

Worldwide,
13 million deaths
could be prevented
every year by
making our
environments
healthier

WHO Executive Board supports new health agenda item on Rio+20

The recent [WHO Executive Board](#) (EB) meeting agreed to seek inclusion of a new health-related agenda item at the forthcoming [United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development \(Rio+20\)](#). Member States affirmed the need for a strong position on health in the context of the conference (to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012). Rio+20 is an important opportunity to reiterate the relationship between health and sustainable development. Members States supported the WHO EB paper proposing action on three fronts: universal access to health care, obtaining health co-benefits from sustainable development policies in different sectors, and ensuring that related health indicators are included in sustainable development metrics. The EB also took note of the progress report on *Climate change and health* ([see Resolutions EB124.R5 and WHA61.19](#)).

The 130th EB meeting also nominated Dr Margaret Chan for [a second five-year term as WHO Director-General](#) and appointed Dr Ala Alwan, Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, [as the new WHO Regional Director](#) for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

World Future Energy Summit

The fifth World Future Energy Summit last week featured the official launch of 2012 [as the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All](#). This follows [UN resolution 65/151](#), aimed at creating “an enabling environment for the promotion and use of new and renewable energy technologies, including measures to improve access to such technologies.”

During the summit, WHO described how cleaner, renewable energy options for homes and health care facilities can improve both health and the environment. In particular, cleaner and greener biomass stoves can reduce incidence of pneumonia in children and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in women. Greater access to solar powered electricity in off-grid health care facilities can help strengthen health-care services in developing countries. The summit focused on energy innovation in policy implementation, technology development, finance and investment approaches, and existing and upcoming projects and took place from 16–19 January 2012, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Halting cholera in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

The Presidents of Haiti and the Dominican Republic recently joined the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to call for major international investments in water and sanitation infrastructure in order to eliminate cholera from the island of Hispaniola. The joint appeal on January 11 pressed donor countries and agencies to honour pledges made after Haiti’s 2010 earthquake and through new funds specifically targeted at water and sanitation infrastructure.

Resources are urgently needed to bring Haiti up to the level of neighbouring countries in terms of access to clean water and sanitation services, they urged. Even before the earthquake, only 63% Haitian residents had access to improved drinking water, and access to sanitation services actually declined from 26% of the population in 1990 to 17% in 2008. These conditions contributed to the rapid spread of cholera following an outbreak in October 2010. For more information, [click here](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS 2012

> 4 February

[World Cancer Day](#)

> 22 March

[World Water Day: Water and Food Security](#)

Global prevention of environmental and occupational cancers

World Cancer Day on 4 February helps raise awareness about the disease. Globally, nearly one in five of all cancers are attributable to the environment, including work settings, resulting in 1.3 million deaths each year. Many environmental and occupational factors, including certain chemicals, radiation and airborne particles, can cause cancer. Related deaths could be prevented by changes in national and international policies to limit people's involuntary exposure to these substances. People often have limited control over the causes of these cancers, such as the quality of the air they breathe, the water they drink, and the level of chemical contamination in indoor and outdoor environments and at the workplace.

Despite their proven feasibility and cost-effectiveness, efforts to prevent environmental cancers have lagged. To address these gaps and to develop a new global policy framework for environmental cancer, the [Asturias Declaration](#) set out recommendations for primary prevention of environmental and occupational cancers to be an integral component of global cancer control.

A silent hero in action: In memory of Yves Chartier

It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely death of our dear friend and colleague, Yves Chartier. Yves died in a snow-shoeing accident in the Jura mountains on Sunday 8 January 2012.

Yves seamlessly did it all, behind the scenes, with humility, grace, a dry sense of humour and a contagious smile. He was an incredibly fit man, in the prime of his life, a dedicated professional, a loving husband and father, a selfless friend and dedicated partner in the global fight to end poverty and injustice. He worked tirelessly to realize his belief that all humans deserve respect, shelter, decent health care, and a clean environment. He had little time for discussions when there was so much to do – motivating Mozambican refugees to clean defecation fields in exchange for creating soccer pitches, tending to the injured in war-torn Southern Sudan, setting up safe medical waste sites from Haiti to Tanzania, and finding simple solutions to drinking water in Eastern Congo. It is now up to each of us to take his example of hard work, virtue, sense of humanity and humour and integrate it into our own lives – one more child might have a second chance at life, one more village could have access to safe water. And our families would be stronger, our communities healthier and our friends and neighbours more respected. Yves lives on, not only in our memories, but in the actions we take. All of us are better people because of him.

Yves Chartier, from France, joined WHO in 2003 as Technical Officer/Public Health Engineer working in the Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health (WSH) Unit, in the Department of Public Health and Environment on health care waste management and Legionella. Previously he had worked around the world as Chief of mission for Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières). His technical work in WHO included emergency missions, most recently in Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake and the cholera outbreak that followed.

Our thoughts go out to his wife and young children. For those of you who wish to leave tributes, a message, photos, or a recollection for his family, an email account has been created: rememberingyves@gmail.com



In Memory of Yves Chartier

Some publications highlighting his work and achievements.

Tools to support Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health Care intervention in settings.

- [WHO core principles for achieving safe and sustainable management of health-care waste](#)
- [Essential environmental health standards in Health Care](#)
- [Management of solid health-care waste at primary health-care centres: A decision-making guide](#)
- [Safe management of wastes from healthcare activities](#)
- [Preparation of national health-care waste management plans in sub-saharan countries](#)
- [Management of waste from injection activities at district level](#)
- [Replacement of mercury thermometers and sphygmomanometers in health care](#)



**EXPAND
THE
NETWORK**

SELECTED HEALTH TOPICS FROM WHO'S PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT WEB SITES

[Health in the green economy](#)
[Climate change and health](#)
[More public health and environment topics](#)

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT LINKS

[WHO Regional Office for Africa](#)
[WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia](#)
[WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific](#)
[WHO Regional Office for the Americas](#)
[WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean](#)
[WHO Regional Office for Europe](#)

Publications highlighting the achievements of Yves Chartier

[Natural Ventilation for Infection Control in Health-Care Settings, 2009.](#)
[How to integrate water, sanitation and hygiene into HIV programmes \(WHO with USAID\), 2010.](#)

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