HECANET June 2005

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ARTICLES

Children's environmental health issues were extensively covered in June, but with the volume of relevant articles and with many themes inevitably overlapping, it is becoming increasingly challenging to group them under specific subjects. As such a few additional sub-headings have been added, and summaries of articles, grouped under the themes listed below, are featured with links to their full texts.

Water and sanitation issues and malaria, were spotlighted, in part as a result of the UN's review of progress made in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the focus on Africa of the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles, Scotland. The G8 also resulted in a large volume of articles dealing with the other focus of the Summit, namely climate change, and a number of articles and studies looked at the effects of climatic changes on agriculture, disease patterns and hence vulnerable populations, especially in developing countries. There was also a new study which addresses the health effects of another global environmental issue, namely desertification.

Other noteworthy developments included: the Meetings of Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas (HEMA) and

their focus on children's environmental health; a new campaign by the Indian Academy of Paediatricians entitled, 'Environment and Child Health' Group; a new website for pediatric health care providers issued by the US National Environmental Education & Training Foundation; a suit filed by a coalition of farm workers, environmental and public health groups against EPA for ignoring the special risk to children growing up surrounded by chemical poisons; the continuing debate relating to the new rule limiting mercury emissions from power plants in the US and legal challenges in this regard from a coalition of states and public health groups; and related to this, the EU Environment Ministers call for exports of mercury to be banned by 2011, and the agreement by Canada's environment ministers on a national standard to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants; and finally the EU decision to ban the use of phthalates in toys.

Certain research studies related to children's environmental health covered by the media are also worth highlighting, namely: research by doctors in Shanghai on 100 children who were newly diagnosed with leukemia to study the relation between the disease and their indoor environment; a study which found very high levels of pesticide residues in blood samples taken from Punjab villages; evidence that the genes of developing fetuses can be permanently changed by exposure to compounds that act like hormones and that this effect is then passed on to future generations; evidence that phthalates in pregnant women alter the reproductive organs of their male offspring; a study of babies in hospital intensive care units which found new evidence of high levels of a hormone-altering chemical in newborns treated with plastic medical devices; three research reviews which drew "remarkably consistent" conclusions linking daily levels of ozone pollution to an increased risk of death; a new study which indicates that living too close to overhead power lines appears to increase the risk of childhood leukaemia; a study which concludes that information to guide child health policy is lacking in the poorest countries with the highest rates of childhood mortality; and research into why the prevalence of autism is lower among the Amish communities in the US and whether this is linked to environmental factors including exposure to mercury.

(1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution, (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Asthma (d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking
(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury
(3) WATER AND SANITATION
(4) MALARIA
(5) CHILDHOOD CANCERS
(6) MISCELLANOUS (a) Global (b) Africa (c) Americas (d) Asia (e) Middle East

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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

HECA-supported pilot projects are underway in 13 countries: Central African Republic; Kenya; Rwanda; Uganda; Bolivia; Nicaragua; Pakistan; Yemen; Djibouti; India; Nepal; Mongolia; and Samoa. Many of these projects aim to build awareness among children on environment and health issues. They also aim to tackle key risks like indoor air pollution, unsafe water, lack of sanitation and improper hygiene, in the places that matter most to children, such as schools. Some projects were launched by high-level governmental officials, while others have been initiated by experienced local NGOs. Implementing organizations have submitted frameworks for monitoring and evaluation, and where appropriate, more detailed action plans.

Summaries of projects will be posted on the HECA website as well as results from project activities as these become available. For more information on these projects please contact the HECA Secretariat.

(2) Health and Environmental Ministerial Meeting of the Americas (HEMA)

Ministers of Health and Environment from throughout the Americas met in Mar del Plata, Argentina (16-17 June) to discuss how to improve linkages and integrate their work to improve the quality of life of their people. Dr. Ginés González García, Minister of Health and Environment of Argentina hosted health and environmental colleagues from 34 countries of the Americas to adopt a formal plan of action to address the growing impacts of environmental-health linkages. Ministers also discussed the advances and challenges the countries face in achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to health and environment, at a special session June 18. The initiative is supported by the Pan American Health Organization, the Organization of American States, and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The meeting adopted a plan of action on children's environmental health, integrated water resources and solid waste management, and the sound management of chemicals. The ministers also adopted a Declaration and Action Plan with fixed priority actions for the immediate future and a proposal for Heads of State to be raised at the Summit of the Americas in November. They also identified practical ways in which the adopted plan supports the Millennium Development Goals.

In HEMA's 'Declaration of Mar Del Plata', adopted on 17 June 2005, Ministers identified three priority issues for regional cooperation related to health and environment, one of which being children's environmental health, and the other two very much related to children's environmental health, namely, integrated management of water resources and solid waste, and sound management of chemicals. In the specific section on children's environmental health, Ministers resolved "to improve the understanding between environmental quality and children's health, considering that children are particularly vulnerable throughout the different stages of their development" The Declaration goes on: "Similarly, we commit to continue and strengthen the actions aimed at the prevention of the adverse effects of the environment on children. We also recognize the threats posed by emerging and re-emerging diseases and commit ourselves to developing a better understanding of the conditions that give rise to them". Countries will focus efforts on the need to: Strengthen the training with respect to children's environmental health at every level of health care; Strengthen programs of education and incentive for public participation, as part of a broad strategy for promoting children's environmental health; Incorporate the theme of children's environmental health into formal educational programs; Promote the organization of fora on children's environmental health , as well as incorporate this issue into other fora; Develop strategies for the implementation of initiatives on Children's Environmental Health; Promote cohort studies on the effects of pollution on children's health; Promote measures aimed at the reduction of environmental risks related to zoonotic diseases; Promote the establishment and networking of pediatric environmental health specialty units; and Strengthen capacities to recognize and manage poisoning in children derived from pesticides and other chemicals. The full text of the declaration is available on UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean (ROLAC).

In addition to ministers, participants included the director of the World Health Organization, Dr. Lee Jong-Wook; the director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Dr. Klaus Toepfer, the director of the Pan-American Health Organization, Dr. Mirta Roses; and the Director of the Office for Sustainable Development and Environment of the Organization of American States, Dr. Scott Vaughan. Dr. Roses, PAHO's director, made a special presentation on advances and challenged in the health-related Millennium Development Goals, and Dr. Ricardo Sánchez of UNEP discussed advances in the goals related to the environment. More information is available on the HEMA web-site.

(3) IPA/WHO/UNEP Workshop for African Pediatricians on Children's Health and the Environment

An important workshop will be held on October 12-14, 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Pediatric Association (IPA) is sponsoring a 3-day workshop on Children's Health and the Environment. During this workshop, which will be hosted by UNEP, providers will learn about the harmful effects of air pollution, water contamination and unsafe food on the health of children. The course is designed for African doctors who plan to teach other providers about children's health and the environment. We will discuss how pediatricians from countries throughout Africa can work together to help improve the environment for tomorrow's children. This issue is a cross-cutting one that may be every bit as important as nutrition in its overall impact on child health. Please contact IPA if you would like to place your name on a list to receive additional

information and a registration form for this workshop.

(4) Second International Conference on Children's Environmental Health: Healthy Environments Healthy Children: Increasing Knowledge and Taking Action

The Government of Argentina, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the Argentine Pediatric Society are pleased to announce the Second International Conference on Children's Environmental Health (CEH): Healthy Environments Healthy Children: Increasing Knowledge and Taking Action to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 14 through 16 November 2005 at Hotel Crowne Plaza. This conference aims to strengthen collaborative research, increase awareness of children's environmental health, facilitate the sharing of experiences and instigate actions to improve the environments of children in the Americas and around the world. The conference will focus on science-oriented issues, research needs and capacity-building while addressing the concrete needs for action and policies at the community, country, regional and international levels.

This conference is expected to respond to calls for action concerning children's environmental health that will be made by the preceding Health and Environment Ministerial of the Americas (June 2005) and the Summit of the Americas (November 2005). Science, research and policy experts will be able to interact and set an agenda to weave research and science into policy discussions and vise-versa. Participants will include healthcare and environmental professionals, members of organizations, active community members, scientists, researchers, public health and environmental health policy experts, engineers and healthcare practitioners. All sectors will be represented through their presence, active participation or concrete presentations, including government, academia, non-governmental organizations, industry, and professional associations. A call for abstracts on CEH research issues will be made by May 2005, at the time of the circulation of the draft program of the event. This conference will also offer the opportunity for pre- and post-conference courses and workshop that will address specific CEH issues.

Children are the main and most precious resource of countries. They should live, grow, learn and play in environments that are supportive of good health and well-being. This conference proposes to increase awareness, set forth action, and contribute worldwide to improve the status of children's health and their environments.

(5) Workshop on Advances in the Use of Biomarkers in Children.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) jointly announce the Workshop on Advances in the Use of Biomarkers in Children. This 1½ day workshop will be held on November 17-18 following the global conference, Healthy Environments, Healthy Children: Increasing Knowledge and Taking Action, at the Hotel Crowne Plaza in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

This workshop will convene experts from around the world to present and discuss the scientific advances made during the past decade in the availability and improvement of biomarkers in children. It will cover topics such as: The availability of biomarkers during the various development stages; Biomarkers of exposure to environmental chemicals; Discussion of biomarkers of susceptibility and effects; new technologies and their contribution to the development of new biomarkers in children; and How to incorporate biomarker data into risk assessment paradigms and risk communication. The agenda for this workshop will include presentations on biological tissues, major classes of chemicals and biomarkers of susceptibility and effect. It will discuss the incorporation of biomarker data into risk assessment and risk communication and present the role of new technologies in the development of biomarkers in children.

(6) WHO/Europe – Children's environmental health work

Building up a 'Train the trainers' network. Rome, Italy, 8-10 June 2005: As a follow up to the commitments made at the Budapest Ministerial Conference last June, WHO provided training to participants from several European countries on children's health and environment issues, to enable them to train other people in their countries. Participants from 19 countries learnt about the "windows of vulnerability" in children, the harmful effects of air pollution, how and when exposure to pesticides occurs, the effects of different chemicals and other related topics. The training is part of a series and is carried out in collaboration with WHO headquarters within a WHO global effort to promote the recognition, assessment and study of environmental factors that affect the health and development of children. More information is available on WHO-Europe's

web-site.

European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC): Europe Still Fighting Against Air Pollution High level European policymakers met in Copenhagen, at the new EEHC to examine how much progress has been made since last June when 52 countries agreed to reduce children's exposure to air pollution. Organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Environment Agency (EEA), the second EEHC meeting identified ways to scale up activities and support all Member States in their work to make a safer future for the Region's children.

(7) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment

UNEP and the Aichi Prefectural Government of Japan will host the first Children's World Summit for the Environment in Toyohashi and Toyota cities, Japan, from 26 to 29 July 2005. The Summit will bring together up to 1,000 children, aged 10 to 14 years, and adult chaperones to review the implications of environmental problems to their livelihood. The Summit will endeavour to increase children's understanding of environmental issues through the sharing of experiences and opinions and will provide an opportunity for them to collectively voice their concerns for the environment. It will also inspire them to initiate and implement community environmental projects and to remove ethnic barriers while creating new relationships that will last well beyond the Summit. WHO for its part is preparing brochures that will be distributed to children, as well as sets of other materials, projection of videos and presentation of games. In addition, two roundtables are being organized where UNICEF and WHO will participate.

(8) Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL): new publication

Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) believe that international law provides a logical starting point for individuals, institutions, and countries to work together to address many of the major environmental health threats. International law and institutions provide specific opportunities for action—ranging from mechanisms to hold one's national government accountable for its international environmental obligations, to resources for capacity building and information-sharing for health initiatives. PSR and CIEL's new publication, entitled 'Using International Law and Institutions to Protect Children's Environmental Health', systematically describes how each key international and regional law and institution is relevant to efforts by civil society, government officials, individuals, and institutions to protect the environmental health of children. It is a resource that a wide range of actors can use to move forward to protect children's health.

The international conventions, treaties, and other instruments described in this handbook fall into four major thematic categories: human rights, labor, environment, and health. Although this may seem like a wide range of issues, instruments in each of these categories relate significantly to children's environmental health. Human rights law in the context of children's health focuses on ensuring that the basic rights of children, such as the "right to health and health services," are secured. Labor law focuses on a portion of these human rights, preventing child labor practices that place children in unhealthy work environments. Environmental law helps ensure that environmental conditions are sufficient to secure these basic human and labor rights of children. Health law focuses on health-specific international issues, such as tobacco use. The handbook is available on PSR's web-site.

(9) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America/Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment

The Argentine Society of Doctors for the Environment with the collaboration of International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) and International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES) is proud to present the publication "Children and their environment: Guide to protect children from environmental hazards". The guide is addressed to the general public with clear information on environmental threats to children's health and useful tips on how to protect them at home, outdoors, during pregnancy and from global threats as climate change and ozone layer depletion. This free publication (available only in Spanish) will work as a preventive tool for families to help their children to grow up in a healthy and safety environment.

"Measuring the Environmental Health Impacts on Children's Health in the Southern Cone" Project: We encourage you to

visit the special website to stay informed on the advances of the project: the case studies development (lead industrial pollution in Zárate and agricultural chemical pollution in Misiones), the beginning of the literature review process and the ending of the survey for pediatricians.

Programmed Activities:
Stockholm, Sweden, June 27th – July 1st, 2005: The Preparatory Committee of the Strategic Approach to the International Chemicals Management (SAICM) of the Chemicals Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme is organizing the SAICM Expanded Bureau Meeting in order to draw together the conclusions on the individuals regional consultations and make the final preparations for the Third Preparatory Conference of SAICM (PREPCOM3), that will take place in Vienna on September 18th to 24th. ISDE will participate at the Extended Bureau of SAICM as a health expert NGO.

Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 1st – 4th, 2005: AAMMA experts, responsible of the Module on Health and Environment will lecture at the Master on Public Health, Institute for Human Development and Health of the Municipal Doctors of the City of Buenos Aires, recognized by the National Ministry of Health and the Secretary of Health of the City of Buenos Aires. The course is addressed to health care administrators.

Buenos Aires, Argentina, August-December 2005: AAMMA – ISDE.LA organizes with the Direction of Training - Pediatrics Division of Santojanni Public Hospital of the City of Buenos Aires a 50 hours course addressed to pediatricians, health care providers and administrators on “Impact of Environmental changes on Children’s Health”. AAMMA – ISDE.LA expert’s team will lecture on “Children’s Special Vulnerability to Environmental Changes”, “Climate Change Health Effects”, “Urban Environment and Health”, “Health Care Without Harm: Healthy Hospitals”, “Children’s Chemical Safety” and “State of the World: International Negotiations and Documents”.

Vienna, Austria, September 24th-25th, 2005: International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) is inviting all ISDE members and activists on health and environment to its General Assembly that will take place in Vienna after the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM Meeting, September 19th-24th). The main aims of the ISDE meeting are networking, exchange of ideas, regional initiatives and prepare the next three years work plan. During the event, voting of the new ISDE authorities will take place (restricted to ISDE affiliates) and activities, projects of the different regions will be presented and ISDE role and intense participation in the different international forums will be explained (open to all ISDE members and, for the first time, also to non-ISDE members). To find more information please visit www.isde.org

Carried Out Activities:
Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina, June 17th, 2005: 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Health and Environment of the Americas, HEMA Meeting. AAMMA – ISDE.LA was part of the group of organizations that prepared the document that express the recommendations of the civil society on children’s environmental health, water and sanitation and chemical safety. This document was presented to the Ministers at the official meeting. Some countries delegations defined priorities: EU Delegation: Incorporate environmental issues into pediatric practice, capacitate health professionals and develop networks on environmental health. Promote programs to decrease the use of mercury, lead and exposure to pesticides. Canadian Delegation: Encourage NGOs work and participation on children’s environmental health and promote biomonitoring studies, especially in vulnerable communities. Argentinean Delegation: Dr. Atilio Savino, Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development, expressed “We must work on the defense of citizens rights, it is very important that judges also participate in this common process” He also said: “Participation must be guaranteed…., research must be encouraged to clarify the relationship between environment and disease to generate more certainty”. He also mentioned the importance of informing the community to reduce fear, increase capacity building and the importance of the implementation of the precautionary principle” The final Declaration, the Plan of Action and the Recommendations of the Civil Society in English and Spanish versions are available at www.aamma.org

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, June 2nd – 4th, 2005: ISDE.LA experts were Key speakers at the opening session of the “Plan It Quality National Conference 2005: Environments in Early Learning and Child Care – Linking Research Policy and Practice”. This meeting was organized by Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. More than 600 participants attended the conference where

ISDE.LA experts lectured on “Children Chemical Safety: Intergovernmental Forum of Chemical Safety (IFCS) Recommendations”. ISDE.LA representatives also developed a workshop on “Capacity Building in Children’s Environmental Health” for child health care providers.

(10) Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) Congressional briefing: The Crisis in Children's Environmental Health

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) held a Congressional briefing on ‘The Crisis in Children’s Environmental Health’. The youngest members of society – children are among the most vulnerable to environmental health hazards. The briefing reviewed some of the latest scientific findings on the connection between air pollution and health problems in children. The briefing covered, inter alia: findings from a ten-year study on the effect of air pollution on lung development in children, a review of recent scientific literature linking air pollution to adverse health outcomes in children, a discussion on the impacts of mercury exposure on children, and a discussion of California ’s Children’s Environmental Health Program and the state’s efforts to ensure that air quality standards protect children’s health.

(11) NEETF’s Pediatric Environmental History Initiative

The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) is pleased to announce its new website for pediatric health care providers. The site is an on-line resource portal with user-friendly tools, including a screening and a comprehensive environmental history form, and an environmental history taking primer. The Pediatric Environmental History Screening Form is a one-page form designed to be administered by the primary health care provider in less than five minutes in order to capture most of the common environmental exposures to children. It can be administered regularly during well-child exams as well as to assess whether an environmental exposure plays a role in a child's symptoms. If a positive response is given to one or more of the screening questions, the primary care provider can use the Additional Categories and Questions to Supplement The Screening Environmental History to explore further. The Pediatric Environmental History Primer provides background information on issues included in the form and recommendations health care providers can make to families to control or eliminate the hazards in their environment. These tools are based on medical literature and current best practices, and were developed in consultation with an expert advisory group, chaired by James R. Roberts MD, MPH. Other members of the Advisory Committee are Sophie Balk, MD; Ruth Etzel MD, PhD; Joel Forman, MD; Christine Johnson, MD; Lillian Mood, RN, MPH; Bonnie Rogers, DrPH, FAAN. NEETF's Pediatric Environmental History Initiative is a multi-year project to incorporate environmental history taking into the clinical practice of pediatricians and nurses. The Initiative is funded in part by The New York Community Trust. For more information, please contact Rebecca Love.

(12) Children, Youth and Environments (CYE) Journal

The current issue of the Children, Youth and Environments (CYE) Journal features a special focus on children's environmental health. It contains 20 articles, including research papers on air pollution in developing countries, effects of chemical exposure in India, risk factors for childhood injuries in developed countries, and other aspects of young people's health and wellbeing around the world. Reports from the field focus on projects, tools and resources for researchers and practitioners working in children's environmental health. Additional topics covered in the issue include children's friendship with place and the development of child-friendly cities; the use of visual research methods in participatory research with young people; and innovations in educational computing environments. The current issue also contains reviews of two award-winning documentaries and 12 books, including a review symposium of "Doing Research with Children and Young People." The introduction offers a quick overview of highlights. CYE, based at the University of Colorado, is a multidisplinary journal that publishes peer-reviewed research articles, field reports from practitioners and book reviews. In the last nine months, independent reader accesses increased by 300%. CYE now has readers in 118 countries. More information is available on CYE’s web-site.

(13) International workshop on environmental health-children's asthma

The mega-cities of Mumbai (Bombay) and New York City met in a workshop at Bombay Hospital to discuss the growing incidence of asthma and respiratory illness, especially among young children. The two cities took an important step in addressing this serious health problem by bringing together community health workers; professionals from government and non-governmental organizations in the fields of air pollution control, environmental health and communications; and asthma patients, for a two-day workshop on environmental health that took place June 14th and 15th in Mumbai.

The workshop examined air pollution and its health effects, initiatives to reduce air pollution, and community-based asthma intervention programs that have been successful in India, the United States and other areas. The outcome was an action plan to increase understanding of asthma and its relationship to air pollution, improve management of pollution-related health effects, and create coalitions and partnerships to build on recommendations that emerge from the workshop.

The serious health issue of rising asthma rates is not faced by Mumbai and New York City alone. This is a global epidemic estimated to surpass the human and economic burden associated with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis combined. The World Health Organization and the Global Initiative for Asthma estimate there are over 300 million people with asthma worldwide. In the United States, asthma is the leading cause of children missing school and about 1 million people suffer from asthma in New York City alone. In India, the prevalence of asthma may exceed 10% in children and adults, resulting in 300,000 to 500,000 deaths and 25-38 million illnesses a year.

Mumbai and New York City – among the largest cities in their countries – have hot, humid climates in the summer months that contribute to air pollution. While both cities are fortunate to have extensive public transportation networks, they also have serious traffic problems that result in high vehicular emissions and other transportation-related challenges. Both Mumbai and New York City are actively working on approaches to reducing air pollution such as clean or alternative fuel projects. They also have strong government and community-based organizations that are involved in raising awareness about asthma and other respiratory health issues at the community level. Both cities also have high incidences of asthma among the poorest of children. Following the workshop a trip was made to one of the slums in Mumbai.

The workshop, organized by the Cerana Foundation of India, was sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Agency for International Development, Central Pollution Control Board, AP Pollution Control Board, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, the Indian Association of Air Pollution Control, the National Initiative for Asthma Management, the New York City Asthma Partnership and the New York University Center for Immigrant Health. Follow up activity addressing air pollution and children's environmental health are presently underway. For more information, contact Ameesha Mehta-Sampath or Maureen O'Neill at US/EPA.

(14) European Environmental Bureau (EEB): NGOs and Control Equipment Containing Mercury

Environment and Health NGOs encouraged the European Commission in its proposed of restriction on the use and marketing of non-electrical and non-electronic measuring and control equipment containing mercury. They recommend that all consumer and professional uses be included in the restriction, with exemptions for a limited period of time and only where alternatives do not exist. The Commission developed a working document for a proposal to restrict the marketing of certain measuring devices containing mercury. Mercury containing devices can pose a risk to human health and the environment during usage, because they are easily broken. After usage they end up in the waste stream, contaminating air, water and soil. This creates an unacceptable health risk for children and women of childbearing age. Source: European Environmental Bureau 3 June 2005.

(15) University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conference Series Promoting Healthy Communities for Children

September 26-27, 2005, University of Minnesota, Continuing Education Center St. Paul, Minnesota. Unhealthy and unsafe environments put children at risk in many ways from toxicants in the air, food, and water to inadequate/overcrowded housing; unsafe, inaccessible spaces for recreation; geographic concentrations of poverty and wealth; traffic dangers; differential access to social, political and material resources; school violence; discrimination; social isolation; powerful media influences . the list could go on. From conception through adolescence, children are disproportionately affected by exposure to environmental risks because they have greater physiological and psychological vulnerabilities during stages of rapid and formative development, and they have less power to influence and shape their environment. This conference will examine critical aspects of the environment as they affect the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Conference plenary and breakout sessions will be organized around three broad themes: (i) the natural environment including the quality of our air, water, and soil; exposure to lead, environmental tobacco smoke, and noise; industrial waste disposal; (ii) the built environment including parks, sidewalks, bikeways, transportation networks, urban/suburban/rural planning and development, zoning regulations, housing codes, disability accessibility; and (iii) the social environment including social processes and

conditions related to economic and political power and decision making; human connections at an ecological level, such as social capital, efficacy, and cohesion; family relationships; safe schools; discrimination due to race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age. The audience will be multidisciplinary, reflecting the variety of conference co-sponsors and the many disciplines involved in addressing environmental impacts on children's health. Attendees will include researchers, practitioners, public health professionals, and graduate students. Abstracts are invited for poster and oral presentations in two broad categories: 1) studies reporting evidence of the impact of adverse environmental exposures on children's health, and 2) evidence-based programs, policies, or interventions that have been implemented to reduce risk exposure and enhance protective factors in the environment. Submissions are due by April 15, 2005. Please contact the University.

(16) Mid-Atlantic Center for Children[1]s Health and the Environment: Conference on Children's Health and the Environment

A Conference on Children's Health and the Environment will be held on Saturday, October 1, 2005 in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference will focus on: Emerging Issues in Children's Environmental Health; Childhood Obesity & the Environment; School Environmental Health Problems; Asthma; Mold Issues; Outcomes of Environmental Exposures * birth defects, learning problems; Risk Communication; and the Resources of a Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit. CME or CEU credits for physicians or nurses can be earned. The Conference is sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment, the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, and Region 3 Environmental Protection Agency. For more information contact Aurora Amoah at the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment.

(17) Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program: Environmental Health Conference on Iraq-Amman

International Environmental Health Conference on Iraq, 19-22 September 2005, Amman, Jordan, hosted by Stony Brook University Environmental Health Program, New York and the Agency of International Development (US/AID). Military conflicts, long-term international sanctions, isolation and rapid industrialization have turned Iraq's environment into an unprecedented, environmental disaster adversely affecting human health in Iraq and the surrounding countries. Consequently, the Iraqi healthcare system has been overwhelmed with a variety of environmentally related acute and chronic disorders, including respiratory and diarrheal diseases and adverse reproductive outcomes. Recent scientific reports have indicated significant increases in the incidence of cancer, physical and mental disabilities and congenital abnormalities. The situation has further deteriorated in recent years due to severely restricted access to modern scientific and medical knowledge and the almost complete isolation of Iraqi researchers, scientists and university faculty from their peers in the international community.

This conference will address environmental issues facing Iraq using the latest research and scientific studies and attempt to develop recommendations to address these problems. The conference will provide a venue for Iraqi and international scientists to present research work and advances related to environmental health in Iraq. It will allow Iraqi medical professionals to exchange information with their peers from the international community and it will help bridge the isolation of the Iraqi medical and environmental community by facilitating interactions and collaboration with international attendees. Additionally, the conference will stimulate long-term collaborative efforts among Iraqi scientists from different institutions or disciplines and with their foreign peers, thus encouraging research work and studies addressing various environmental and health problems affecting the region. Iraqi researchers and scientists will present the most recent research in the various disciplines related to health and the environment.

Children in Iraq: Although all segments of the population in Iraq have suffered from environmental contaminants, children have been especially affected. Due to neglect, repeated military conflicts, and international sanctions, over 500,000 children have died in the past decade. The primary cause of death among children is malnourishment and infectious diseases which arise due to a lack of basic health and sanitation services. The situation is worsened by congenital malformations and defects caused by exposure to radioactive material and chemicals associated with wars. In the post-Gulf War period, the infant mortality rate rose to 103/1000 due to the severe health deterioration in the country in the 1990's. This is nearly double the ratio prior to that period. The mortality rate of children under five years of age in Iraq is now the worst in the world. UNICEF reports that Iraq ranks 126th out of 174 on the list of UN Human Development Index, while it ranked 50th out of 130 on the list in 1990. A variety of environmentally related chronic diseases are emerging among children due to their ongoing exposure to environmental contaminants. The most serious issue is diarrhea from water contamination, which proves fatal in

many cases. Over 50% of the country's water supply is contaminated because the infrastructure and water purification system were destroyed during the recent war. Upper respiratory tract disease from exposure to air contaminants is another significant concern. Additionally, many cases of cancer and congenital abnormalities among children are believed to be environmentally related. It is expected that the Environmental Health and Resource Centers established through the SBU-HEAD program will enable Iraqi specialists to study and prevent many of the environmental health problems currently facing children in Iraq. For more information, please visit the conference/program web-site.

(18) International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES)

Call for fact-sheets: INCHES received quite a few fact-sheets or links to fact-sheets on the internet. These fact-sheets are mainly in English. INCHES is calling members to send their available fact-sheets in other languages to be added to the database. They could be in any language, ranging from lead poisoning, asthma, allergies, chemical, ventilation at school, etc. INCHES is trying to build a very complete overview which we also share with the HECA network. Please send an electronic version or hard copy of the fact-sheets, as soon as possible, to the INCHES address: INCHES, P. O. Box 163, 6950 AD Dieren, the Netherlands. Please try not to postpone your assistance as we would like to have a very substantial database of factsheets available in the next month for everyone. More information on INCHES is available on the network's web-site.

(19) Policy Interpretation Network on Children's Health and Environment

A conference entitled, 'Child Health And The Environment: Results From EU Framework 5 PINCHE project (Policy Interpretation Network on Children's Health and Environment) and Plutocracy project (Placental Uptake and Transfer of Environmental Chemicals Relating to Allergy in Childhood Years), will be held from 23 to 25 November 2005. The meeting will take place in Central Brussels. At the conference, the final results and policy implications of the PINCHE and the Plutocracy projects will be presented, and oral and poster presentation in related scientific areas will be given. There is a special session with EU Parliamentarians. For more information on the Programme and the Call for Poster Abstracts: see the PINCHE website: www.pinche.hvdgm.nl.

(20) The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group

The Global Lead Advice & Support Service (GLASS) run by The LEAD Group Inc. in Australia announced an important new web-publication – a Searchable Library Database and a Searchable Q&A of GLASS. The LEAD Group Inc. a non-profit community group, is working to eliminate childhood and foetal lead poisoning by the year 2012 and to protect the environment from lead. Feedback is welcome.

(21) Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) 8th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC - 2005)

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) will hold its 8th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC - 2005) from 7-9 December 2005 in Islambabd. Pakistan. Technical sessions will be held on children's health and environment.

Three pillars of the sustainable development are society, economy and environment; the "Heart" of the sustainable development is the future generation. Children represent the future of our societies, and therefore it is essential to protect the health of children and ensure that children live in safe environment, allowing them to reach their full potential. However, children happen to be the most vulnerable group to adverse health consequences of environmental factors such as polluted air, contaminated and polluted water, food and soil, radiation risks, chemicals, unhealthy housing, environmental noise, risks related to transport, and the consequences of armed conflict and environmental disasters and poverty. According to the WHO (2003) report, approximately 3 million children under the age of five years die every year due to environmental hazards. In South Asia, the average infant mortality rate (IMR) is about 70 per 1000 live childbirths (UNICEF 2000). The governments and stakeholders have a responsibility to take action to reduce the sources of chemical and other risks and prevent childhood exposure.

The Eighth SDC will look at the ways in which governments cooperate and exercise power over natural resource management (NRM) in their respective countries and in the region. The participants of the Conference will share their experiences and discuss national and regional environmental and health issues with a focus on the children's health. These, among others, include monitoring and situation evaluation of children of different age groups and toxic chemicals, preventive and educational activities for promoting safe use of chemicals and national environmental and health policies.

Abstract: A soft and printed copy of the abstract of not more than 400 words should be submitted directly to Dr. Mahmood A. Khwaja (khwaja@sdpi.org) by Monday, 15 August 2005. It should clearly state the title, theme, objectives, sources of data, and major expected findings. It should include the author's full name, a brief bionote as author of no more than 30 words, complete contact address (email as well as postal), telephone and fax numbers. SDC 2005 details also available at the Eighth SDC web-site (www.sdpi.org).

(22) 2005 Regional Children's Environmental Health Summit

The 2005 Regional Children's Environmental Health Summit: "Healthy Children: A Call to Action" will be held August 3 & 4, 2005 in Helena, Montana, sponsored by: US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Rocky Mountain Region Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, in partnership with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the University of Montana, and Montana State University.

The goals for the 2005 Summit include: 1. Increase the ability of health, environmental, and education professionals to identify, prevent, and reduce environmental health threats to children; 2. Share information, resources, "best practices", and emerging science regarding the protection of children's health from environmental hazards; 3. Encourage coordination and information sharing across government agencies, health organizations, health care providers, educators, and the general public in addressing children's environmental health issues; 4. Identify actions that can be implemented throughout the Region to protect children from environmental health threats; and 5. Provide public health professionals with an opportunity to identify/implement effective children's health strategies in advance of Children's Health Month in October. Details are available on the Montana Department of Environmental Quality web-site.

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution

Indoor Pollution a Silent Threat She knows nothing about how she is endangering her body and her child by inhaling smoke. She's one of about 95% of Ugandans who face disease due to burning traditional biomass fuel and coal for cooking. Exposure to indoor air pollution more than doubles the risk of pneumonia, especially among children under 5. Rosebell Kagumire. Monitor, Uganda. 30 June 2005.

Pollution a Silent Killer, Says Envoy Indoor air pollution is the 'deadliest silent' killer that should be addressed urgently, the German ambassador said. "Smoke in the home from cooking on wood, dung, crop waste and coal causes 1.6 million deaths every year." "Every 20 seconds, someone, especially a child or mother, dies from an illness caused by smoke." Fred Ouma. New Vision, Uganda. 17 June 2005.

Concerns raised about bad air at school According to EPA, illness, lack of concentration, and increased absences of students can result from problems with the air quality inside schools. Evidence is rapidly emerging that various environmental conditions are closely associated with the incidence of objectively measurable adverse health effects. Darlene Bakhoum. Trenton Trentonian, New Jersey. 14 June 2005.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

Study probes city's toxic fumes A study into links between human sickness and industrial air pollution in Durban will compare the health status of children and adults in the south Durban industrial zone with a similar number of people from three northern area suburbs who are not exposed to major industrial pollution. Tony Carnie. KwaZulu-Natal Mercury, South Africa. 22 June 2005.

Air pollutants can harm child lung growth Long-term exposure to air pollution is a key factor in respiratory-illness development in children, researchers said at a Capitol Hill briefing. "We found that children living in polluted communities are 4 to 5 times more likely to have abnormal lung function" than children not living in high ozone communities. Lydell Bridgeford. United Press International. 10 June 2005.

Three Studies Link Daily Ozone Levels to Mortality Rates 3 research reviews draw "remarkably consistent" conclusions linking daily levels of ozone pollution to an increased risk of death. Studies have found increased rates of health problems on days with high levels of ozone pollution, especially in children with asthma and other respiratory diseases. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Newswise. 19 June 2005.

Smog takes a toll on little lungs These smog alert days on planet Earth 2005 make it feel like we are all living part of a bad science-fiction novel: Some futuristic nightmare where our kids have to limit play outside in the summer sun because microscopic particles suspended in the air clogs their lungs, leaving them breathless or sick. Tanya Talaga. Toronto Star. 27 June 2005.

Rights: Nigerian Challenge Over Emissions The flares contain a cocktail of toxins that affect the health and livelihood of local communities. This has exposed Niger Delta residents to an increased risk of premature deaths, child respiratory illnesses, asthma and cancer over the past 40 years, environmentalists and local people say. Stefania Bianchi. Inter Press Service. 20 June 2005.

Nigerian Communities Sue Oil Companies to Stop Gas Flaring Environment News Service. 23 June 2005.

Heat and smog kill thousands in Canada: study A new study shows the combined impact of extreme hot and cold temperatures and air pollution is killing thousands of people a year in four Canadian cities. The report recommends a warning system "to implement appropriate heat response protocols to protect vulnerable populations during extreme heat events." CTV.ca. Tehran Times. 8 June 2005.

The deadly price of dirty air More than 5,800 Ontario residents are expected to die prematurely this year because they are breathing dirty air, warns a new report from the Ontario Medical Association. The elderly will be the most vulnerable by far, but infants and children with compromised health conditions are also at risk, the report says. Tanya Talaga. Toronto Star, Ontario. 14 June 2005.

Air pollution 'may have killed 800' Up to 800 people may have died in the UK from air pollution caused mainly by traffic in 2003, according to a report. Poor air quality is thought to contribute to between 12,000 and 24,000 premature deaths in the UK every year. Amanda Brown. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 9 June 2005.

Ill winds Power plants blow no good for increasingly sick kids. Winds too often carry a chemical fog of pollutants that health experts say cause, or make worse, incapacitating lung and heart diseases and, for some, lead to premature death. “Ozone” and “particulate matter” have become household words, especially in homes with an asthmatic child. Betty Brink. Fort Worth Weekly, Texas. 9 June 2005.

Plainville buses to go green School officials are hoping a new fleet of cleaner-running DATTCO buses can solve the elementary building’s diesel-fume problems, while helping to improve the overall air-quality in Plainville and conserve fossil fuels. The particle-reducing mechanisms in the school buses will be especially beneficial to children with asthma. JC Reindl. New Britain Herald, Connecticut. 1 June 2005.

District cuts emissions from school bus fleet The Penn Hills School District equipped its entire fleet of school buses with pollution controls and switched to ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel to reduce emissions. It’s especially important for the children, who are more sensitive to pollution because they breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Pennsylvania. 9 June 2005.

Idlers unwelcome in town Diesel fuel poses greater health risks than regular gasoline because it contains fine particulate matter that is inhaled and settles in the lungs. This isn't good for anyone, but children are especially vulnerable as their respiratory system is still developing and they breathe at a faster rate than adults. Carolyn Lorié. Brattleboro Reformer, Vermont. Opinion, 7 June 2005.

Solutions to diesel fuel pollution Cutting down air pollution from diesel engines isn't just dependent on taxpayers ponying up extra money for newer school buses. There are a number of solutions already in play that experts say will help clean up the region's air. Greg Clary. White Plains Journal News, New York. 13 June 2005.

Hidden costs aboard school buses Greg Clary. White Plains Journal News, New York. 13 June 2005.

Concern grows over diesel fumes Many buses are older and lack even rudimentary pollution controls. DEP says diesel exhaust is a key contributor of fine-particle soot that can cause asthma, bronchitis, cancer and premature deaths. "If you're putting all these children on school buses, public dollars should go to saving those kids." Lawrence Hajna. Gannett News Service, New Jersey. 13 June 2005.

Schools to seek cleaner bus exhaust EPA has distributed $10 million in grants to help school districts clean up school bus exhaust. Kansas City area schools have gotten zero. Although bus emissions contribute to air pollution, the greater concern goes to the health of the children who ride buses. “The particulate matter from school buses goes directly to kids.” Kansas City Star, Missouri. 13 June 2005.

Assembly, Senate aim for reductions in diesel emissions Legislation aimed at drastically reducing harmful diesel emissions in a state known for choking air conditions breezed through the Senate and Assembly. School buses would be targeted first, in an effort to get the state's most vulnerable out of harm's way fastest. [Registration Required]. Jennifer Moroz. Philadelphia Inquirer. 28 June 2005.

Grants may lower school bus pollution Kentucky school districts can apply for grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for mechanical work or alternative fuels that could reduce pollution from diesel school buses. Kentucky Post, Kentucky. 30 June 2005.

EPA Proposes Cutting Diesel Exhaust from Equipment Powered by Stationary Diesel Engines It is intended to cut smog-forming chemicals, fine particles and soot, which are blamed each year for increases in respiratory illnesses and thousands of premature deaths. Those considered especially vulnerable are children, the elderly and people suffering from asthma. John Heilprin. Associated Press. 30 June 2005.

Protect Your Lungs From Wildfire Smoke In some cases, especially for people who suffer from asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease -- COPD -- or other respiratory disorders, the symptoms can be more severe, even including bronchial spasms. And children and senior citizens are at higher risk than the general population. NBC San Diego, California. 1 June 2005.

Smoke gets in our skies Smoke from large wildfires in Arizona shrouded much of Northern New Mexico on Wednesday, filling the air with the acrid smell of ash. Both state agencies urge elderly people, small children and those with respiratory or heart problems to avoid smoky areas and stay indoors. Staci Matlock. Santa Fe New Mexican, New Mexico. 30 June 2005.

Troubling trend of ozone alerts There is a growing health concern about Houston's pollution problem sparked by the city's high heat. Current ozone levels have reached level "orange" on the west side of Houston, which means the air out there can be unhealthy for children, the elderly or people with respiratory problems. [Registration required]. Dan Lauck. Houston KHOU TV, Texas. 29 June 2005.

Houstonians take precautions on ozone days Houston KPRC, Texas. 15 June 2005.

Hospitals on alert as smog and then storms trigger asthma warning Violent thunderstorms today are expected to unleash widespread respiratory illness, affecting those with no previous breathing problems. Those at risk include hayfever sufferers, generally young people up to 30 years old. Paul Simons and Michael Horsnell. London Times. 24 June 2005.

Summer smog reaches dangerous levels as weather turns chaotic [Purchase required]. Michael McCarthy. London Independent, England. 24 June 2005.

Paris on pollution alert Authorities in Paris issued a first-stage health alert for people with respiratory problems after air-pollution levels surged. Ground-level ozone rose above a key threshold of 180 micrograms a cubic metre. Young children, people with asthma, the elderly and individuals with breathing problems are advised to avoid exertion. Cape Town News24, South Africa. 21 June 2005.

Ozone warning in effect Asthmatics and others with respiratory problems should be especially careful today, as air pollution is expected to be high for the third-straight day in the Hudson Valley. Those most susceptible to ozone include the very young or old, and those with existing lung ailments. Dan Shapley. Poughkeepsie Journal, New York. 28 June 2005.

Power task force to talk about health The health impacts of air pollution and a close-up look at a massive state-of-the-art coal plant to be built in Illinois are being discussed. Children and pregnant women are advised against eating large bass because of mercury. “I'll be talking about the health effects of mercury, coal's contribution to that”. Wes Johnson. Springfield News-Leader, Missouri. 27 June 2005.

(c) Asthma

World-beating asthma study hopes to save lives Tasmanian doctors are leading the world's most comprehensive study into asthma, aimed at preventing deaths. "Have children’s lungs been damaged in some way either because of asthma or because of other environmental effects?" “I have an interest air pollution - I'd like to know if air pollution has affected their lungs.” ABC, Australia. 24 June 2005.

Carpets linked to asthma The increasing use of carpets and upholstery in Malaysian homes may be leading to more dust mites, and child asthma cases. Asthma results from a complex interaction between the individual and his environment. Studies had shown that asthma was a major cause of school absenteeism. Annie Freeda Cruez. Malaysia News Online. 13 June 2005.

Four million Vietnamese suffer from asthma About 5 percent of Viet Nam's population (4 million people) are suffering from asthma and 3,000 of them die every year, said a survey conducted by the Viet Nam Society of Asthma. Vietnam News Agency, Vietnam. 17 June 2005.

Warming trend could hurt asthma, allergy sufferers New research suggests global warming could leave Middle Georgians sneezing more as allergy and asthma cases increase. About 7 percent of adults and 11 percent of high school students in Georgia have asthma. S. Heather Duncan. Macon Telegraph, Georgia. 13 June 2005.

City Council garbage Parents of the 300,000 city children who suffer from asthma should remember the names of the politicians who bargained away their health when the City Council disgraced itself by voting, 29-19, to stop Mayor Bloomberg's proposed trash-removal plan. One out of every four children in Harlem has asthma. Errol Louis. New York Daily News, New York. Editorial, 10 June 2005.

Sprawl spurs increase in pollution More people, more cars, more pollution, more houses and more conflicts with little critters getting squeezed out. “Every time a child or a senior citizen gets asthma, we're paying these costs while the developers and politicians rake in the money.” Andrew Silva. San Bernardino County Sun, California. 2 June 2005.

Wheezin' season affects many young people There are several theories about why childhood asthma is becoming more and more common. Children are also exposed to more pollutants such as cigarette smoke and exhaust than in the past. Aubrey Fleischer. Appleton Post-Crescent, Wisconsin. 21 June 2005.

(d) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

Children's health and parent's smoking According to a report of World Health Organization on parent's smoking in the presence of their children, more than 600 thousand children in the world die of what is known as negative smoking, because of its effect on their Respiratory system and the future effect on the heart and other organs. Dr. Amr Al-jawi. Yemen Times, Yemen. 27 June 2005.

Smoking is no joke WHO cites smoking as a public health priority. A study of primary school-age children in Trinidad and Tobago found that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is closely associated with an increased prevalence of symptoms of asthma and rhinitis in children. They lived in households where one or both parents smoked. Eulalee Thompson. Kingston Jamaica Gleaner. 1 June 2005.

Children of smokers are more likely to have ear infections While many parents know smoking is bad for their own health, they may fail to realize the effect it has on their child's health. Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) decreases a child's lung efficiency and impairs lung function, which increases the incidence of childhood asthma. Benton County Daily Record, Arkansas. 13 June 2005.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

Keep children away from chemicals Chemicals that poison the developing brain hurt our children and our economy. Chemicals that poison the developing brain — neurotoxicants — pose an insidious threat to children's health. These include lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and certain pesticides. Dr. Leonardo Trasande/Dr. Philip Landrigan. Poughkeepsie Journal, New York. 26 June 2005.

Help protect your kids from toxins Children are uniquely at risk from toxic chemicals. Their bodies are small, they are still developing and their behavior makes them more likely to come in contact with toxins. Ongoing research in the field of children's environmental health is helping us learn more about why children are particularly vulnerable. Diana Yu. Olympia Olympian, Washington. 27 June 2005.

Phthalates and male babies For the first time, scientists have found evidence that phthalates in pregnant women alter the reproductive organs of their male offspring. The study could have implications for regulation of phthalates in the U.S. Many cosmetic companies that market in the U.S. have already agreed to remove some phthalates. Bette Hileman. Chemical & Engineering News. 2 June 2005.

Babies Show High Levels of Chemical A Harvard study of babies in hospital intensive care units has found new evidence of high levels of a hormone-altering chemical in newborns treated with plastic medical devices. [Registration Required]. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times, California. 9 June 2005.

Toxin affecting tiniest infants Patricia Norris. Springfield Republican, Massachusetts. 17 June 2005.
Toxic agent found in treated newborns is linked to plastic Jane Kay. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 10 June 2005.

Phthalates to be banned in toys and childcare articles The planned compromise deal banning, without age-limitations, the use of phthalates in toys, will be an EU landmark decision in the protection of children's health. Euractiv, Belgium. 27 June 2005.

California takes aim at chemicals in plastics California is considering pioneering and controversial legislation aimed at protecting citizens from potentially harmful chemicals in a wide array of consumer products - everything from deodorant to

plastic toys. Daniel B. Wood. Christian Science Monitor. 3 June 2005.

Call to regulate gender-bending chemicals Scientists will call on European leaders today to take urgent action to speed up regulation of the thousands of gender-bending chemicals in use across the continent. "Many of these chemicals affect development in the womb." Alok Jha. London Guardian. 20 June

Sorry, but we've got really bad chemistry I'm a walking cocktail of toxic chemicals. I've got a jigger of lead in me, a splash of flame retardant and a dash of DDT. The chemical compounds, used in soap and shampoo and as a softener in plastic products, have been associated with abnormalities in babies' reproductive systems. [Registration Required]. Steve Lopez. Los Angeles Times, California. 8 June 2005.

Chemical-Contamination Con In any word-association game today, the term "chemicals" prompts responses like "harmful," "disease," and "risk." Bio-monitoring of blood samples from children, particularly thirty years ago, helped us identify which segments of the population had dangerously high blood levels of lead. Elizabeth M. Whelan. New York Post. 15 June 2005.

Fight looms over state biomonitoring efforts California needs a statewide biomonitoring program to track our exposure to various chemicals, from trans fat to PBDEs and organophosphate pesticides. 25 years ago, data showed levels of lead, a potent neurotoxin, dropped in blood as the metal was phased out of gasoline. Douglas Fischer. Oakland Tribune, California. 20 June 2005.

Bill to monitor body toxins advances in the assembly California moved closer to the establishment of the country's only statewide biomonitoring program, aimed at tracking chemicals such as plastics and flame retardants. An investigation found measurable amounts in all family members, with their two children surprisingly high in flame retardants. Douglas Fischer. Oakland Tribune, California. 29 June 2005.

Women are taking environmental health into their own hands Some women are making choices, to measure contaminants in their bodies and to avoid using products that would increase their chemical burden. This exposure is important not just for women themselves but also for fetuses and breast-feeding children. Gregory Dicum. San Francisco Chronicle, California. 9 June 2005.

Avoiding Health Risks from PBDEs -- An ENN Commentary PBDEs are linked to neurological, reproductive, and thyroid damage in animals. We know that there are increasing levels of PBDEs accumulating our bodies and in breast milk. So many women rightly worry about breastfeeding and potential hazards to children, in particular. Joyce Newman. ENN. 9 June 2005.

Action on toxic crisis Toxic chemicals are increasingly being found in the air, water, food, and products we use every day as well as in our own bodies. A study found that flame retardants are ending up in women of childbearing age. The chemicals, which may pose risks to child development, in US women are some 40 times those in Europe. Kenneth Geiser/Joel Tickner. Boston Globe. 12 June 2005.

Following the Toxic Trail Bayview Hunters Point in San Francisco is not only home to mostly poor people of color, but also, to two power plants, the city's sewage treatment facility, a naval shipyard declared a Superfund site, and many industrial companies. Her son was constantly breaking out with some kind of rash. Steve Curwood. Living On Earth. 7 June 2005.

What's causing cancer? The elephant in the room is the contribution of environmental toxins and whether many of the cancers striking Canadians can be avoided. Children are increasingly the victims. Researchers in Britain have shown that certain childhood cancers such as leukemia and brain cancer have increased by more than a third since the 1950s. Mitchell Anderson. Toronto Star. 13 June 2005.

Flame retardants found in breast milk Flame retardants used in consumer goods from TVs to fridges, which could pose a risk to health and the environment, are being found in breast milk, house dust and fish in Australia. Anna Salleh. ABC News, Australia. 28 June 2005.

Valley of death The Steel Valley residents claim water, land and air pollution caused by Mittal Steel, formerly Iscor, is giving them cancers, skin infections and kidney diseases. Some children have learning problems, are chronically fatigued and suffer from memory loss and lung ailments. Fiona Macleod & Yolandi Groenewald. Johannesburg Mail & Guardian, South Africa. 14 June 2005.

Company Bust for Illegal Storage of Toxic Waste A company was illegally storing hazardous chemical waste. Another was found to be operating an illegal waste site, which was found "not conducive to healthy living conditions and infringes on the community's right to an environment that is not harmful to their wellbeing and health". David Masango. Abuja Daily Trust, Nigeria. 24 June 2005.

Heavy pollution source of concern on Bali beaches Bali beaches were reported to have been polluted by heavy metal and other chemical substances including ammonia, nitrogen dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, lead and copper. "Pb poisoning can affect the nervous system. It can also cause mental and intellectual problems, especially with children," I Wayan Ananta Wijaya. Jakarta Post, Indonesia. 14 June 2005.

Bronx school fails toxic chemical test Elevated levels of several toxic chemicals have been found in the air inside a controversial Bronx high school that city officials rushed to open last September on the site of a former electronics factory. New York Daily News, New York. 24 June 2005.

Bronx High School site bonanza New York Daily News, New York. 28 June 2005.

Track Rocket Propellant Cleanup, Say Congressional Auditors A system to track sampling and cleanup results for the chemical perchlorate should be established. The NAS reviewed studies of perchlorate's health effects and recommended more studies be conducted on the effects of perchlorate exposure in children and pregnant women. Environment News Service. 24 June 2005.

Study: Perchlorate contamination, cleanup not under federal watch A rocket-fuel ingredient contaminates hundreds of sites, but neither the extent of perchlorate contamination nor the effectiveness of cleanup efforts is being tracked. In tests, perchlorate seems to impair thyroid function and can cause developmental problems in infants. Nikki Cobb. San Bernardino County Sun, California. 23 June 2005.

By gum! Pine gets the chop for tots Treated pine was once ubiquitous in childrens' playgrounds but the tide -- and timber -- is changing. The changes follow concerns that a chemical used in treated pine to stop it rotting is linked to childhood illnesses. Anne Barbeliuk. Mercury, Australia. 13 June 2005.

(b) Lead

Outlawing Leaded Fuel Will Come With Many Costs The recent proposal by the government to outlaw leaded petrol may be a welcome initiative - at least to environmentalists. The threat from lead is more pronounced among children in whom it can cause mental retardation (usually as a result of eating lead particles deposited in dust). Rodney Muhumuza. The Monitor, Kampala, Uganda. 13 June 2005

It's up to Govt to Ensure Leaded Fuel is Phased Out By 2006 Lead is potentially harmful to people and studies have shown that elevated levels can lead to neurological problems, particularly in children. Most countries have banned the sale of leaded gasoline. [Subscription required]. Kimathi Njoka. East African, Nairobi. 1 June 2005.

Refineries vs. health The government revived the campaign for the use of unleaded gasoline. Lead causes reduced brain development in children. An expert from UNEP cited in this paper the World Bank's study of the US's experience since the 1970s; that "for every US$1 invested in the phase-out effort, $10 was saved in medical costs". Opinion and Editorial. Jakarta Post. 2 June 2005.

Toxic camp angers Kosovo Roma Roma rights groups are preparing legal action against the UN Mission in Kosovo over its failure to evacuate several hundred refugees from camps contaminated with extremely high levels of poisonous lead. When WHO tested the Roma's blood for lead in 2004, the readings for 90% of the children were off the scale. Matt Prodger. BBC, UK. 14 June 2005.

EPA and Partners Take Action to Reduce Lead Levels in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities Through education and outreach, child care facilities and schools will be assisted by EPA and its partners to understand and reduce children's lead exposure from drinking water. New release. US Environmental Protection Agency. 15 June 2005.

Lead poisoning in kids falls sharply The number of New Jersey children with very high levels of lead in their blood has dropped 83 percent in the past decade, and health officials said they must now push to reduce exposure to the toxic metal even lower. Carol Ann Campbell. Easton Express Times, Pennsylvania. 15 June 2005.

Hidden hazards of house painting Officials are remaining vigilant in an effort to curb lead exposure resulting from hazardous paint removal practices. Sanding releases large amounts of paint dust, which may contain dangerous quantities of lead, posing a health threat to children, who unintentionally inhale or ingest the residue. Thomas Ahern. Arlington Advocate, Massachusetts. 16 June 2005.

Lead poisoning requires action For the significant amount of short-term and long-term damage that lead poisoning creates within a community, it does not usually get much attention from the media. Childhood lead poisoning is a health issue that affects the future of both the individual child and the community. Deborah A. McMahan, M.D. Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Indiana. 27 June 2005.

Health Canada details rules for lead in kids' jewelry Most jewelry doesn't have labels detailing the metal mixture, so new regulations announced Wednesday limiting lead content in children's jewelry mean that buyers still must beware. "The government has taken a positive step towards protecting the health of children by enacting these regulations." Canadian Press. 2 June 2005.

Assembly approves lead regulations on imported candy The California state Assembly approved legislation to regulate lead levels in candy after concerns were raised that the federal government wasn't doing enough to protect consumers from imported candy that contained lead. Research suggests that even small amounts of lead can diminish the learning skills of young children. Associated Press. 3 June 2005.

Kids against candy With lead-tainted candy from Mexico still for sale in the Mission, health officials and educators – and even some candy-loving kids – are working to warn the community about its perils. Tali Woodward. San Francisco Bay Guardian, California. 2 June 2005.

State Warns About Mexican Candies Some candies have officials worried. Just before the end of the school year, public schools were given posters warning about the ills of some chile-based candies, many of which are made in Mexico, because of their high lead content. [Subscription required]. Gabriela Guzman. Albuquerque Journal, New Mexico. 12 June 2005.

Lead found in imported candy, pottery Officials are warning about possible lead contamination from candy and terra cotta pottery from Mexico. Exposure to lead can be poisonous, and children and developing fetuses are more susceptible. Lead contamination or poisoning can lead to behavioral disorders or learning disabilities. Florangela Davila. Seattle Times, Washington. 30 June 2005.

Fears over lead exposure prompt public meeting Residents living near Exide Technologies' lead battery recycling plant in Lower Hutt will hold a public meeting tomorrow to discuss concerns about its lead discharge. "Children have played around the site for years and yet the workers wear masks and protective clothing." Kelly Andrew. New Zealand Press Association. 7

June 2005.

Monroe County works to get the lead out Launched in April with a $100,000 state grant, Monroe County's Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is part of an effort to take more preventive steps, especially with dangers posed by deteriorating lead paint. "I don't know a lot about it, but it can damage the kids." James Goodman. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York. 27 June 2005.

Customers with lead pipes pick up free filters Prolonged exposure to lead can weaken the central nervous system and lead to learning disabilities, stunted growth, hearing loss and, in some cases, mental retardation. Unborn children and children 6 years old and younger are most at risk from lead exposure. Tom Lambert**.** Lansing State Journal, Michigan. 28 June 2005.

Study targets high lead levels Children: Shooting .22-caliber rifles indoors may elevate toxic element in blood. Alaska children who fire .22-caliber rifles in indoor shooting ranges may be at risk for high levels of lead in their blood if the ranges aren't properly maintained, a new study reported Thursday. Ann Potempa. Anchorage Daily News, Alaska. 17 June 2005.

(c) Pesticides

Poisons may pass down generations Toxic chemicals that poisoned your great-grandparents may also damage your health. Researchers have evidence that some inherited diseases may be caused by poisons polluting the womb. Research on rats indicates man-made environmental poisons may alter genetic activity, giving rise to diseases that pass down at least four generations. BBC. 3 June 2005.

Environmental toxins permanently alter genetics Evidence that the genes of developing fetuses can be permanently changed by exposure to compounds that act like hormones and that this effect is then passed on to future generations is sending shock waves through the ecotoxicology community. Paul D. Thacker. Environmental Science & Technology. 9 June 2005.

Startling study on toxins' harm Tom Paulson. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington. 3 June 2005.
Origins of disease may lie with forebearers: study [Purchase required]. Eric Vanden Bussche. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario. 3 June 2005.
Damage from toxins can pass to offspring Elizabeth Weise. USA Today. 3 June 2005.
Fertility woes forecast Corydon Ireland. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York. 3 June 2005.
Grandpa's poisons may affect you, rat tests show Maggie Fox. Reuters. 3 June 2005.
Pesticides cause lasting damage to rats' sperm Amanda Gardner. Health Day News. 3 June 2005.
Sprays stunt babies Robin Yapp. Herald Sun, Australia. 3 June 2005.
Are these sperm doomed? Roger Highfield. London Daily Telegraph, England. 19 June 2005.

Where poison flows in the veins... A study has found very high levels of pesticide residues in blood samples taken from Punjab villages. If research on animals is extrapolated to humans, it may mean that early childhood exposure to chlorpyrifos can lead to lasting effects on learning, attention, and behaviour, just as were seen with another environmental neurotoxin, lead. One World South Asia. 7 June 2005.

Research group sounds pesticide warning Deccan Herald, India. 8 June 2005.
Poison alert for Punjab farmers Gajinder Singh. Calcutta Telegraph, India. 8 June 2005.
CSE finds high levels of pesticides in blood samples Bombay Financial Express, India. 7 June 2005.
'Pesticide cocktail' in blood of Punjab farmers: CSE [Registration required]. New India Press, India. 8 June 2005.
Punjab: High pesticide level in blood samples Rediff, India. 8 June 2005.
Pesticide body rejects report on Punjab farmers Indo-Asian News Service. Peninsula, Qatar. 14 June 2005.

How sure are you that you are only killing pests? People have developed a more harmful means of ridding themselves of pests, and which can directly affect the health of the family. But these poisons can also kill pets and even people. “You can't

keep poison out of the reach of your children, domestic animals or the even the wind while also eliminating rats." Ameen Abduljalil. Yemen Observer. 16 June 2005.

Exotic pesticides destroy our life 20,000 new cancer cases annually. Reality shows that these insecticides kill tens of victims every day in addition to the damages on the human, soil and environment. Some of the pesticides consequences appear in food, and environment lead to impotency and some inherited to sons. Yemen Times, Yemen. 6 June 2005.

EPA Sued Over Million Farm Kids Exposed to Pesticides A coalition of farm workers, environmental and public health groups filed suit against EPA for ignoring the special risk to children growing up surrounded by chemical poisons. Children of farm workers breathe pesticides that drift from the fields, and they often live, play, and go to school right next to pesticide-treated orchards. ENS. 8 June 2005.

EPA Sued Over Pesticides' Effects on Kids Associated Press. ABC News. 8 June 2005.
Coalition sues EPA over pesticide dangers [Subscription required]. Sarah Arnquist. Fairfield-Suisun City Daily Republic, California. 14 June 2005.

UND scientists study impact of ag chemicals on school-age children UND researchers are studying the impacts of chronic exposure to chemicals, specifically pesticides, on children's ability to learn and comprehend. David Dodds. Grand Forks Herald, North Dakota. 15 June 2005.

Farmworkers support bill to enforce laws on pesticide drift Flora Bautista was taking care of her five children and her nephew - a 5-month-old baby - when the 2003 pesticide drift happened in Lamont. Since then, Bautista said, the baby has suffered from respiratory tract infections, asthma, pneumonia, and other lung diseases. Juliana Barbassa. Associated Press. 29 June 2005.

Parents say crop duster sickened children; others say spray is safe Two families from the Duson area say that one of the most commonly used herbicides in America not only destroyed the plants, trees and vegetables in their yards, but also made their children sick when it was dropped upon them from a crop duster. Jason Brown. Lafayette Advertiser, Louisiana. 6 June 2005.

New EPA head defended study using pesticides around children Stephen Johnson, the new head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has defended a controversial study that would have exposed children to pesticides as "ethically and scientifically sound," agency employees said. Kim McGuire. Denver Post, Colorado. 16 June 2005.

EPA proposal would allow human tests of pesticides Landrigan said rodent studies suggest exposing animals, and by extension, children, can harm their long-term behavior and intellectual development. I don't know how you could possibly justify administering chemicals to a young child that could produce lifelong learning deficits. [Registration Required]. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 28 June 2005.

EPA criticized for pesticide testing rules [Registration Required]. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times, California. 28 June 2005.

EPA blocked from human pesticide studies The Senate voted to block the EPA from using studies that expose people to pesticides. New EPA rules under development envision permitting accepting data from human tests on children, pregnant women, newborns, infants and fetuses. Even newborns of "uncertain viability" could be tested under the draft rule. Andrew Taylor. Associated Press. 30 June 2005.

Senate Opposes Pesticide Tests on Humans [Registration Required]. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 30 June 2005.
Senate votes to ban EPA pesticide tests on humans [Registration Required]. Maura Reynolds. Los Angeles Times, California. 30 June 2005.
Limits sought on testing for pesticides [Purchase Required]. Michael Janofsky. New York Times. 30 June 2005.

Pesticide exposure affects thyroid hormone levels during pregnancy Exposure to certain pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls, and mercury, even at low levels, can disturb thyroid hormone levels during pregnancy, research suggests. “Our findings place emphasis on the need to be more vigilant in regard to particularly fragile populations such as pregnant women and fetuses”. Reuters Health. 13 June 2005.

Connecticut passes pesticide prohibition on public and private elementary and preschool lawns The Connecticut General Assembly passed a law prohibiting lawn care pesticides on the lawns of public and private preschools and public and private elementary schools. Landscape Management. 23 June 2005.

Bill on pesticide alerts OK'd After months of debate on science, privacy and public health, on Tuesday night Monroe County adopted a controversial state law that restricts pesticide use. Advocates said the law protects children and gives homeowners the right to know when airborne chemicals are used in their neighborhoods. Corydon Ireland. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York. 15 June 2005.

Rooting out toxins Saying increases in household pesticide use threaten people's health, environmental advocates called on the state to ban certain harmful chemicals and take other steps to curb pesticide use. Studies have linked pesticides to diseases like prostate cancer, leukemia, birth defects, fetal death, and infertility. [Subscription required]. Jon Brodkin. Milford Daily News, Massachusetts. 21 June 2005.

Orange County opts for pesticide-free schools At the behest of a Raleigh-based advocacy group, the Orange County Schools this week adopted a policy that focuses on preventing pests, rather than using pesticides to eradicate them. Carolyn Norton. Durham Herald-Sun, North Carolina. 22 June 2005.

(d) Mercury

Greenpeace protests coal-fired power plants Greenpeace activists stormed Mirant Corp.'s headquarters in Manila. The Greenpeace report cited recent studies by the US National Academy of Sciences that showed how methyl mercury emissions, even at low levels, could cause life-long loss of intelligence in hundreds of thousands of children born yearly. Christine Gaylican. Philippine Daily Inquirer. 1 June 2005.

Filthier than jeepneys What most Filipinos are oblivious to is that a bigger offender of the Clean-Air Act contributes daily to make the air we breathe even filthier: coal-fired power plants. Greenpeace cited recent studies that show how mercury emissions, even at low exposure levels, can cause lifelong loss of intelligence in thousands of children yearly. Dan Mariano. Manila Today, Philippines. 3 June 2005.

Reduce mercury contamination of water bodies, children's brains In April, for the first time ever, the state Department of Health warned women of childbearing age and children not to eat most fish caught in the Adirondacks and Catskills because of mercury contamination. Colin Garwood and Melinda Sobin. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York. 29 June 2005.

EU sets 2011 deadline to ban mercury exports EU Environment ministers, the world's largest producer of mercury, called for exports of the toxic substance to be banned by 2011. Mercury poisoning can harm the nervous system, brain and kidneys and even cause death. Pregnant women are advised to limit intake of some fish due to mercury pollution in the sea. Reuters. Planet Ark. 27 June 2005.

Canada's environment ministers draft agreement on mercury standards Canada's environment ministers agreed in principle Monday on a national standard to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. Mercury is a toxic element that can damage organs and the central nervous system. Low exposure may cause learning disabilities in children. John Lewandowski. Canadian Press. 28 June 2005.

EPA faces fight on mercury policy House and Senate Democrats introduced legislation yesterday that would force EPA to scrap a plan that would allow polluters to trade for the right to emit a certain level of mercury rather than face mandatory cuts.

Mercury can damage the nervous systems of children, leading to mental retardation and blindness. Alan Wirzbicki. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 30 June 2005.

A plea to clear the air The Bush administration is giving coal-fired power plants up to 20 years to remove 70% of mercury in emissions, citing that a key technology remains unproven. But that technology is already close to getting the job done. Too much of the wrong kinds of fish can harm the brains of developing fetuses and children. [Registration Required]. Tom Avril. Philadelphia Inquirer. 6 June 2005.

Health Groups Join Suit Against U.S. EPA Over Mercury Emissions Four U.S. Public health groups joined a lawsuit against EPA by attorneys general from 13 states challenging a new rule limiting mercury emissions from power plants. They are seeking to overturn a regulation they say fails to protect infants and children from the harmful effect of such emissions. Christopher Martin. Bloomberg. 14 June 2005.

Baltimore enters legal fray on mercury pollution rules Baltimore will join 12 states challenging the Bush administration's decision to exempt power plants from tough mercury pollution controls. Mercury rises into the air when coal is burned, falling down into waterways and causing brain damage in developing infants when their mothers eat too much fish. Tom Pelton. Baltimore Sun, Maryland. 8 June 2005.

State should continue efforts to tighten standards on mercury Without agreement on the ultimate step Michigan can take to clean mercury out of the smoke of coal-fired electric plants, Gov. Granholm's work group has to go down as a bust. Utility representatives would not move beyond voluntary goals. Environmentalists pressed for a 90% cut by 2013. Editorial. Detroit Free Press, Michigan. 27 June 2005.

Deadly immunity When a study revealed that mercury in childhood vaccines may have caused autism in thousands of kids, the government rushed to conceal the data -- and to prevent parents from suing drug companies for their role in the epidemic. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Salon.com. 17 June 2005.

The age of autism: A glimpse of the Amish Some research has centered on the Amish to determine whether an isolated population has the same prevalence of autism as the rest of us. A pediatrician and geneticist was treating 6 Amish children with autism, none vaccinated. 4 had high levels of mercury that he believes came from coal-fired power plants. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 3 June 2005.

The age of autism: Amish ways Is the prevalence of autism lower among the Amish, and, if so, how do they differ from the rest of us? Candidates include vaccines; environmental pollutants; something in the food chain that the Amish avoid or a wildcard factor. If anything has emerged from this excursion it is how often the metals-mercury issue has arisen. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 7 June 2005.

The age of Autism: One in 15,000 Amish The autism rate for U.S. children is 1 in 166. The autism rate for the Amish around Middlefield, is 1 in 15,000, according to Dr. Heng Wang. Most medical experts and health authorities say a link between thimerosal and autism has been discredited, but CDC's director told Congress she is keeping an open mind. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 9 June 2005.

Firm Removed Mercury From Nasal Spray, Not Infant Shots Drug maker Wyeth removed a mercury compound from a popular nasal spray more than a decade ago to skirt warning label requirements, but continued using the chemical in infant vaccines for several years until it came under pressure to stop. [Registration Required]. Myron Levin. Los Angeles Times, California. 7 June 2005.

Granholm to decide fate of mercury rules Environmentalists and health officials are pressing Gov. Granholm to make good on a campaign promise to cut Michigan's mercury emissions by 90%. Mercury can cause devastating health problems in human beings -- especially fetuses whose brains and nervous systems can be permanently damaged. Hugh Mcdiarmid Jr. Detroit Free Press, Michigan.1 June 2005.

Lawmakers test positive for mercury All of the 72 legislators and 10 residents tested for mercury at the Legislative Office Building had some level of the neurotoxin in their bodies - but none exceeded federal safety levels. Consuming too much mercury can cause permanent language, attention and memory impairment in children. Rebecca Dickson. Concord Monitor, New Hampshire. 1 June 2005.

It's past time to tackle mercury contamination Mercury pollution coursing into rivers and creeks near the Olin chemical plant demands the immediate attention of corporate, federal and state officials. Mercury has been shown to cause nerve damage, memory loss, birth defects and heart problems in humans who have been exposed to sufficient amounts. Editorial. Mobile Register, Alabama. 2 June 2005

South Alabama town looks for mercury cure near Olin plant Associated Press. Kansas City Star. 9 June 2005.

Is mercury's message now reaching ADEM? ADEM's long-standing indifference to mercury contamination has been unconscionable. Mercury poisoning in humans can result in birth defects, learning disorders and debilitating effects on the brain and nervous system. Editorial. Mobile Register, Alabama. 22 June 200 5.

State should fix feds' backward step on mercury The more scientists learn about mercury's toxic effect on the human body, the less they want it lingering around. So why is mercury still permitted in the air? When pregnant women eat the contaminated fish, the mercury can permanently damage the brain and nervous system of an unborn child. Julie Deardorff. Chicago Tribune, Illinois. 24 June 2005.

Idaho needs to get serious about mercury regulation Gold mining is affecting Idaho's public health by polluting our air and water. Mercury can become a potent neurotoxin affecting the brain and nervous system. Children and pregnant women are especially at risk. J. Robb Brady. Idaho Mountain Express, Idaho. Opinion, 3 June 2005.

Calculated, Risk Is Worth Benefit of Eating Fish Pregnant women's diet can make babies smarter, as long as mercury consumption is minimized, a study shows. Because fish can be healthful as well as hazardous, experts have grappled with what advice to give people, particularly pregnant women, about how much is safe to eat. [Registration Required]. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 20 June 2005.

Environmentalists track mercury levels Mercury levels in fish such as salmon and tuna have been documented, but levels in bass and catfish are drawing attention. The effects of mercury poisoning are most pronounced on young children or fetuses. It is harmful to developing brains, which can affect thinking, learning and problem-solving in later years. Jacksonville Daily News, North Carolina. 16 June 2005.

Snippets of hair will be tested for mercury levels On Wednesday, after a hairstylist snipped a half-gram of hair from three spots on the back of her head, Kestrel Liedtke affixed to her chest a little sticker that said, "I've checked my mercury to protect my unborn children." Patty Henetz. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 23 June 2005.

Greenpeace tests for mercury pollution on Cape Cod Mercury can cause damage to developing fetuses, infants and children. The effects are similar to that of lead poisoning and include delayed development, cognitive deficits, language difficulties and problems with motor function, attention and memory. Joe Burns. The Cape Codder, Massachusetts. 30 June 2005.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

Two billion people need access to basic sanitation by 2015 to meet UN target Nearly 2 billion people must be provided safe water and basic sanitation by 2015 to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the number lacking access, the UN public health and children's agencies said today. Press Release. United Nations. 3 June 2005.

Slow progress on providing basic sanitation: UN One World South Asia. 22 June 2005.

Official Says Efforts to Solve Global Water Crisis Falling Short Despite gains since 1990 in the provision of water and sanitation facilities, "there are still 2.6 billion people without improved services - over half the developing world's population - and 1.1 billion still using water from unimproved sources," said Vanessa Tobin an environmental expert at UNICEF. George Gedda. Associated Press. 30 June 2005.

Hundreds of cities in China face water shortages Many cities in China are facing a water crisis, due to rapid population growth and worsening water pollution. Around a billion people in developing countries lack access to clean drinking water and 1.7 billion live without good hygienic facilities. 80% of diseases are caused by unclean drinking water. Wei Qing. Epoch Times, China. 22 June 2005.

Rivers polluted, drinking water tainted A gloomy picture of polluted rivers, dirty drinking water and contaminated food and medicines was presented to the country's top legislators. According to the Ministry of Water Resources, over 300 million rural residents do not have access to safe drinking water, and about 190 million people drink water containing harmful contaminants. Liu Li. China Daily. 30 June 2005.

Centres of Excellence as a response to the problem of access to water in Africa Insanitary water and the fragile state of sanitation systems are the source of many diseases which ravage Africa. Such factors explain alarming child mortality rates. African women and young girls often spend hours on end fetching and carrying water. Press Release. Institut de Recherche Pour le Développement. 6 June 2005.

Arsenic: In Search of an Antidote to a Global Poison Millions are at risk for the adverse effects of arsenic. Chronic exposure places people at risk for skin and internal cancers, diabetes mellitus, and vascular, reproductive, developmental, and neurological effects. New information indicates that children metabolize arsenic differently than adults. M. Nathaniel Mead. Environmental Health Perspectives. 3 June 2005.

Reducing Arsenic Exposure from Drinking Water We support EPA's decision to lower the allowable limit of As in drinking water to reduce an array of adverse health outcomes. There is ever-increasing evidence that waterborne arsenic is a menace, including findings that it impacts children's intellectual functioning. Joseph Graziano & Alexander van Geen. Environmental Health Perspectives. 3 June 2005.

Water in Yemen: Reduction and pollution According to many water crisis studies, 80% of diseases in the third world are due to water pollution. Ten million people die annually. Millions of people are deprived of safe drinking water. Children that live in rural regions where there is no healthy discharge, undergo diarrhea 7 times a year. Amal Mohammed Al-Ariqi. Yemen Times, Yemen. 27 June 2005.

100 Chinese cities face water crisis, says minister Pollution and consumption of water in China are growing so fast that more than 100 of the country's biggest cities could soon be unable to quench the thirst of their populations. In April' there were clashes in Huankantou over a factory that was thought to be the source of water pollution that left babies deformed. London Guardian, England. 8 June 2005.

'A storeroom of diseases.' Issues surrounding water are central to achieving the UN millennium goals. "Addis is a storeroom of diseases. People have to go to the toilet and that exposes us to diseases. We try to keep the area outside the toilet clean, but children touch things, put things in their mouth." Poor sanitation has deadly consequences. Jeevan Vasagar. London Guardian, England. 21 June 2005.

Fluoride water 'causes cancer' Boys at risk from bone tumours, shock research reveals. Fluoride in tap water can cause bone cancer in boys, a disturbing new study indicates, although there is no evidence of a link for girls. Bob Woffinden. The Observer, UK. 12 June 2005.

New Jersey hears pros and cons of fluoridation plan Opponents criticized a plan to fluoridate New Jersey drinking water, calling it dangerous and unnecessary, while supporters said the state must move to protect the dental health of children. Opponents said fluorosilicic acid is not purified and contains traces of both lead and arsenic, a carcinogen. Carol Ann Campbell. Newark Star-Ledger. 7 June 2005.

(4) MALARIA

If malaria's the problem, DDT's not the only answer A dispute over using DDT against malaria centers on whether the potential benefits of reducing malaria transmission outweigh the potential risks to the environment. But it isn't that simple. Malaria infects over 300 million a year - killing at least 3 million – largely children. [Registration Required]. May Berenbaum. Washington Post. 5 June 2005.

DDT has many drawbacks in trying to stop malaria In humans, DDT exerts acute toxic effects. Its metabolites persist in breast milk following cessation of environmental application and there is some evidence it affects mental development in children. State, national and international agencies, including EPA classify it as a probable human carcinogen. Donald Johnston. Cedar City Spectrum, Utah. 19 June 2005.

Debunk the DDT bugaboo and let kids live With a million lives a year at stake, science, not politics, should rule the day. But in malaria-ridden nations, wide- eyed children and pregnant moms, fathers and grandparents are being held hostage by questionable science--and the political correctness of entities from WHO on down. Editorial. Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star, Virginia. 9 June 2005.

The Killer Bug When the sun goes down in Africa, death stalks the children. It often comes from bugs smaller than a toddler's thumbnail. There won't be a magic bullet — the solution will involve a combination of drugs, better availability of treatment, bed nets, insecticide spraying and, ideally, a vaccine. [Registration Required]. Editorial. Los Angeles Times, California. 5 June 2005.

Bush to Seek More Aid for War on Malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa In sub-Saharan Africa, 3,000 people die each day from malaria, most of them children. Mr. Bush's new plan will call for a variety of approaches to fight malaria. [Purchase required]. Richard Stevenson. New York Times.30 June 2005.

(5) CHILDHOOD CANCERS

Poor countries need help to fight cancer-WHO International experts said help was urgently needed so poorer countries can better detect and treat cancer, which is blamed for 7 million deaths a year worldwide, far more than AIDS. Rising rates are related to tobacco, exposure to new products such as pesticides and (food) additives and an ageing. Stephanie Nebehay. Reuters. 7 June 2005.

The causes of childhood leukaemia We don't yet fully understand the aetiology of childhood leukaemia, but we are now reasonably sure that it often involves damage to DNA before birth—probably in response to infection, chemicals, ionising radiation, or other environmental exposures. [Subscription required]. Heather O Dickinson. British Medical Journal. 6 June 2005.

Leukemia research focuses on children Doctors in Shanghai started research on 100 children who were newly diagnosed with leukemia to study the relation between the disease and their indoor environment, experts told an International Pediatrics Forum. "It is urgent to conduct research and identify the environmental threats to children's health and safety." Shanghai Daily, China. 17 June 2005.

Pylons 'may be a leukaemia risk.' Living too close to overhead power lines appears to increase the risk of childhood leukaemia, researchers say. A major study found children who had lived within 200m of high voltage lines at birth had a 70% higher risk of leukaemia than those 600m or more away. BBC, UK. 3 June 2005.

Study: Children near power lines may face higher cancer risk CNN. 3 June 2005.
Power lines and leukemia: study highlights risk to babies Julie Robotham. Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney. 3 June 2005.
Fears over child leukaemia link to power lines [Purchase required]. Jeremy Laurance. London Independent, England. 3 June 2005.
Link between power lines and leukemia still weak Reuters. 3 June 2005.
Power Lines-Leukemia Debate Lingers Steven Reinberg. HealthDay. 3 June 2005.

Living with risks It looks like an eye-grabbing statistic: a report that infants living near overhead high-voltage power cables have a nearly 70% higher risk of developing leukemia than other children, according to research from Oxford University published in the latest British Medical Journal. Editorial. London Guardian, England. 6 June 2005.

Power stations 'no cancer risk' There is categorically no evidence that living near nuclear power stations increases the rate of childhood cancers, says a report. Overall, children living within a 25km radius of a site were no more likely to get cancer than those living elsewhere. BBC, UK. 10 June 2005.

Experts fail to find a link between nuclear power stations and cancer [Purchase required]. Steve Connor. London Independent, England. 10 June 2005.
Nuclear power 'not linked to child cancers' Mark Hookham. North Wales Daily Post, Wales. 10 June 2005.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) Global

"Natural Capital" at Centre of Poverty Eradication Sound and solid investment in the environment will go a long way towards meeting international targets on poverty reduction, the supply of drinking water and fighting infectious diseases. UNEP highlighted new and emerging research on the importance of a healthy environment for reducing the spread of diseases. News Release. UNEP. 17 June 2005.

UNEP urges rich nations fulfill aid commitment to Africa ahead of G8 meeting Xinhuanet. 17 June 2005.

After G8, why the rich world must keep its pledges The UN's targets will not be met without more aid, debt relief and fairer trade rules. More than 50,000 children under five die every year, mostly of preventable diseases such as diarrhea. Sarah Boseley. Guardian, London. 21 June 2005.

Study Urges $5.1 Billion for Child Health For about $5.1 billion, the lives of 6 million children younger than 5 could be saved each year, provided the money were spent to extend proven methods of disease prevention and treatment in the world's poorest countries. David Brown. Washington Post. 24 June 2005.

Report says climate change could undermine MDGs "Climate change could increase the prevalence of certain diseases such as malaria, cholera, dysentery and cause a quantitative and qualitative decline of an element so much important to health as safe water as well as the aggravation of malnutrition," the report indicated. Angola Press. 16 June 2005.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Many of 2 billion dryland dwellers at risk as land degrades Rising dust storms a health problem, even continents away; infant mortality worst in drylands: Report. Growing desertification worldwide threatens to swell by millions the number of poor forced to seek new homes and livelihoods. News Release. United Nations University. 16 June 2005.

Desertification, dust are global threats Alister Doyle. Reuters. 17 June 2005.

Information to guide child health policy is lacking in the poorest countries with the highest rates of childhood mortality, concludes a study in The Lancet. Credible global and national estimates of the burden of disease in childhood are essential for

the development of appropriate health policy and implementation of health interventions to prevent these deaths. Child Health News. News-medical.net. 9 June 2005.

Local Power Evoked on World Environment Day UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said, “Let us tap the great knowledge and natural dynamism of urban areas. And let us create green cities where people can raise their children and pursue their dreams in a well-planned, clean and healthy environment”. Environment News Service. 3 June 2005.

World marks green day; U.N. warns of booming cities Activists mark June 5, the date of the first environmental summit in Stockholm in 1972, as the U.N.'s World Environment Day. The 2005 theme is "greener" planning for cities, many of them hit by air pollution, fouled rivers and poor sanitation. Alister Doyle. Reuters. 5 June 2005.

2005 Urban Environmental Accords These are the urban environmental accords that mayors from around the world signed in San Francisco. They include three actions on ‘Environmental Health’, one on chemicals, one on air pollution and one promoting that twenty percent of all city facilities (including schools) serve locally grown and organic food within seven years. Associated Press. 6 June 2005.

Save Environment Or Perish "The battle for sustainable development, for delivering a more environmentally stable, just and healthier world, is going to be largely won and lost in our cities." It is time every man, woman and child took responsibility for the preservation of the environment for our own good and for the benefit of future generations. [Subscription required]. Editorial. Nation, Nairobi. 5 June 2005.

Lightening the load of child miners An estimated 1 million children worldwide work in small-scale, risky mining operations, a practice that needs to be stopped, the ILO said in a report unveiled to mark World Day Against Child Labour. Dangerous surroundings mean they risk serious illness and injury from explosives and toxic chemicals. Clare Matheson. BBC. 13 June 2005.

Experts warn of the dangers of tanning Cellular damage wreaked by the sun's ultraviolet radiation can show up as cancer years later. Children who have had one or more bad sunburns have an increased risk of cancer as an adult. Warren King. Seattle Times, Washington. 1 June 2005.

Life in the womb may hold key to later infertility problems The most common cause of infertility in young women is rooted in the way girls develop in the womb, new research suggested yesterday. Louise Gray. Edinburgh Scotsman, Scotland. 23 June 2005.

(b) Africa

What the world wants Gleneagles offers Tony Blair his last chance to play the world’s saviour. With his retirement plans a matter of record, he will not be chairing another G8 summit. As a matter of fact, the G8 nations produce 47% of the world’s greenhouse gases, the bulk from the US. As a matter of dismal truth, 30,000 children die each day in Africa. Ian Bell. Glasgow Sunday Herald. 5 June 2005.

UN study warns of Africa's plight A UN report on the Millennium Goals of eradicating poverty and hunger by 2015 has found that millions in sub-Saharan Africa are sinking deeper into poverty. The study finds 11 million children under five are dying every year, many of them from preventable or treatable diseases such as malaria and measles. Laura Trevelyan. BBC. 8 June 2005.

Broken promises leave three million children to die in Africa As Blair and Bush close in on deal over debt, UN report reveals human cost. On current UNDP projections, there will be 5 million under-five deaths in Africa, compared with 2 million if the goals were achieved. Larry Elliott & Patrick Wintour. Guardian, London. 8 June 2005.

Business As Usual Means 28 Million Dead Children Peter Deselaers. Inter Press Service. 12 June 2005.

3 million reasons to act for Africa The G-8 promised bold action to get Africa back on track for achieving the MDGs-a compact to reduce extreme poverty and other forms of deprivation by 2015. The MDGs include cutting child deaths by two-thirds. Poverty-related diseases claim 500 African children each hour, and the numbers are rising. Kevin Watkins. International Herald Tribune. 8 June 2005.

Crumbs for Africa $674 million in emergency aid that Congress had already approved for needy countries. That's it. Not a penny more to buy treated mosquito nets to help save the thousands of children in Sierra Leone who die every year of preventable malaria. Nothing more to train and pay teachers so 11-year-old girls in Kenya may go to school. [Purchase required]. Editorial. New York Times. 8 June 2005.

Plight of Africa's children Today is the Day of the African Child, the facts paint a harsh picture of life and death for Africa's children. Africa has only 10 percent of the world's population, but 40 percent of childhood deaths. Preventable or treatable diseases, like pneumonia, malaria, diarrhea and measles. Carolyn Bartholomew/David Oot. Washington Times. 16 June 2005.

Brown tells of anger at African poverty Gordon Brown today spoke of his personal anguish at seeing the poor and starving of the developing world, to an audience of schoolchildren in Scotland ahead of next month's G8 summit. “All of us are sad because 30,000 children will die unnecessarily today." Matthew Tempest. Guardian, London. 17 June 2005.

Agony of Africa's sick pressures G8 leaders It is the less headline-grabbing ones, like diarrhoea, which account for much of the massive daily death-toll. "Fifteen thousand Africans die each and every day of preventable, treatable diseases." Poverty, of course, is at the root of Africa's health crisis. Lack of clean water is among the litany of contributory factors. Andrew Cawthorne. Reuters. 23 June 2005.

In Kenya, a Woman Called Charity Takes On the Establishment Mrs. Ngilu, the Kenyan minister of health, was visiting a rural hospital. A woman held her son sick with swamp fever from bad drinking water. On most days, the boy would die, like thousands of other children who die every day in Africa of preventable and treatable diseases. [Purchase required]. Helene Cooper. New York Times. 4 June 2005.

Global warming in Africa: the hottest issue of all Any benefit from more aid to Africa will go up in smoke unless rich nations halt temperature rises that are robbing rainfall from a continent reliant on small-scale farming. Jack has not heard of global warming, but remembers a hailstorm that shredded the tea crop. His children went hungry. [Purchase required]. Michael McCarthy. London Independent. 20 June 2005.

Climate change threatens humanity's cradle Africa Ed Stoddard. Reuters. 27 June 2005.

'Dumping is big business' in Kenya A Kenyan school student tells of how he sits on a riverbank and sees nothing but "heaps of garbage, oil patches and two dead cats". Maathai has warned of the link between discarded plastic bags and malaria, as bags can fill with rainwater and provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Victoria Engstrand-Neacsu. Mail & Guardian, South Africa. 2 June 2005.

(c) Americas

Health And Environment Ministers Meet in Argentina Ministers of Health and Environment from the Americas are meeting in Argentina to discuss how to improve linkages. They are expected to adopt a plan of action on children’s environmental health, integrated water resources and solid waste management, and the sound management of chemicals. News Release. PAHO. 14 June 2005.

Health Ministers from the Americas Discuss Environmental Impact Prensa Latina.17 June 2005.

New website and environmental history tools for pediatric health care providers NEETF has created a new website for pediatric health care providers. The site is an on-line resource portal with user-friendly tools, including a screening and a comprehensive environmental history form, and an environmental history taking primer. News-medical.net. 22 June 2005.

National children's study to determine effects of environment on kid's health For the National Children's Study, selected children in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens will participate in what may give health officials a better idea of how the environment affects children's overall health. Cheryl Wills. NY 1 TV, New York. 15 June 2005.

Schools and Organizations Win EPA Sun-Safety Awards Schools and organizations from across the country won EPA awards this week for protecting children from the damaging effects of overexposure to the sun. The awards recognize efforts in teaching sun safety to prevent skin cancer, cataracts, and other health effects. News Release, US Environmental Protection Agency. 23 June 2005.

(d) Asia

Linking child health to environment The Indian Academy of Paediatricians is drawing attention towards child health through a green campaign. They have named their campaign, `Environment and Child Health Group.' Children are more susceptible to the ill-effects of air pollution because their immune systems and organs are immature. Shyama Rajagopal. The Hindu, India. 8 June 2005.

In China, a filthy growth World Bank estimates 300,000 people in China die prematurely per year from respiratory disease related to air pollution. There are thousands of towns along China's rivers where the rates of cancer, tumors, stunted growth, spontaneous abortion, diminished IQs [is] much higher than the norm due to water and soil pollution. Ilana Ozernoy. US News & World Report. 23 June 2005.

Child laborers rally in Bangladesh demanding end to child labor Hundreds of children who work in Bangladesh's sweatshops marched on Sunday in the capital of Dhaka to demand an end to child labor. "Our first mission is to eliminate hazardous environments at work places". "I wash leathers with chemicals," Khatun said, showing her wounds in hands. Julhas Alam. Associated Press. 13 June 2005.

'Coal rush' in China exacting a heavy toll Hundreds of illegal mines seeking to cash in on the "coal rush" have sprung up in the Xia Shi Gou area, according to officials and residents. "We're dying early here," said the only doctor for miles. "There's coal dust everywhere, which causes lots of disease -- lung cancer, tuberculosis, asthma. Jehangir S. Pocha. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 9 June 2005.

Students march against pollution To mark World Environment Day, a group of university and college students chanted "No pollution! We want to survive!" yesterday in Taipei to raise public awareness to environmental issues. CNA. Taipai Times. 6 June 2005.

(e) Middle East

Air quality an overlooked casualty of war Gas flare-offs from oil fields, smoldering fires along sabotaged pipelines, groaning generators on every street corner have spread a gray haze over much of Iraq, aggravating respiratory problems. Doctors advise keeping her [3 year old] away from the polluted air that is triggering the attacks. [Registration Required]. Carol Williams. Los Angeles Times. 30 June 2005.

Children of Iraq: A face of grief as war takes toll Over 2 years after the start of the war in Iraq, children continue to be its main victims. It is estimated that 60% of rural residents and 20% of urban dwellers have access only to contaminated water. In the hardest hit regions, more than 70% of primary-school buildings lack potable water. [Registration required]. César Chelala. Philadelphia Inquirer. 2 June 2005.

Baghdad Garbage Burned on the Streets Haider al-Moosawi and Ali Marzook. Environment News Service. 24 June 2005.

Iraqi scientists acquainted with DU measurement techniques A seminar and technical workshop were organized by UNEP in Amman to train 16 Iraqi scientists and experts in DU measurement techniques. Iraqi health ministry reports, then and now, link major diseases, such as cancer as well as birth defects not seen before in Iraq, with exposure to radiation. Alia Shukri Hamzeh. Jordan Times. 1 June 2005.

Depleted uranium threat 'low' A survey of the Australian area of operations in Al Muthanna province in southern Iraq has found no risk to troops from potentially harmful depleted uranium (DU) residues left over from past conflicts. The Medical Association for Prevention of War said the risk of cancer and birth defects was high. Max Blenkin. Australian Associated Press. 8 June 2005.

State Weighs Hazardous Dust Measure Millions of Iraqi and Afghan civilians live in areas where depleted uranium dust flew and settled, but no definitive, overall studies of the health impact have been conducted. More localized studies have revealed that thousands of children, born to those exposed, suffer from deformities and cancers. Thomas Williams. Hartford Courant, Connecticut. 22 June 2005.