Birth of the Global Urban Air Pollution Observatory (GUAPO)

GUAPO aims to reduce the impact of air pollution in cities by sharing good practices around the world. It is initiated by Mayor of Paris and was launched at the Clean Air Forum that was held in Paris on 16–17 November 2017. Equipped with an orientation committee and a scientific committee, GUAPO is responsible for sharing knowledge on air pollution and its effects on health. It will also identify and monitor progress achieved in terms of reducing urban pollution and its health and environmental impacts. GUAPO is a non-profit association with its Secretariat based in Paris, France. For more information click here.

On this occasion, the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, took the opportunity to announce Paris’ commitment to join #BreatheLife. For further information on the BreatheLife campaign click here.

Keeping the vector out: housing improvements for vector control and sustainable development

More than 80% of the world’s population is at risk from at least one vector-borne disease, and more than half at risk from two or more. Recognizing the need for implementation of relevant vector control interventions that go beyond the health sector and strengthening multisectoral approaches, WHO has issued a policy brief, Keeping the vector out: housing improvements for vector control and sustainable development.

The evidence shows that poor quality housing and neglected peri-domestic environments are risk factors for the transmission of malaria, arboviral diseases (such as dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya, Zika virus disease), Chagas disease and leishmaniasis.

The policy brief highlights effective housing interventions such as screening windows, doors and eaves of houses, by fitting ceilings, and by reducing the vectors’ indoor hiding and breeding places, like cracks and crevices in walls, floors and roofs, prevents vector-borne diseases. These interventions help reduce morbidity, mortality, human suffering and thereby promote economic growth and well-being, and contribute to poverty reduction.

For more on WHO work on housing and health click here.

Iodine thyroid blocking: guidelines for use in planning for and responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies

The updated WHO guidelines on the use of iodine thyroid blocking recommends the provision of stable iodine to persons between 0 to 18 years of age, if at risk of being exposed to radiiodine, as an urgent protective action just before or during a radiological or nuclear emergency. Inhalation of air or consumption of food and drinking water contaminated with radioactive iodine during a nuclear accident leads to internal radiation exposure, thus increasing the risk of thyroid cancer for younger people.

Iodine thyroid blocking should be provided within the framework of a justified and optimized protection strategy. These updated guidelines are for health authorities, emergency planners, policy-makers, public health specialists and clinicians to strengthen public health preparedness for radiation emergencies. It focuses on the public health aspects of planning and implementation of iodine thyroid blocking in an emergency, such as dosage and timing of administration, adverse effects of stable iodine, its packaging, storage, and distribution. To access the guidelines click here.
WHO Executive Board Special Session

A special session of the WHO Executive Board was held in Geneva to discuss the draft Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019-2023 (GPW13). Member States had an opportunity to provide their comments on the draft GPW 13 which will inform the preparation of a revised version for consideration by the Executive Board at its 142nd session that will be held from 22 to 27 January 2018. It is hoped that GPW 13 will be adopted at the Seventy-first World Health Assembly in May 2018.

The Executive Board is composed of 34 health experts, each designated by a Member State that has been elected to serve by the World Health Assembly. Member States are elected for a three-year term. The Executive Board has the dual role of making proposals to the Health Assembly and ensuring that the policies of the previous Health Assemblies are put into effect. It also prepares the agenda of the World Health Assembly.

The Executive Board special session took place on 22–23 November 2017. To access the agenda of the session click here (available in the six official languages). Click on the links to see the composition of the Executive Board and members’ terms of office. Further information is available on the official website of the governing bodies.

World Toilet Day

Today, 4.5 billion people live without a household toilet that safely disposes of their waste. World Toilet Day is a day to raise awareness about all the people who do not have access to a toilet and inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis.

This year the theme for the World Toilet Day was wastewater. Safely managed sanitation and safe use of wastewater and disposal of excreta are fundamental to protecting public health. By 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to reach everyone with sanitation, and safe use in planning and responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies.

To learn more from WHO factsheets, videos and tools on sanitation, wastewater and health, follow the links to: SDG monitoring, Sanitation safety planning, Antibiotic resistance, Neglected tropical diseases and Diarrhoeal disease.

Click here to find out more about the global campaign, events and available materials.

National Health Workforce Accounts include Standards for social determinants of health

The National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA) aim to provide concise information on the health workforce situation and trends of a country; to facilitate the standardization of a health workforce information system; and to support tracking human resources for health policy performance towards universal health coverage.

Under the national health workforce account, a number of modules relate to education and training regulation and accreditation to strengthen national health systems and improve health outcomes. Information from the modules help guide and inform efforts to reorient and gear the training regulation and accreditation to strengthen national health systems and improve health workforce situation and trends of a country; to facilitate the standardization of a health workforce information system; and to support tracking human resources for health policy performance towards universal health coverage.

The National health workforce account: a handbook was launched during the Fourth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health that took place from 13 to 17 November 2017 in Dublin, Ireland.

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

NEW Air pollution
Water sanitation hygiene

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

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Keeping the vector out - Housing improvements for vector control and sustainable development
Iodine thyroid blocking - Guidelines for use in planning and responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies

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