

HECANET * October - November 2008**

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(34) Third international conference on children's health and the environment. Busan, South Korea, 7-10 June 2009

(35) Tunza International Children's Conference on the Environment. Daejeon, Korea. 17 - 21 August 2009

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

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

Indoor air pollution studies look at the link between hypospadias and endocrine disruptors found in common household products, and higher indoor NO₂ concentrations and increased symptoms in children with asthma, while one study investigates how pollen enters wellings. In China, the effects of reducing coal burning pollutants to children's health are explored and the effects of air pollutants and the risk of cleft palates are investigated, while the UN reports there are increased emissions of greenhouse gases in developing nations. The effects smoking during pregnancy are linked to behavioural problems in children, while a web assisted tobacco intervention is introduced in the Journal of Medical Internet research. In the USA, a study following 100 000 children from birth to 21 years of age is on track to begin in 2009. India makes a positive move to have lead removed from paints. A study of Chinese children investigated the BLLs and the association to attention deficit disorder, while the New England Cohort provides further evidence of the BLL and the early origins of psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia. The great lakes study establishes a relationship between prenatal PBC exposure and IQ in 9 year old children, while in Europe the potential developmental neurotoxicity of pesticides is tested. A study investigating Autism Spectrum Disorders found that children who had severe ASDs had increased urinary porphyrins-associated with mercury toxicity. In China, tainted water sickens 450 people, while in Germany, parents are advised to give children bottled water to avoid exposure to lead during childhood. WaterAid warns that the world slums face increasing sanitation problems, accounting for over 5 000 child deaths around the world each day. The Zimbabwean cholera situation hits new highs, with the health minister asking for international helps. In the area of Global change, we explore the impacts and implications of climate change on children in low and middle income countries, while Europe attempts to lead the world in a new deal on climate change. One article addresses the issues surrounding the risks and benefits of breastfeeding, and a study finds that female fetuses more susceptible to hormone disrupters. In Bolivia a study tests the semen quality of men and establishes a link between molybdenum and poor semen quality, while in Philadelphia, the children's hospitals says that the cases of hypospadias have doubled over the last 30 years. A photo account portrays how Bangladesh is being affected by climate change. In the Americas, Argentina sees a series of poverty-linked diseases "come back" due to climate change, while in Peru, the semen quality of pesticide

applicators is tested. The World Bank looks at inequities by using the innovative inequality measuring index in Brazil and Argentina. In Asia, 18 million and 65 million Chinese nationals are predicted to die from lung cancer and COPD respectively if nothing is done to reduce the smoking and the fuel burning indoors, and in India, 12 states face alarming levels of hunger comparable to those of Ethiopia. In Manila, 5 000 people are estimated to die every year as a result of metro manila's air pollution, while in Uzbek, new borns have been the latest victim of an Aids "outbreak" from unsafe blood supplies and contaminated equipment. In Africa 25 babies die from consuming contaminated teething syrup and in Zimbabwe, the cholera outbreak is compounded by the desperately short supplies of food and poor health care, Health providers and economists try to work out how to get malaria drugs to remote African villages the "coca cola" way. In Europe, small birth size is found to be associated with major cardiovascular pathologies in later adult life. Sweden looks at how the effect of maternal age affects the risk of childhood leukaemia and in the Isle of Wight, scientist found much better lung function in those breastfed for at least 4 months. In New Zealand UNICEF call for better data on the extent of child sexual exploitation and in Australia a report looks at the prevalence of eye problems among children, including vision disability, congenital anomalies and cancer.

- (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**
- (5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**
- (6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General (b) Americas (c) Asia (d) Africa (e) Europe (f) Oceania**

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

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 \(CEHI\)](#) or contact: cehindicators@who.int

(3) WHO agreed on a research agenda on climate change and public health

A meeting of experts convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Madrid agreed today to a research agenda to develop an evidence-based framework for action on the human health implications of climate change. The plan builds on a comprehensive review of what is already known about health risks from climate change. It was developed by WHO with more than 80 top researchers on climate change and health along with representatives of donor and other UN agencies. The meeting took place 6-8 October and hosted by the Ministry of Health of Spain.

"Many agencies, including WHO, have highlighted the health dangers of climate change" said Dr Margaret Chan, WHO's Director-General. "Our 193 Member States asked WHO to help them strengthen the evidence base for policy action. This plan provides the framework for doing just that. It sets out guidance to governments, research institutions and donors looking to fill crucial knowledge gaps." In the last decade, even though climate change has been increasingly acknowledged as an important risk to human well-being, its effects on health have received little research attention. Scientific papers describing the links between climate change and health are outnumbered by those on air pollution by almost 8 times, and by those on smoking by almost 40 times. The plan aims to speed-up, focus and intensify climate change and health research to strengthen the evidence base for discussion at the 15th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP15), to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009, where world leaders will forge a new global climate agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. The research plan identifies five priority research areas; including:

1. Interactions with other health determinants and trends
2. Direct and indirect effects
3. Comparing effectiveness of short-term interventions
4. Assessing health impact of policies of non-health sectors
5. Strengthening public health systems to address health effects of climate change

To read more please visit:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/pr36/en/index.html>

(4) International Children's Environmental Health Champion: Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino

The International Children's Environmental Health Champion is recognized for outstanding efforts and commitment to advancing children's environmental health issues around the world. EPA is pleased to recognize Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino as the 2008 International Children's Environmental Health Champion. Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino, physician and medical officer at the World Health Organization (WHO), leads the activities on children's health and the environment at its Department of Public Health and Environment. As the Principal Investigator of a grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, she is involved in international research promoting advancing children's environmental health. Dr. Pronczuk de Garbino has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about environmental threats to children's health. She planned and coordinated the First International Conference on Children's Environmental Health in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2002, which released the Bangkok Statement, a call for action to protect children from environmental threats. In 2005, she organized the Second International Conference on Children's Environmental Health: Healthy Environments, Healthy Children in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She has convened numerous meetings and expert workshops that have brought children's environmental health issues to the attention of policy makers, health educators and providers, and others. To read please visit:

http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/2008_CEH_Awards.htm#int

(5) The global burden of disease: 2004 update

[WHO published a new assessment of the global burden of disease](#), a study that provides the reader with a comprehensive picture of the global and regional state of health. Drawing from extensive data across the Organization, it features comparisons between deaths, diseases and injuries by region, age, sex and country income for the year 2004. It also provides projections of deaths and burden of disease by cause and region to the year 2030. The study contains details of the top 10 causes of death and estimates for over 130 disease and injury causes. Striking findings include:

- Worldwide, Africa accounts for nine out of every 10 child deaths due to malaria, for nine out of every 10 child deaths due to AIDS, and for half of the world's child deaths due to diarrhoeal disease and pneumonia.
- The top five causes of death in low-income countries are: pneumonia, followed by heart disease, diarrhoea, HIV/AIDS and stroke. In high-income countries, the list is topped by heart disease and followed by stroke, lung cancer, pneumonia, and asthma/bronchitis.
- Men between the ages of 15 and 60 years have much higher risks of dying than women in the same age category in every region of the world. This is mainly due to injuries, including those caused in violence and conflict, and to higher levels of heart diseases. This difference is most pronounced in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and the eastern European regions.
- Depression is the leading cause of years lost due to disability, the burden being 50% higher for females than males. In both low- and middle-income countries, and high-income countries, alcohol dependence and problem use are among the 10 leading causes of disability.

(6) WHO Report: Indoor smoke does not offer protection against malaria

Half of the world's population relies on biomass or coal as their primary household fuel source. The smoke produced from burning these fuels indoors presents a major health risk. Much work is being done to develop interventions to reduce levels of indoor air pollution. However, anecdotal evidence exists for smoke having a repellent effect on mosquitoes. This raises the possibility that interventions to reduce indoor air pollution might increase the risk of malaria and other insect-borne diseases. Eighty percent of the burden of insect-borne diseases and ninety percent of the resulting deaths are due to malaria and the report therefore focuses on this disease. A literature review was performed to assess the extent of evidence for smoke providing protection from malaria or mosquitoes. Although there is evidence that the smoke from certain plant products contains active compounds that have a repellent effect, no experimental evidence was found for a repellent effect attributable to smoke from domestic biomass fuels. One of the important findings from this study is the dearth of literature relating to the effects of smoke from domestic fuel use on mosquito behaviour. The conclusions and tentative recommendations presented with respect to this are therefore grounded in a very weak evidence base. Furthermore, vector behaviour and malaria epidemiology vary across geographical settings making it unlikely that a single rule describing the relationship between smoke, vectors and the incidence of vector borne disease would have global applicability. To download the full report visit: http://www.who.int/indoorair/publications/smoke_malaria/en/index.html

(7) 2.5 Billion People Lack Toilets

Clean toilets save lives. But with billions of people lacking access to basic sanitation around the world, which toilet best meets each person's and family's need? A new guidebook produced by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) sheds light on the diverse sanitary systems and technologies which can help people across the developing world lead healthier and happier lives. Launched on the 4th November in conjunction with the World Toilet Summit & Expo in Macao, the Compendium of Sanitation Systems and Technologies is a unique, all-in-one planning and reference tool on the best, most appropriate and most sustainable sanitation systems and technologies. The publication may be downloaded free of charge from http://www.eawag.ch/organisation/abteilungen/sandec/publikationen/publications_sesp/downloads_sesp/compendium_high.pdf. The Compendium solves this problem by presenting a range of options in one document; it is useful as a starting point to make well informed decisions during the planning process. The Compendium also promotes a systems approach – as sanitation devices and technologies should always be considered as parts of an entire system.

(8) Map of Violence - The Young People of Latin America

Latin America has the highest murder rates in the world for young people aged between 15 and 24, according to a study by a Brazilian research group. Using data from 83 countries, the group found that the probability of a young person being murdered in Latin America is 30 times higher than in Europe. The grimmest figures are for El Salvador, where the murder rate among young people is 92 per 100,000 people. A key factor there is the presence of violent youth gangs, the report says. The study, called [Map of Violence: The Young People of Latin America](#) (available

in Portuguese only), was compiled by researchers at the Latin American Technological Information Network, Ritla. The Brasilia-based group compared murder rates for 2007 in 83 countries, both for the overall population and for the 15-to-24 age bracket. "The probability of a young Latin American being a murder victim is 30 times higher than for a European, and more than 70 times greater than for young people in countries like Greece, Hungary, England, Austria... or Ireland," the report said. The comparative study found that the murder rate for young people was 36.6 for every 100,000 people in Latin America while in Africa it was 16.1, North America 12, Asia 2.4, Oceania 1.6 and Europe 1.2, although there are variations within a particular region. The report also found that the top four countries for youth murder rates also headed the overall murder rate table: El Salvador (total murders per 100,000 - 48.8), Colombia (43.8), Venezuela (29.5) and Guatemala (28.5). Brazil occupies fifth place for youth murders and sixth for the overall murder rate at 25.2. The lowest youth murder rates in Latin America were in Chile, Cuba and Uruguay, all with around seven killings per 100,000. The Ritla report notes that as well as El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala have also seen what it calls "drastic" increases in murder rates. Part of this is due to the presence of youth gangs, known as maras, which are prevalent in Central America. But the study says the region also has a long history of armed internal and external conflict.

(9) Annual Report Captures Efforts to Protect Children

[A new publication](#) outlines national efforts to protect children from environmental risks over the last year. EPA's Children's Environmental Health: 2008 Highlights is the eighth in an annual series on work done in its programs, labs and regions. EPA has funded research on how the environment affects children's health, promoted the education of health care providers, published information about how climate change affects children's health, and assembled data to quantify the extent of children's health issues. EPA is addressing environmental health disparities, issues during pregnancy, the rebuilding of communities with children's needs in mind and the health of children in our nation's schools. Issues in the report include childhood asthma, lead poisoning, exposure to the sun, children and chemicals, integrated pest management, Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units and research findings. This year marks the 11th year of explicit attention to the health of children following the Executive Order of 1997, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks.

(10) Health facilities in Emergencies—World Health Day 2009

World Health Day marks the founding of WHO. It is the Organization's most visible effort to raise awareness of a key global health issue selected each year. The First World Health Assembly created the event in 1948 and it has been celebrated on 7 April annually since 1950. WHO organizes international, regional and local events on the Day and throughout the year to highlight the selected priority health area. In 2008, World Health Day was dedicated to the theme "Protecting health from climate change." The theme was selected in recognition that climate change is posing ever growing threats to global public health security. A range of activities in every country aims to stimulate active, long-term involvement. World Health Day offers an opportunity to revitalize political commitment to address public health issues.

(11) Report: Tougher European Climate Rules Would Save Money and Lengthen Lives

[The report “The Co-benefits to Health of a Strong EU Climate Change Policy”](#), analyses the health benefits of reduced climate pollution if the EU increased its 2020 target for domestic greenhouse gas emission cuts from 20 to 30 per cent without any delay. The study commissioned by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-E) and WWF. The findings show that raising the target to 30 per cent, in line with recommendations of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), would produce savings resulting from better health valued at between €6.5-25 billion per year. The estimates are based on economic evaluations of loss of life and health, working days lost and hospital costs. The findings show reductions in hospital admissions of 8,000 per year, and two million fewer work days lost per year by moving to the higher 30 per cent target. These health savings are over and above the benefits of the EU’s existing scenario of a 20 per cent target. The report shows that raising the target to 30 per cent would increase the savings by €25 billion, or 48 per cent, from €51-76 billion.

(12) Impacts of Europe's changing climate - 2008 indicator-based assessment

[The report](#) presents past and projected climate change and impacts in Europe by means of about 40 indicators and identifies sectors and regions most vulnerable with a high need for adaptation. The report covers the following indicator categories: atmosphere and climate, cryosphere, marine biodiversity and ecosystems, water quantity (including river floods and droughts), freshwater quality and biodiversity, terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity, soil, agriculture and forestry, human health. Furthermore the report shows the need for adaptation actions at EU, national and regional level and the need for enhanced monitoring, data collection and exchange and reducing uncertainties in projections. [The report](#) is a joined effort of the European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC-IES) and the World Health Organisation Europe (WHO).

(13) 60 Ways the UUN makes a Difference

On the occasion of the United Nations Day celebrated on October 24, the UN published the following 60 facts about the nature of the world body's work and mission. The United Nations was established, in the aftermath of a devastating war, to help stabilize international relations and give peace a more secure foundation. Amid the threat of nuclear war and seemingly endless regional conflicts, peacekeeping has become an overriding concern of the United Nations, and the activities of the blue-helmeted peacekeepers have emerged as among the most visible. But the United Nations is much more than a peacekeeper and a forum for conflict resolution. Often without attracting attention, the UN and its family of agencies are engaged in a vast array of work that seeks to improve people’s lives around the world. Child survival and development. Environmental protection. Human rights. Health and medical research. Alleviation of poverty and economic development. Agricultural development and fisheries. Education. Advancement of women. Emergency and disaster relief. Air and sea travel. Peaceful uses of atomic energy. Workers’ rights. The list goes on. Here is a sampling of what the United Nations and its component bodies have accomplished since 1945, when the world Organization was founded. Please visit http://www.un.org/un60/swf_files/ to see the colourful and interactive presentation.

(14) The right of children and adolescents to a healthy environment

A third of children and adolescents between the ages of 0 and 18 (35.3%) lack adequate access to drinking water supply in the home, while only 27,4% of the adult population suffer such conditions. The problem of sanitation is even more serious, as the regional average of children and young people with no or inadequate access to sanitation is 42.7%, compared to only 36.7% of adults. In terms of both drinking water and sanitation, the situation is more critical for children under the age of five, poorer children and adolescents, those living in rural areas, and those from indigenous or Afro descendent communities. These revealing data are highlighted by ECLAC experts in [the fifth edition of Challenges](#), a four-monthly bulletin on childhood and adolescence published jointly by ECLAC and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In the main article "[The right of children and adolescents to a healthy environment. A diagnosis from Latin America and the Caribbean](#)", specialists Martín Hopenhayn and Ernesto Espíndola analyse the subject of water and sanitation and its impact on childhood. Persistent inequities in access pose a serious threat to the almost 21 million children under the age of five in the region, who are at risk of infant mortality and under nutrition — a situation that could be avoided by substantially improving access. These are the challenges set by the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Challenges bulletin is available, in English and Spanish, from <http://www.cepal.org/dds/desafios>

(15) Young People Urge World Leaders to Combat Climate Change

Nearly 90 per cent of young people across the globe think world leaders should do "whatever it takes" to tackle climate change. This is among the top findings of a new poll conducted on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The survey of 12 to 18 year-olds in five countries (Brazil, India, Russia, South Africa and the United States) found that nine in ten young people (88% overall and 85% or more in each country) agree that "World leaders should do whatever it takes to tackle climate change". **Climate Change a Top Concern among Young People:** Young people are clearly concerned about climate change. Concern is highest in Brazil (96%) and South Africa (91%), followed by India (85%) and the United States (82%), while significantly lower levels of concern are expressed in Russia (70%). **World Leaders Not Doing Enough:** Young people in South Africa, the United States and Brazil are particularly critical of world leaders' efforts to address climate change; seven in ten or more across these three countries say world leaders are not doing enough (South Africa, 82%; the United States, 79%; Brazil, 73%). Only in India are young people more likely to say world leaders are doing "too much" or "enough;" just 19 percent say they are not doing enough. To read full press release, please go to:

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5961&l=en>

(16) New UNEP Project Atmospheric Brown Cloud Report

Cities from Beijing to New Delhi are getting darker; glaciers in ranges like the Himalayas are melting faster and weather systems becoming more extreme, in part, due to the combined effects of human-made Atmospheric Brown Clouds (ABCs) and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The brown clouds, the result of burning of fossil fuels and biomass, are in some cases and

regions aggravating the impacts of greenhouse gas-induced climate change, says [the report](#). This is because ABCs lead to the formation of particles like black carbon and soot that absorb sunlight and heat the air; and gases such as ozone which enhance the greenhouse effect of CO₂. Globally however brown clouds may be countering or 'masking' the warming impacts of climate change by between 20 and up to 80 per cent the researchers suggest. This is because of particles such as sulphates and some organics which reflect sunlight and cool the surface. The cloud is also having impacts on air quality and agriculture in Asia increasing risks to human health and food production for three billion people. The phenomenon has been most intensively studied over Asia. This is in part because of the region's already highly variable climate, including the formation of the annual monsoon, and the fact that the region is home to around half the world's population and is undergoing massive growth. But the scientists today made clear that there are also brown clouds elsewhere, including over parts of North America, Europe, southern Africa and the Amazon Basin which also require urgent and detailed research.

(17) Nature-Based Enterprises Can Help Rural Poor Adapt to Environmental Threats

Expanding nature-based enterprises can increase income for the world's rural poor. This approach, as outlined in the latest [World Resources Report 2008](#), can also develop the rural poor's resilience to social and environmental threats such as climate change. Three-quarters of the 2.6 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day are dependent upon local natural resources for their livelihoods. Threats such as climate change and ecosystem degradation are beginning to strain those livelihoods, and it will be necessary to shape development strategies that build resilience against such threats and ensure stable and prosperous communities. [World Resources 2008: Roots of Resilience - released on the 8 October 2008](#) as part of the IUCN World Conservation Congress - closely examines existing community-based efforts. The report argues that properly fostered nature-based enterprises can improve rural livelihoods and, in the process, create resilience to economic, social, and environmental threats. Achim Steiner, under-secretary general and executive director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said, "Poverty will never be made history unless we invest in more intelligent management of the world's nature-based assets. There are now countless models and case studies of how ecosystems can be managed to boost rural livelihoods and incomes while meeting the goal of environmental sustainability.

"Mainstreaming and making these models and blueprints more commonplace and widespread is now a matter of great urgency in a world challenged by climate change, in a world where we are pushing, if not pushing past the regenerative limits of the planet's life support systems," Steiner added. Roots of Resilience concludes that expanding the scale of already successful models requires an emphasis on three critical elements:

1. **Ownership:** A groundwork of good governance must both transfer to the poor legal authority over local resources and elicit local demand for better management of resources.
2. **Capacity:** Local communities must have the ability to manage ecosystems competently, carry out ecosystem-based enterprises, and distribute the income from these enterprises fairly.
3. **Connection:** Establishing adaptive networks that connect and strengthen nature-based enterprises will give them the ability to adapt, learn, link to markets, and mature into businesses that can sustain themselves and enter the economic mainstream.

The report includes with recommendations for national governments, donors, and the private sector to help create enabling environments that nurture rural enterprises and the resilience that can come with their growth. “The international community must fast-track this model to the centre stage of development policy. By doing so, countries can bring a new level of commitment and creativity to the poverty- and environment-related Millennium Development Goals,” said Veerle Vandeweerd, director of the Environment and Energy Group at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). World Bank President Robert Zoellick writes in the foreword to the report, “Increased resilience must be part of the response to the risks of climate change. The efforts that foster resilience chart the first steps on the path out of poverty.” World Resources 2008 is a joint effort produced by WRI, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank.

(18) "Deadly Dozen" Diseases Could Stem From Global Warming

Health experts from the Wildlife Conservation Society released a report on October 7 that lists 12 pathogens that could spread into new regions as a result of climate change. All have potential impacts to human and wildlife health as well as global economies. Called *The Deadly Dozen: Wildlife Diseases in the Age of Climate Change*, the new report provides examples of diseases that could spread as a result of changes in temperatures and precipitation levels. The best defense, according to the report’s authors, is a good offense in the form of wildlife monitoring to detect how these diseases are moving so health professionals can learn and prepare to mitigate their impact. The report was released at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in Barcelona, Spain.

“The term ‘climate change’ conjures images of melting ice caps and rising sea levels that threaten coastal cities and nations, but just as important is how increasing temperatures and fluctuating precipitation levels will change the distribution of dangerous pathogens,” said Dr. Steven E. Sanderson, WCS President and CEO. “The health of wild animals is tightly linked to the ecosystems in which they live and influenced by the environment surrounding them, and even minor disturbances can have far-reaching consequences on what diseases they might encounter and transmit as climate changes. Monitoring wildlife health will help us predict where those trouble spots will occur and plan how to prepare.”

The “Deadly Dozen” list—including such diseases as avian influenza, Ebola, cholera, and tuberculosis—is illustrative only of the broad range of infectious diseases that threaten humans and animals. It builds upon the recommendations included in a recently published paper titled “Wildlife Health as an Indicator of Climate Change,” which appears in a newly released book, *Global Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events: Understanding the Contributions to Infectious Disease Emergence*, published by the National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine. The study examines the nuts and bolts of deleterious impacts of climate change on the health of wild animals and the cascading effects on human populations. In addition to the health threats that diseases pose to human and wildlife populations, the pathogens that originate from or move through wildlife populations have already destabilized trade to a large extent and caused significant economic damage. For instance, avian influenza and several other livestock diseases that have re-emerged since the mid-1990s have caused an estimated \$100 billion in losses to the global economy. To view a brochure of the report please visit: http://www.wcs.org/media/file/DEADLYdozen_screen.pdf

(19) On Universal Children's Day, UNICEF welcomes new initiative to aid children affected by conflict

As the world commemorates Universal Children's Day, UNICEF welcomes the launch of a new group that aims to amplify the voice of those suffering as a result of conflict. The group has been established by young people with first-hand experience of the hardship children face in conflict zones. The new network, led by UNICEF Advocate Ishmael Beah, will be launched on the 20th November at a press conference at the United Nations in New York, hosted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, and UNICEF. It is the brainchild of Ishmael Beah (Sierra Leone), Emmanuel Jal (Sudan), Grace Akallo (Uganda), Kon Kelei (Sudan), Zlata Filipovic (Bosnia Herzegovina), and Shena A. Gacu (Uganda). By working together, they will seek to raise awareness of the plight of children in conflict zones, to advocate for an end to hostilities and to serve as role models for children who are currently struggling to recover from war. "Each of these young people has a story of overcoming great personal hardship," said UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman, welcoming the launch of the network. "This new network can draw attention to the suffering of children caught in conflicts and demonstrate how young people themselves can help dramatically rebuild their lives."

(20) Young Consumers' Guide to Eco-Friendly Living

How to balance looking cool and feeling cool with the need to combat climate are among the key tips in the new United Nations YouthXchange Training kit. This updated version of the guide also gets to grips with the mountains of waste emerging across the globe as a result of today's fast throw-away society from mobile phones to fashion. The 2008 Training Kit on Sustainable Consumption, produced by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is now in its second edition. YouthXchange is a train the trainer tool that aims to promote sustainable consumption patterns among young consumers worldwide. Among other novelties, this updated guide includes a chapter on how to find a balance between youths' consumer aspirations of dressing cool and fashionable while at the same time being aware of the impact of their consumption on, for example, climate change. For read full press release please visit: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5933&l=en>

(21) Children's Environmental Health - Poverty and Environment Partnership event

On 23 September 2008, the Poverty-Environment Partnership (PEP) hosted a policy dialogue on "Environment, Climate Change and the MDGs: Reshaping the Development Agenda" in support of the UN High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals. To view some information on the recent event that included a roundtable on 'Improving Health and Child Survival', please visit: <http://htc-01.media.qualitytech.com/COMP010026ARC1/20080923/session2.html> for further information

(22) UNEP Launches First Youth Network on Climate Change for North America

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launches today its first-ever North American Youth Network to help combat climate change. Twenty youth representatives, aged 18-22, were selected from the United States and Canada and are convening in Chicago on November 14-16, 2008 to launch UNEP's new Kick the Carbon Habit Education Campaign. The environmental education campaign aims to increase awareness of resource conservation in a world where natural resources are becoming increasingly scarce. UNEP recognizes the crucial role education can play in mitigating climate change and believes that young people are critical partners and leaders in the quest for a more sustainable future. UNEP's goal with the Kick the Carbon Habit Education Campaign is to form a self-sustaining network of North American youth leaders that will use educational events to reach out to their communities and encourage new as well as proven methods of resource conservation. The Youth Network representatives will use modern technology, including their website www.kicktheCO2habit.org, to liaise with UNEP and each other; to develop strategies for the growth of the campaign; to write and distribute a monthly e-newsletter to update volunteers on activities taking place within the network; and to play a leadership role in deciding future goals of the network. For more information please contact: Elisabeth Guilbaud-Cox (egc@rona.unep.org).

(23) Children Artists Join Forces with UN to Combat Climate Change

Young artists from around the world are lending their support to global efforts to combat climate change through Paint for the Planet, an exhibit and auction of children's art in New York. Launched today, the Paint for the Planet website (www.unep.org/paint4planet) features a selection of stand-out entries from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) International Children's Painting Competition. Showcasing children's fears and hopes for the planet, the paintings are a powerful plea from children for leadership on climate change before it is too late. Paint for the Planet will be the launch pad for the 'UNite to Combat Climate Change' campaign to support the call for a definitive agreement at the climate change talks in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. Five young artists from Burundi, Colombia, Malta and the United States will come to New York for the event to share their message for the planet with decision makers, corporate leaders and the media. They will officially open the exhibit at UN Headquarters in New York on 23 October. This is the first time the original artwork – chosen from a collection of nearly 200,000 paintings – has ever been displayed. On 25 October, a selection of paintings will be auctioned at the Harvard Club of New York City to raise emergency funds for children affected by climate-related disasters. The proceeds will be donated to UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. In addition to the live auction, the art will also be sold online on eBay.com in partnership with LiveAuctioneers to enable people around the world to participate. Pre-bidding for the auctioned paintings will also shortly be available on eBay, liveauctioneers.com and www.unep.org/paint4planet. After New York, the exhibit will travel to various climate-related events and meetings around the world, culminating in Copenhagen. For more information, contact Lucy Jasmin, lucita.jasmin@unep.org.

(24) Children take to the canvas to advocate for climate change in UN campaign

The global campaign 'UNite to Combat Climate Change' kicked off on the 23rd October at United Nations Headquarters in New York with the unveiling of a children's art exhibition

showcasing a powerful plea from the young for leadership on climate change before it is too late. The Paint for the Planet event features a selection of stand-out entries from a collection of nearly 200,000 paintings from the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) children's painting competitions around the world. Coinciding with the release of a survey of young people's opinions on climate change in the United States, India, Russia and South Africa, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner presented figures today that 86 per cent of the polled respondents think that leaders should do "whatever it takes" to tackle global warming. Joined at the exhibition opening by young artists from Burundi, Colombia, Malta, the United Kingdom and the United States, the UNEP Director introduced the six young children as "powerful ambassadors." The event raised \$21,000 for the fight against climate change. To read full article, please visit: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28692&Cr=unep&Cr1>

(25) Second Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Open Ended Working Group to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury - Issue #3

[The Second Meeting of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group \(OEWG\)](#) to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury was held from 6-10 October 2008, in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting, convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), was attended by over 250 participants, representing governments, UN agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The OEWG discussed a future mercury framework including: elements to be addressed by a mercury framework; the type of framework to be used; and the capacity building, financial and technical support required to deliver on the elements. Delegates used a document on the common elements of a mercury framework (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/8), prepared by the UNEP Secretariat, as a basis for their discussions and for drafting recommendations to the UNEP Governing Council (GC). The outline of the document was informed by the work of the first meeting of the OEWG and based on the priorities articulated in UNEP GC Decision 24/3 IV. Thanks to substantive intersessional work by the Secretariat, participants arrived in Nairobi for their final meeting optimistic about making progress. A spirit of congeniality and optimism reigned through most of the week-long session, but the precarious nature of the Group's deliberations surfaced briefly on Thursday afternoon, as progress slowed. However, delegates recovered on Friday morning and were delighted by the agreement on a policy framework on mercury, as well as by their success in narrowing down the list of implementation instruments – one legally-binding and three voluntary options – for consideration by the UNEP GC in February 2009.

(26) Getting the Lead Out: The Bush administration slashes the airborne limit

President Bush has taken his fair share of lumps from us and others concerned about his seemingly all-talk-and-no-action approach to the deterioration of the environment. That's why; when his administration does something of benefit -- in this case, cutting the limit on airborne lead by 90 percent -- he should be given his due. The Environmental Protection Agency's action this month marked the first time in 30 years that the regulation had been strengthened, from 1.5 micrograms of lead per cubic meter of air to 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter. The Oct. 16 announcement by EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson was not unforeseen. The agency was under court order to do something as part of a settlement of a lawsuit brought by the Missouri Coalition for the Environment. What wasn't known was whether Mr. Johnson would follow the

advice of agency staff experts and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. They recommended the drastically low lead limit he ultimately adopted. Children get exposed to lead after it falls to the ground and mixes with indoor dust and soil. Scientific studies -- more than 6,000, says the EPA -- have shown that exposure to lead was damaging the health of children at levels lower than the old federal limit. Those reports have shown a link between lead exposure and IQ loss and other developmental damage in children. Lead has been outlawed from use in gasoline and paint since the 1970s. This led to a 97 percent reduction in the average amount of lead in the air between 1980 and 2005. But lead is still getting into the atmosphere from 16,000 sources (smelters, metal mines, waste incinerators and aviation fuel), which pump out 1,300 tons of it each year. The new regulation would be enforced by establishing a monitoring system in cities of more than 500,000 people and by requiring states to set up ambient air monitors near sources that release more than one ton of lead annually. The one hitch in the EPA's plan is that there are fewer than 200 air lead monitors nationwide. Mr. Johnson plans to bump that number to more than 300. The agency certainly has time to get the equipment needed. The regulation doesn't take effect until 2017.

(27) HEAL attends WHO Public Health & Environment Symposium

The World Health Organization recently hosted an International Public Health Symposium on Environment and Health Research entitled Science for Policy, Policy for Science: Bridging the Gap. This conference in Madrid, Spain (20-22 October 2008) brought together policy makers and representatives of industry and public interest organizations to present latest evidence and find new ways to address identified environmental health (EH) problems by helping to tailor research to public policy matters. To read a report from the Madrid events and watch HEAL video interviews with some of the scientists visit: <http://www.euro.who.int/symposium2008>

(28) AELP Train Teachers on Pesticides Handling

The Africa Emergency Locust Project (AELP), The Gambia, on Wednesday conducted a day training for 20 teachers from region one, two and three respectively on safety use and handling of pesticides in the country. According to the National Coordinator, the project has four components namely; emergency locust control and management, emergency agricultural pest management, strengthening of the early warning and pest management. He further informed the participants that the purpose of the gathering among others is to sensitised teachers on pesticides management to help in determinate information to children at the grass root level. He then observed that over the period, they have had series of training programmes with stakeholders about pesticides, the hazard on the use of pesticides among others. To read full article please visit: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200810280603.html>

(29) MTV Launch Global Warming Campaign

MTV has launched a global climate change campaign involving ten music stars, including Good Charlotte, Kelly Rowland, Shaggy, Xzibit, Enrique Iglesias and Sophie Ellis-Bextor. The campaign, MTV Switch, will promote a website where the network's young viewers are encouraged to make alterations to their lifestyles to reduce the world's carbon emissions. MTV will run ads promoting the campaign on their own channels around the world, and also make the

ads available to other broadcasters interested in supporting the campaign. To visit the campaign's website go to: <http://www.mtvswitch.org/>

(30) Summary of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention: 27-31 October 2008

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade convened on 27-31 October 2008, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy. Over 510 participants, representing more than 126 governments, UN agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), attended the meeting. Over 120 countries party to the Rotterdam Convention agreed to add the pesticide tributyltin to a global trade "watch list", but were unable to reach consensus on the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos and the pesticide endosulfan during negotiations here this week. The conference reaffirmed that governments have an obligation to use the Convention's information-sharing mechanism to inform others about their national decisions on the import and management of hazardous chemicals. For further details please visit: <http://www.pic.int/home.php?type=s&id=77>

(31) Invitation to the MASS Dialogues - Bringing Poznan to the World

From 1-12 December 2008, more than 180 countries and 10,000 members of civil society will meet in Pozna, Poland, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to continue to negotiate the global response to the climate crisis. More than 500 young people will participate directly in the Pozna negotiations. As International Youth Delegates, they will engage in learning, communications, outreach, networking and advocacy activities. They will be the voice of young people globally at the negotiations. Through a series of approximately 30 interactive video conferences, The MASS Dialogues will enable youth delegates to the Pozna negotiations to connect directly with young people from around the world. As many of you know, a COP experience is an incredible opportunity for learning and inspiration, and for gaining a sense of empowerment and accomplishment. The MASS Dialogues will be an opportunity to bring extend the learning and inspiration far beyond the small group in Poznan. For Further Information please contact please contact Aiden Abram - abram@2degreesC.com.

(32) Global initiative on radiation safety in health-care settings

A global WHO initiative to mobilize the health sector towards safer use of radiation in medicine while preventing unnecessary medical radiation exposures will get underway mid-December. In addition to national institutions, collaboration is being expanded to involve international organizations, professional associations, scientific societies and academic institutions. The strategy will be consolidated at a Technical Meeting on the Global Initiative on Radiation Safety in Health-Care Settings, WHO headquarters, 15-17 December.

(33) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Conference. Washington, USA. 24 - 26, February 2009

This conference will serve as the platform for CDC to officially launch its National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (referred to as Tracking Network). This is a nationwide network of integrated health and environmental data to be used to provide information in support of actions that improve the health of communities. Since 2002, CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program led the initiative to build the Tracking Network, drawing from a wide range of stakeholders with expertise from Federal, state, and local health and environmental agencies; nongovernmental organizations; and schools of public health. Anticipated attendees are any person or organization engaged in the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program or interested in learning more about tracking. Website: <http://www.blsmmeetings.net/cdctrackingconference/>

(34) Third international conference on children's health and the environment. Busan, South Korea, 7-10 June 2009

Every year, the lives of four million children under 5 years - mostly in developing countries - could be saved by preventing the effects of exposure to unsafe water, polluted air and other environmental risk factors. In an effort to raise children's environmental health in the global political agenda and strengthen policies and protective measures, WHO and the Korean Ministry of Environment are joining efforts with partners in planning an international event. Over 300 health professionals and experts will gather from 7-10 June 2009 in Busan, Republic of Korea for the Third WHO International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. The Conference aims to identify existing needs and new issues, and to translate research results and new knowledge into stronger policies and effective actions.

(35) Tunza International Children's Conference on the Environment. Daejeon, Korea. 17 - 21 August 2009

The United Nation Environment Programme in cooperation with UNEP National Committee for the Republic of Korea will be hosting the 2009 Tunza International Children's Conference on the Environment in Daejeon, Korea from the 17 to 21 August 2009. The Conference whose theme will be *Climate Change: Our Challenge* will collectively bring together about 400 participants (aged 10 to 14) from over 100 countries. The delegates will be introduced to the new Tunza Strategy (2009-2014), and will discuss their role in the implementation of the Strategy. The delegates will also give suggestions on the themes for the 2010 International Children's Conference on the Environment. The four-day Conference will culminate in resolutions on climate change to be presented to the Children's Climate Forum in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009. For further updates please visit: http://www.unep.org/Tunza/Children/Events/icc_2009/

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Bio-aerosols in indoor environment: Composition, health effects and analysis](#) In India there is little awareness regarding the quality of indoor air, mould contamination in indoor environments, potential source for transmission of nosocomial infections in health care facilities. This is a review on composition, sources, modes of transmission, health effects and sampling methods used for evaluation of bio-aerosols. Indian J Med Microbiol. October – Dec 2008.

[Two routes for pollen entering indoors: ventilation and clothes](#) This study found that a large amount of pollen entered dwellings through air ducts when the windows were closed and the ventilation fans working. Since most pollen that entered by ventilation remained near the windows, cleaning carefully and frequently near windows could reduce the amount of pollen indoors. J Investig Allergol Clin Immunol. October 2008.

[A Longitudinal Study of Indoor Nitrogen Dioxide Levels and Respiratory Symptoms in Inner-City Children with Asthma](#) High levels of Higher indoor NO₂ concentrations were associated with increased asthma symptoms in preschool inner-city children. Nitrogen dioxide is most prevalent in industrial zones but also found at higher levels in poor homes with unvented gas stoves. EHP. 10 October 2008.

[Endocrine Disruptors in the Workplace, Hair Spray, Folate Supplementation, and Risk of Hypospadias: Case-control Study](#). Imperial College London scientists talked to women who had babies with hypospadias, where the urinary tract is found away from the penis. They reported an excess risk of hypospadias was associated with occupational exposures to phthalates and hair sprays. EHP. 20 November 2008.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Benefits of reducing prenatal exposure to coal-burning pollutants to children's neurodevelopment in China](#) The findings indicate that neurobehavioral development in Tongliang children benefited by elimination of PAH exposure from the coal-burning plant, consistent with the significant reduction in PAH-DNA adducts in cord blood of children in the 2005 cohort. EHP October 2008

[Ozone and Other Air Pollutants and the Risk of Oral Clefts](#) There are few epidemiologic data on the relation of prenatal air pollution exposure and the risk of oral clefts. The study provides new evidence that exposure to outdoor air O₃ during the first and second month of pregnancy may increase the risk of CL/P. Similar levels of O₃ are encountered globally by large numbers of pregnant women. B Hwang. EHP. October 2008.

[The Influence of Living Near Roadways on Spirometry and Exhaled Nitric Oxide in Elementary Schoolchildren](#) Traffic from local neighbourhood roadways may cause airway inflammation as

indicated by eNO. The study used measurements of both air pollution exposure and spirometry for 2,328 children, and also had measurements of exhaled nitric oxide (eNO) for 1,613 of these children. M Jerrett. EHP. October 2008.

[Traffic-Related Air Pollution and Asthma Onset in Children: A Prospective Cohort Study with Individual Exposure Measurement](#) In this cohort, markers of traffic-related air pollution were associated with the onset of asthma. The risks observed suggest that air pollution exposure contributes to new-onset asthma. The study used a sample of 217 children between 10–18 years of age. EHP. October 2008.

[Pollution linked to appendicitis](#) A University of Calgary team found more patients were hospitalised on days when pollution levels were at their highest. The study suggests pollution raises the general risk of tissue inflammation and patients were approximately 15% more likely to be hospitalised on days of highest ozone concentrations compared to days of lowest ozone concentrations. BBC. 6 October 2008.

[Emissions up in developed nations](#) Emissions of greenhouse gases by industrialised nations rose 2.3% from 2000 to 2006, according to new figures from the UN's climate change agency. The biggest increases were in the former Soviet bloc - and Canada. A UN spokesman said countries had to work much faster to avoid the possibility of dangerous climate change. BBC. 17 November 2008

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Maternal smoking during pregnancy and child behaviour problems: the Generation R Study](#) Smoking by father when mother did not smoke, was also related to a higher risk of behavioural problems. The statistical association of parental smoking with behavioural problems was strongly confounded by parental characteristics, chiefly socioeconomic status and parental psychopathology. Int. J. Epidemiol. October 2008.

[Second-hand Smoke Exposure in Hospitality Venues in Europe](#) Although in the last few years some European countries have implemented smoking bans in hospitality venues, the levels of second-hand smoke (SHS) in this sector could still be extremely high in most countries, cities without smoking regulations have very high levels of SHS exposure. EHP. 11 November 2008.

[Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, 1975-2005, Featuring Trends in Lung Cancer, Tobacco Use, and Tobacco Control](#) The American Cancer Society, the CDC, the NCI, and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) collaborate annually to provide updated information on cancer occurrence and trends in the USA. Journal National Cancer Inst. 25 November 2008.

[Web-Assisted Tobacco Interventions: Empowering Change in the Global Fight for the Public's \(e\)Health](#) This paper discusses the role of WATI in supporting tobacco control and introduces a special issue of the Journal of Medical Internet Research that broadens the evidence base and provides illustrations of how new technologies can support health promotion and population health overall. J Med Internet Res. 25 November 2008.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[Finally, Answers to Nagging Chemical Toxicity Questions](#) The National Children's Health Study is on track to begin in 2009. The study will track 100,000 U.S. children from birth to age 21. In the process, it will develop a set of data about what causes disease, answering controversial questions about the origins of autism, diabetes, cancer and other significant health problems. [The Daily Green](#). 6 October 2008.

[Correlations Between Prenatal Exposure to Perfluorinated Chemicals and Reduced Fetal Growth](#)

The study sought to investigate the correlation between relatively low levels of PFOS and PFOA in maternal serum and birth weight. The results indicate that in-utero exposure to relatively low levels of PFOS negatively correlated with birth weight. [EHP](#). 4 November 2008.

(b) Lead

[Move to ban paints with lead content in India](#) Taking a serious note of the health hazards posed by lethal paints laden with lead, particularly to children, the global community has resolved to eliminate the noxious element from paints worldwide. A resolution in this regard was adopted by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) at the VI session at Dakar in Senegal. [The Times of India](#). 30 September 2008.

[Lead Exposures in U.S. Children, 2008: Implications for Prevention](#) EBLs and even deaths have been associated with inadequately controlled sources including ethnic remedies and goods, consumer products, and food-related items such as ceramics. Lead in public drinking water and in older urban centers remain exposure sources in many areas. R Levin. [EHP](#). October 2008.

[Case-Control Study of Blood Lead Levels and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Chinese Children](#)

This was the largest sample size case-control study to date to study the association between BLLs and ADHD in Chinese children. ADHD may be an additional deleterious outcome of lead exposure during childhood, even when BLLs are < 10 µg/dL. H Wang. [EHP](#). October 2008.

[Prenatal Exposure to Lead, δ-Aminolevulinic Acid, and Schizophrenia: Further Evidence](#)

Samples from The New England cohort of the National Collaborative Perinatal Project (1959–1966) were used prenatal lead exposure and schizophrenia. The results provide further evidence for the role of early environmental exposures in the development of adult-onset psychiatric disorders. [EHP](#). 11 November 2008.

(c) Pesticides

[The Relationship between Prenatal PCB Exposure and Intelligence \(IQ\) in 9-Year-Old Children](#)

The results from this study, in combination with similar results obtained from a similar study in the Great Lakes conducted 10 years earlier, indicate that prenatal PCB exposure in the Great Lakes region is associated with lower IQ in children. This association was significant after controlling for confounders. P Stewart. [EHP](#). October 2008.

[Potential developmental neurotoxicity of pesticides used in Europe](#) Laboratory experimental studies using pesticides suggest that many currently used in Europe – including organophosphates, carbamates, pyrethroids, ethylenebisdithiocarbamates, and chlorophenoxy herbicides – can cause neurodevelopmental toxicity. Adverse effects on brain development can be severe and irreversible. [BMC](#). 8 November 2008.

(d) Mercury

[Biomarkers of environmental toxicity and susceptibility in autism](#) Significantly decreased plasma levels of reduced glutathione (GSH), cysteine, and sulfate were observed among study participants relative to controls. Participants with severe ASDs had significantly increased mercury intoxication-associated urinary in comparison to participants with mild ASDs. [J Neurol Sci](#). 24 September 2008.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[Tainted China water sickens 450](#) About 450 people have fallen ill in southern China after drinking contaminated water, the Xinhua state news agency says. Four of the sick, in two villages in Guangxi province, have arsenic poisoning. Residents began to show symptoms of facial swelling, vomiting and blurred vision on 3 October. Health officials said 23 children under the age of seven had been kept in hospital. [BBC](#). 11 October 2008.

[Protecting children from lead in tap water](#) Data from the German Federal Environment Agency suggest that even at a lead concentration of 0.01 mg/L in tap water, infants should not consume more than 0.4 L of tap water/day if the water comes from plumbing systems containing lead. Until all lead is removed from plumbing, it has been proposed that infants should be given bottled water to avoid exposure to lead. [CMAJ](#). 4 November, 2008.

[Growing slums 'face water crisis'](#) Charity WaterAid says chronic water shortages in many of the world's slums were being exacerbated by the arrival of millions of people each week. WaterAid estimates that 5,000 children around the world die each day as a result of diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation. Simple latrines can drastically cut the risk from water-borne diseases. [The report can be downloaded here](#)

[Zimbabwe 'asks for cholera help'](#) Zimbabwe's government has asked for urgent international help to tackle its cholera outbreak, the WHO has said. At a meeting with aid agencies, Health Minister David Parirenyatwa is reported to have asked for medicine, equipment and funds to pay medical staff. It has been confirmed that the Limpopo River, has been contaminated with cholera. [BBC](#). 3 December 2008

(4) GLOBAL CHANGE

[Climate change and urban children: impacts and implications for adaptation in low- and middle income countries](#) The paper goes on to discuss the implications for adaptation, making recommendations for an adaptation agenda that focuses on the realities for children. Preparatory

measures are considered, as well as responses to extreme events and to changes in weather patterns. Environment & Urbanization. October 2008

EU's climate package 'in crisis' The EU's attempts to lead the world to a new deal on climate change will crumble unless its current policy crisis is resolved. As economic turmoil continues, there are widespread fears about the effects of the EU's climate package. A group of states led by Poland has assembled a blocking minority to protect their industries from having to buy permits to pollute. BBC. 6 October 2008.

Countless champions Gender equality is now widely considered a prerequisite for sustainable development, and gender must urgently be incorporated into food, fuel and climate discussions. So far, these talks have portrayed women as victims, but women are finding ways to cope with their changing environments so as to feed their families, care for their communities and nurture the Earth. Our Planet. November 2008.

(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Contaminants in Human Milk: Weighing the Risks against the Benefits of Breastfeeding The research to date indicates that, despite the health risks posed by these contaminants, breastfeeding nearly always remains the optimal choice for infant feeding. Mothers in conflict and disaster situations also are advised to continue breastfeeding rather than use commercial infant formula. M. Mead. EHP. October 2008.

Female foetuses are sensitive to hormone disrupters The data reviewed illustrate that EDCs contribute to numerous human female reproductive disorders and emphasize the sensitivity of early life-stage exposures. Many research gaps are identified that limit full understanding of the contribution of EDCs to female reproductive problems. Sterility and Fertility. October 2008

Male Interrupted As genital birth defects become more common in boys, attention turns to phthalates. At Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Howard Snyder says the hospital repair the genitalia of 300 baby boys every year, double what they did 30 years ago. Researchers from the CDC, say hypospadias, has nearly doubled in the U.S.A between the late 1960s and early 1990s. The Philadelphia Enquirer. 27 October 2008

Cadmium, Lead, and Other Metals in Relation to Semen Quality: Human Evidence for Molybdenum as a Male Reproductive Toxicant A study of 219 men recruited through two infertility clinics, presents the first human evidence for an inverse association between molybdenum (Mo) and semen quality. These relationships are consistent with animal data. EHP. 11 November 2008.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

Ten Years of Addressing Children's Health through Regulatory Policy at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks

directs each federal agency to ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate environmental health and safety risks to children. D Payne-Sturges. EHP. 30 September 2008

[Gene-Environment Interactions in Schizophrenia: Review of Epidemiological Findings and Future Directions](#) Experimental ecogenetic approaches with randomized assignment may help to overcome some of the limitations of observational studies and allow for the additional elucidation of underlying mechanisms using a combination of functional enviromics and functional genomics. Schizophrenia Bulletin. October 2008.

[Exposure to mobile telecommunication networks assessed using personal dosimetry and well-being in children and adolescents: the German MobilEe-study](#). In total, personal dosimetry was proofed to be a well accepted tool to study exposure to mobile phone frequencies in epidemiologic studies including health effects on children and adolescents. BMC. 4 November 2008.

[Climate change in Bangladesh](#) This year's UN climate talks are taking place in Poland, with nations trying to agree a new deal on climate change. The issue is critical for a country such as Bangladesh, where climate change has been partly blamed for rising sea and coastal water levels, and more intense and frequent storms. Many of Bangladesh's landless poor have settled on silt islands known as chars. BBC. 27 November 2008.

(b) Americas

[Measuring inequality of opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) The new Human Opportunity Index, developed by a Group of economists from the World Bank, Argentina and Brazil, shows how personal circumstances play in gaining or preventing access to those services needed for a productive life, such as running water, sanitation, electricity or basic education among children in the region. World Bank. 2 October 2008.

[Poverty-linked diseases come back in Argentina](#) Poverty-related diseases such as Chagas, rabies and yellow fever are making a comeback in Argentina because prevention campaigns cut during a deep economic crisis seven years ago have still not recovered. Deforestation and higher temperatures attributed to global warming are also contributing to the resurgence or reappearance of some diseases. Reuters. 3 October 2008.

[Semen quality in Peruvian pesticide applicators: association between urinary organophosphate metabolites and semen parameters](#) Organophosphates are broad class of chemicals widely used as pesticides throughout the world. The study demonstrated that occupational exposure to OP pesticides was more closely related to alterations in semen quality than a single measurement of urine OP metabolites. BMC. 17 November 2008.

(c) Asia

[Millions to die in China from lung disease: report](#) Tens of millions of people will die from respiratory illness and lung cancer over the next 25 years in China if nothing is done to reduce smoking and fuel burning indoors. In an article published in The Lancet, they predicted 65 million deaths from COPD and 18 million deaths from lung cancer between 2003 and 2033 from smoking and biomass burning at home. [Reuters](#). 3 October 2008.

[Hunger in India states 'alarming'](#) Twelve Indian states have "alarming" levels of hunger while the situation is "extremely alarming". Nutrition problems, are comparable to that of Ethiopia and Chad. India has more people suffering hunger - a figure above 200 million - than any other country in the world, it says. The report, released as part of the 2008 Global Hunger Index, ranks India at 66 out of 88 countries. [BBC](#). 15 October 2008

[India is importing asbestos and health problems that have long aided Canadians](#) Some consider chrysotile asbestos a godsend for India, where 456 million people live on less than \$1.25 a day. It is inexpensive and can be mixed with cement to create all kinds of useful infrastructure. Asbestos use in India has exploded since the mid-'90s and the health effects now been seen in the factories of India. [Ottawa citizen](#). October 24 2008.

[Metro's air pollution kills 5,000 annually](#) Poor air quality kills about 5,000 people in Metro Manila every year, an expert said Thursday, citing a 2007 joint report of the World Bank and the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources. A 2005 WHO report, which said the air in Metro Manila is the fourth-most polluted worldwide, next to that of Mexico, Shanghai and New Delhi. [The Manila Times](#). 7 November 2008.

[Uzbek children in 'Aids outbreak'](#) Health authorities told the BBC that an investigation into the infections of the mainly new-born babies was taking place in the eastern town of Namangan. The United Nations says Central Asia has one of the world's fastest-growing HIV infection rates. Unsafe blood supplies and contaminated equipment are often blamed for spreading the infection. [BBC](#). 12 November 2008.

(d) Africa

[Cohort Profile: Africa Centre Demographic Information System \(ACDIS\) and population-based HIV survey](#) The health and demography of the South African population has been undergoing substantial changes as a result of the rapidly progressing HIV epidemic. All data collected by the HIV survey can be linked anonymously to other demographic, socio- and household-economic and health and behavioural data. [Int J Epidemiol](#). October 2008.

[Malaria Drugs, the Coca-Cola Way](#) If only we knew how Coca-Cola gets its cans into the most remote African villages, we could do the same for drugs, says health economist Ramanan Laxminarayan of Resources for the Future in Washington, D.C. Some worry that, instead of passing the benefit on to patients, intermediaries will pocket most of the subsidy. [Science](#). 21 November 2008.

[Cholera Zimbabwe's 'worst crisis'](#) The cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe is "the greatest threat ever to face" the country, according to opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. According to the UN, the outbreak has killed 360 people since August. The crisis is set to worsen as ordinary Zimbabweans run desperately short of food, health care, clean water and safe sanitation. . BBC. 27 November 2008.

['Bad syrup' kills Nigerian babies](#) Nigeria's food and drug agency says that 25 children aged between three months and four years have died after taking a contaminated teething syrup called My Pikin, found to have been tainted with diethylene glycol. The substance, used in engine coolant and anti-freeze, triggered kidney failure in the children. BBC. 27 November 2008.

(e) Europe

[Sex-specific programming of cardiovascular physiology in children](#) Small size at birth is associated with major cardiovascular pathologies, including hypertension and coronary heart disease in later life. In this study smaller size at birth is associated with sex-specific alterations in cardiac physiology; boys had higher systemic vascular resistance and girls had increased cardiac sympathetic activation. European Heart Journal. October 2008.

[Residence Near Power Lines and Mortality From Neurodegenerative Diseases: Longitudinal Study of the Swiss Population](#) The relation between residential magnetic field exposure from power lines and mortality from neurodegenerative conditions was analyzed among 4.7 million persons of the Swiss National Cohort (linking mortality and census data), covering the period 2000-2005. Am J Epidemiol. 5 Nov 2008

[How the Effect of Maternal Age on the Risk of Childhood Leukemia Changed over Time in Sweden, 1960 to 2004](#) The study assessed if there is an association between maternal age and risk of childhood leukemia. Childhood leukemia risk increased with maternal age for mothers born in the past, whereas maternal age had no effect for mothers born more recently. EHP. 7 November 2008.

[Lungs 'boosted' by breastfeeding](#) A study of 10-year-olds on the Isle of Wight by UK and US scientists found much better lung function in those breastfed for at least four months. The different mechanics and duration of sucking may be partly responsible, they said, in the journal Thorax. Studies have established that breastfeeding protects babies from respiratory problems early in life. BBC. 10 November 2008.

(f) Australasia

[Eye health among Australian children](#) Reducing preventable vision loss has recently been identified as a priority by both Australian governments and non-government organisations. This report looks at the prevalence of eye problems among children, including vision disability, congenital anomalies and cancer. AIHW. 7 November 2008.

[Parents 'wrong' on child weight](#) Many parents overlook their child's unhealthy weight because they believe it is normal, research suggests. Data on 2,100 Australian children found 40% of

parents with an overweight or underweight child had not spotted this. Researchers said parents would not act to help their children gain or lose weight if they did not see the problem. [BBC](#). 19 October 2008

[UNICEF calls for better data on extent of child sexual exploitation in NZ](#) On the eve of a major world conference, UNICEF NZ is calling on the Government to devote more resources to uncovering how many children are sexually exploited in New Zealand. [Unicef](#). 25 November 2008.
