Saint Clair & J. Frank. [The Independent](#). 14 March 2008.

[A large black cloud](#) The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), China's paramount environmental regulator, estimates the annual cost of environmental damage at 8-13% of GDP—much the same as the overall economic growth rate. If it continues like this, levels of pollution are expected to double over the next 15 years. [The Economist](#). 13 March 2008.

[China's killer "yellow dust" hits Korea, Japan](#) "We advised the closure because kindergarten and primary school students have weaker immune systems," said Min Eyu-gi, an education official in Busan. The dust from China's Gobi Desert picks up heavy metals and carcinogens such as dioxin as it passes over Chinese industrial regions. J.

Herskovitz. [Reuters](#). 3 March 2008.

(c) Africa

[Annual Sahara wind brings a chill](#) Airborne particles can be four times heavier during the harmattan compared with the rainy season. Carbon monoxide levels are higher, as the wind blows southward over densely populated areas, instead of from the less-polluted ocean. For many, the harmattan is a nuisance that fills lungs with dust and blows in illnesses. E. Harris. [LA Times](#). 15 March 2008.

[Make Zambia clean and healthy campaign fading out](#) Side by side with the distribution of chlorine, the health authorities in Zambia have been carrying out a public sensitisation campaign to educate how to prevent cholera. "Altogether we have recorded only 190 cases of cholera in Zambia compared to last year's 1,800 cases." B. Mwila. [The Times of Zambia](#). 13 March 2008.

[Zimbabwe: WHO Launches Smoke-Free Environment Campaign](#) The World Health Organization has launched a campaign to promote a smoke-free environment for children as part of commemorations to mark Cancer Day. During the campaign dubbed "I love my smoke-free childhood", all member states are expected to screen, diagnose and treat cancer. [The Herald](#). 8 February 2008.

(d) Europe

[European Parliament - Environment Committee insists on banning mercury imports and exports by 2010](#) MEPs in the committee agree with the Council that mercury waste should be stored either in salt mines, in deep, underground, hard rock formations, or in above-ground facilities "in a way that is safe for human health" before eventually being disposed of. [European Parliament](#). 26 March 2008.

[Global warming 'may cut deaths'](#) While summers in the UK became warmer in the period 1971 - 2003, there was no change in heat-related deaths, but annual cold-related mortality fell by 3% as winters became milder. As a result of regulations, levels of several key pollutants are likely to decline over the next 50 years, but the concentration of ozone may well increase. [BBC News](#). 12 February 2008.

[Safety first: Commission proposes new strict rules for toys](#) The European Commission has come forward today with measures to improve toy safety in Europe. The revision seeks to create new and higher safety requirements, to strengthen manufacturers' and importers' responsibility for the marketing of toys and to enhance the market surveillance obligations of Member States. [EUROPA](#). 25 January 2008.
