

**HECANET \*\*\* August - September 2007**

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\* To reflect activities in the next issue of HECANET send information to [heca@who.int](mailto:heca@who.int)

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- (24) The Interface of Chemistry and Biology in the “Omics” Era: Environment & Health and Drug Discovery. Bangkok, Thailand. 25-29 November 2007**
- (25) 8th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment: Climate Change Science and Solutions. Washington. U.S. 16-18 January 2008**
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## **ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS**

Air pollution articles in this issue begin with a question: are interventions to reduce exposure to indoor air pollution likely to increase exposure to mosquitoes? Also, environmental groups ask the U.S to regulate air fresheners. In Africa and in Asia, many still use biomass fuel for cooking. Regarding outdoor air pollution, a study in Mexico links city pollution with chronic lung disease once children become adults. In the Environmental Tobacco Smoke section, smoking bans gain momentum worldwide, whereas New York is considering banning adults from smoking in a car with child passengers. In the chemicals area, danger to children from food and drink additives is exposed and the potential carcinogenic effects of aspartame are shown in a study in Environmental Health Perspectives. Arsenic affects children's cognitive function in Mexico. DDT is linked to breast cancer. Articles related to heavy metals include, among others, the recall of Chinese-made toys since August and a WHO information note on lead and children. Contaminant levels seem to be dropping among Arctic mothers. In the water and sanitation section, numbers show that less than half of Asians have access to improved sanitation and nearly 2 million children die every year from water-related diseases. In other topics, youth challenge global leaders to act against the threat posed by climate change and man-made chemicals are blamed as many more girls than boys are born in the Arctic.

In the Americas, hurricanes left difficult situations in Mosquito Coast and Jamaica and an earthquake devastated cities in Peru. In Argentina, the Tercero river is a dark stew that affects

people who use it as a recreational spot and for fishing. Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, visits Uruguay and expresses that concern must be focused on vulnerable groups. In U.S., schools embrace ways to help the environment. In Asian news, there seems to be a cluster of cerebral palsy in children in China, where food poisoning also hit 260 children in mid-September. An outbreak of cholera is spreading in Iraq and health advocates promote Zinc as an effective treatment for diarrhoea in the Philippines. In Africa, an environmental disaster brews in Darfur as the local conflict approaches its fifth year. Water is difficult to obtain in Zimbabwe and many children cannot wash, whereas in Nigeria, the wife of the President said her husband is determined to provide safe and potable water for all by 2015. Finally, in Europe, there is an outbreak of Chikungunya in Italy and many are killed in Greek fires. In Azerbaijan, a connection is suspected between DDT application in the past and children's diseases. Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

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

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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.

\* [Past Issues](#)  
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## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **(1) HECA Developments**

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

International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage:  
[http://www.who.int/household\\_water/en/](http://www.who.int/household_water/en/)

## **(2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) Newsletter**

The CEHI Newsletter has been set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). It aims to provide up-to-date information on relevant global, regional and national indicator activities. To sign up to the newsletter, to contribute information or to find out more, please visit the website [WHO | Children's environmental health indicators newsletter \(CEHI\)](#) or contact: [cehindicators@who.int](mailto:cehindicators@who.int)

## **(3) UNEP: Ask UNEP**

UNEP Online brings you the new interactive feature: [Ask UNEP](#). Every day a new UNEP expert will be available to answer your question. The expert - a - day exercise aims to bring the environment into public consciousness and to create a healthy discourse on the major issues that affect the health of our planet and the sustainability of natural resources. The feature also lends a human face to the work of UNEP by allowing in-house experts to discuss the work undertaken by the organization - taking on board suggestions and perspectives of international constituents and stakeholders. If you want to interact with the experts and join the global discussion on the environment, access the current session and submit your question(s) to the expert.

## **(4) UNEP Report: Environmental Pollution and Impacts on Public Health: Implications of the Dandora Municipal Dumping Site in Nairobi, Kenya**

One of Africa's largest waste dumps, the Dandora Municipal Dumping Site in Nairobi, is a serious threat to children living nearby and the city's environment generally, a new study shows. The study, commissioned by UNEP examined 328 children aged 2-18 living around the Dandora waste dump and its health implications. The study also compared soil samples from the site with another location just outside of Nairobi. Half of the children tested had concentrations of lead in their blood exceeding internationally accepted levels, while 42 percent of soil samples recorded lead levels almost 10 times higher than what is considered unpolluted soil (over 400 parts per million (ppm) compared to 50 ppm). Children have been exposed to pollutants such as heavy metals and toxic substances through soil, water and air (smoke from waste burning) with implications for respiratory, gastrointestinal and dermatological or skin diseases. Almost half of the children tested were suffering from respiratory diseases, including chronic bronchitis and asthma. Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director, said: "We had anticipated some tough and worrisome findings, but the actual results are even more shocking than we had imagined at the outset. The Dandora site may pose some special challenges for the city of Nairobi and Kenya as a nation. But it is also a mirror to the condition of rubbish sites across many parts of Africa and other urban centres of the developing world." Mr Steiner said UNEP stands ready to assist the local and national authorities in the search for improved waste management systems and strategies including ones that generate sustainable and healthier jobs in the waste handling and recycling sectors.

The 30-acre large Dandora dumping site receives 2,000 tonnes of rubbish every day, including plastics, rubber and lead paint treated wood, generated by some 4.5 million people living the Kenyan capital. The study also found evidence of the presence of hazardous waste, such as chemical and hospital waste, on the dumpsite. Every day, scores of people, including children, from the nearby slums and low-income residential areas use the dump to find food, recyclables and other valuables they can sell as a source of income, at the same time inhaling the noxious fumes from routine waste burning and methane fires. Waste often finds its way into the Nairobi River that runs just meters away from the dumpsite, polluting water used by local residents and farmers downstream. The St. John's Catholic Church and Informal School is located in close proximity to the dump. Between 2003 and 2006, the Church dispensary has treated 9,121 people per year on average for respiratory problems.

Soil and water samples were analyzed for heavy metals, such as lead, mercury, cadmium and chromium, and persistent organic pollutants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and pesticides. Blood and urine samples were analyzed for the same pollutants and for signs of diseases associated with them. The results show dangerously high levels of heavy metals, especially lead, mercury and cadmium, at the dumpsite, in the surrounding environment and in local residents. Lead and cadmium levels found on the dumpsite were 13,500 ppm and 1,058 ppm, respectively, compared to the action levels in The Netherlands of 150 ppm/5 ppm for these heavy metals. Health wise, 50 percent of the children had blood lead levels equal to or above the internationally accepted action levels of 10 micrograms per decilitre of blood, including two children with concentrations of over 29 and 32 micrograms. Low haemoglobin levels and iron deficiency anaemia, some of the known symptoms of lead poisoning, have been detected in 50 and 30 percent of the children, respectively. Exposure to high lead levels is also linked with a wide range of other ill effects including damage to the nervous system and the brain, whilst cadmium poisoning causes damage to internal organs, especially kidneys, and cancers. The study urges expediting decision-making on the waste dump in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The report was prepared by Njoroge G. Kimani, a clinical biochemist of Kenyatta Hospital, with support from Rob de Jong of UNEP's Urban Environment Unit.

The summary of the report Environmental Pollution and Impacts on Public Health; Implications of the Dandora Municipal Dumping Site in Nairobi, Kenya can be found on UNEP's website at [www.unep.org/urban\\_environment/](http://www.unep.org/urban_environment/)

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## **(5) Deliver Now**

[Deliver Now](#) is a major new advocacy drive to eliminate maternal and child deaths and improve the health of women and children around the world. More than 10 million women and children die every year. The overwhelming majority of these deaths can be prevented with greater access to basic health resources. Deliver Now is coordinated by [The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health](#), a global alliance of more than 170 partners. The Partnership is hosted and administered by the World Health Organization, based in Geneva.

Every minute of every day, a woman dies needlessly during pregnancy or childbirth. Every three seconds a child under five dies. Four million newborns die in their first four weeks of life, 3 million of those in the first week. And with 42 percent of pregnant women around the world experiencing a complication, up to 15 percent of which are life-threatening, the issue of protecting the lives of women and children during pregnancy, childbirth and beyond is one of the most critical facing the world today. Most of these deaths can be prevented through greater political commitment, increased support to communities to demand quality health care and increased investment. At least US\$9 billion a year are needed to meet the basic health care needs of women and children. As of 2004, only US\$2 billion - less than a quarter of what is needed - was available to support such services in developing countries.

Deliver Now responds to alerts raised by the UN that the world is lagging far behind in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for reducing maternal and child deaths. MDG4 calls for the reduction of two-thirds of child deaths; MDG 5 aims to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters by 2015 (as compared to 1990). As such, Deliver Now is a key part of the new "Global Campaign for the Health Millennium Development Goals", unveiled September 26, 2007, by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City. The Global Campaign is supported by several governments including the UK, Norway, Canada, France and Germany, as well as a number of prominent global health and advocacy organizations. The launch of Deliver Now follows the recent launch of the International Health Partnership in London by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other world leaders.

The Action Plan Deliver Now launched in New York on September 26 amidst rallies in Manhattan and the Bronx and awareness-raising events across the city to build popular support for the drive throughout the week. The launch also coincided with the convening of a panel at the United Nations, featuring women UN leaders (among them Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO) and global health activists discussing the critical issues facing women and children around the world and the solutions for improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, with a view to include MDGs 4&5 prominent in the global agenda. The launch was followed by other global events, such as the high-profile conference [Women Deliver](#) in London October 18-20, and the roll out of intensive local programs in individual countries, beginning in 2008 in India and Tanzania. In these countries, Deliver Now will bring together local government agencies, civil society, media and other national and international members of the initiative to allocate resources and more effectively bring basic health services to women and children. The results of these programs will be closely monitored to ensure success and accountability. You may add your name and voice to the [Deliver Now](#) campaign. Your name will be added to a list of the growing global community who believes that 10 million mothers and children dying every year is too many to ignore.

## **(6) Bangkok Declaration calls for coordinated action on environment and health**

Ministers and high level officials of environment and health in South-East and East Asian countries endorsed the [Bangkok Declaration on Environment and Health](#) in a collective effort to reduce the estimated 6.6 million deaths in Asia each year attributable to various environmental

health risks. The death toll is approximately 25% of all deaths in the region. The First Ministerial Regional Forum on Environment and Health was held 8 - 9 August 2007. The High level meeting on the 8th was a forum to review national activities and the Regional Work Plans. The Ministerial meeting held on the 9th commenced with a scientific segment chaired by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn, President of the Chulabhorn Research Institute, gives importance to environmental health issues that are a concern in the Asia-Pacific region, including air pollution and in particular carcinogenic air pollutants. In addition, to address the long-term capacity of the region to tackle the environmental health issues it faces, the Chulabhorn Research Institute is committed to utilizing its linkages to world-renowned institutions and experts in the fields of environmental science and human health, as well as its network of research collaborators, to assist countries in the region in the development of human resources and capacity building.

The Ministerial meeting which endorsed the Bangkok Declaration, aimed to strengthen cooperation between ministries responsible for environment and health within countries and across the region. The Bangkok Declaration will provide a mechanism for sharing knowledge and experiences, improve policy and regulatory frameworks at the national and regional level, and promote the implementation of integrated environmental health strategies and regulations.

"The Bangkok Declaration takes us a firm step forward from monitoring and assessment of sectoral issues towards the prevention of health impacts," said Surendra Shrestha, Regional Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Over the last 50 years, environmental pollution has intensified due to rapid industrialization, urbanization and motorization, resulting in urban air pollution, the generation of solid and hazardous wastes, and numerous man-made disasters and emergencies.

"The region's high death toll from environmental degradation can be avoided if we are determined to reverse the current trend," said Dr Shigeru Omi, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific. "Solving environmental health problems requires collaboration between health and environmental sectors. We need to strengthen our collective commitment to priority environmental health challenges in the region."

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia said "The increasing numbers of cross-cutting global environmental initiatives are invitations for mainstreaming health concern into multisectoral cooperation, however, within this multisectoral environment, the role of health ministries would need to be expanded to face the increasing challenges of the collaborative process of integrating health and environment in national development."

Incorporated in the Bangkok Declaration is a regional Charter aimed at helping Southeast and East Asian countries develop joint policies and programmes on environment and health. The regional Charter identified six environmental and health priorities over the next three years, namely: air quality; water supply, hygiene and sanitation; solid and hazardous waste; toxic chemicals and hazardous substances; climate change, ozone depletion and ecosystem change; contingency planning, preparedness and response to environmental health emergencies. A regional thematic working group has been established for each priority area. Dr Vallop Thainuea, Deputy Minister for Thailand's Ministry of Public Health said: "Since the capacities of countries

in the region to deal with environmental health problems are limited, we need to have better intersectoral coordination. Harmonized policy responses need to be formulated for the transboundary environmental risk to health. Consequently, there is the need for an integrated management of health and environmental issues in the region.” The ministers agreed to actively share information and contribute their resources to the protection of the environment and health at the local, national, regional and global level. “Protection of health and environment is vital for sustainable development. A strong and thriving economy will alleviate poverty and provide a better quality of life.” Dr Supat Wangwongwatana, Director General of Pollution Control Department of Thailand’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment said yesterday. “Not only is it important that our environmental agencies and health agencies integrate their work, it is also necessary to form partnerships among the countries in our region.”

A Second Ministerial Regional Forum is planned in 2010 to review the progress in implementing the regional Charter. The Ministerial Regional Forum was attended by environment and health ministers and high level officials from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Representatives from the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the World Bank also attended the meeting. The meeting was jointly organized by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the WHO Regional Offices for South-East Asia and the Western Pacific, and hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Public Health of the Government of Thailand and the Chulabhorn Research Institute. For more information, please contact: Mr. Surendra Shrestha, UNEP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, at 66(2)2881870; or e-mail: [surendra@rrcap.unep.org](mailto:surendra@rrcap.unep.org) or Dr Hisashi Ogawa, WHO Regional Adviser in Environmental Health, at +63(2)528-9886 (landline); +63-9209524203 (mobile)

### **(7) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

[The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, as a triumph for justice and human dignity following more than two decades of negotiations between governments and indigenous peoples' representatives.

The Declaration establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples. The Declaration addresses both individual and collective rights; cultural rights and identity; rights to education, health, employment, language, and others. It outlaws discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them, among which, their environments. It also ensures their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own priorities in economic, social and cultural development. The Declaration explicitly encourages harmonious and cooperative relations between States and indigenous peoples.

### **(8) World Water Week. Stockholm, Sweden . 12-18 August 2007**

The ceremony took place at the Stockholm City Hall. A [2007 World Water Week](#) "Progress and Prospects on Water: Striving for Sustainability in a Changing World" in Stockholm that began with a call for governments around the world to better manage their existing water resources concluded August 18 with the 2,400+ participants from 140 countries collectively saying that progress is being made, but in the face of global poverty, critical lack of sanitation, water scarcity and climate change, we all need to do much better. The date, theme and location for the 2008 event was also announced: "Progress and Prospects on Water: For a Clean and Healthy World" to be held August 17-23, 2008, at the Stockholm International Fairs centre. Professor Perry L. McCarty from Stanford University, California, a pioneer in the development of the understanding of biological and chemical processes for the safe supply and treatment of water, received the 2007 Stockholm Water Prize on August 16 from the hands of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

**(9) Peer Consultation on a Draft Framework to Evaluate Adult-Child Differences in Inhalation Dosimetry of Gases: Application to Selected Systemically-Acting Volatile Organic Chemicals. 21 August 2007**

The Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA) will conduct a peer consultation on a Draft Framework to Evaluate Adult-Child Differences in Inhalation Dosimetry of Gases: Application to Selected Systemically-Acting Volatile Organic Chemicals. A panel of expert scientists will discuss and evaluate the revised draft framework and provide direction for finalizing it. In 2005, the same panel of experts met and held a peer consultation on the original draft framework. The authors have revised the framework based on the feedback received during the 2005 peer consultation. The original and revised framework and background materials were prepared by scientists from TERA and include ideas from several leading researchers in toxicokinetics and physiologically-based pharmacokinetic (PBPK) modeling. The outcome of this peer consultation will be used to further refine the process of children's risk assessment. Funding for the peer consultation is through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. EPA and TERA.

The peer consultation will be a web meeting, using a conference call for the audio, and linking to a web meeting program site for the presentation slides. The web meeting will be on Tuesday, August 21, 2007, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be open to the public. TERA has established a website for meeting registration at <http://www.tera.org/peer/adultchildtk/actkwelcome.htm> The revised framework, panel membership, and additional meeting details will be posted on the website when they become available. Interested persons are encouraged to submit written technical comments for the panel's consideration. A specific time during the meeting will be set to allow any observers to ask clarifying technical questions or make comments. For more information, please write and email to P Nance at: [nance@tera.org](mailto:nance@tera.org) or to J. Patterson at [patterson@tera.org](mailto:patterson@tera.org)

**(10) Workshop and Accreditation on Children's Environmental Health (CEH). Athens, Greece. 25 August 2007**

Organized by WHO and the Pediatric Environmental Health Leadership Institute of the [International Paediatrics Association](#) (IPA), the environmental health workshop had over 40

paediatricians from 12 countries who participated actively presenting their experience. The IPA offered for the first time an accreditation in the area: the Pediatric Environmental Health Examination in the context of the [25th International Congress of Pediatrics](#) which took place at The Megaron Athens International Conference Centre from 25 August to 30 August 2007.

Paediatricians (and MDs) were able to get an accreditation on Children's Environmental Health (CEH), provided they fulfilled the following criteria: i) Attend a training workshop on children's health and the environment; ii) Present a seminar about children's environmental health at a hospital or university; iii) Record, file and analyze pediatric environmental history forms from children with illnesses from environmental contaminants and record and report environmentally-related cases from pediatric practice; iv) Propose and discuss a community project on an environmental health problem; v) Present a second seminar after the community-oriented project has been implemented, in order to present and discuss the results with the community.

Seventeen professionals passed the examination - about 3 hours long- becoming Diplomates of the Pediatric Environmental Health Leadership Institute. Diplomates are expected to participate in teaching workshops, serve as resources for information requests, provide clinical consultation upon request, and advise policymakers and the public health sector. For more information, please contact Dr. Ruth Etzel at [raetzel@southcentralfoundation.com](mailto:raetzel@southcentralfoundation.com)

### **(11) International Seminar on Environmental Pediatrics. Santiago, Chile. 30-31 August 2007**

The Seminar was organized by the Chilean Society of Pediatrics and took place on 30 - 31 August 2007 at the Hotel Providencia, Santiago, Chile. The program included among others, the main children's environmental health risks, such as POPs, heavy metals; the work being done in CEH in Chile; and discussions on Pediatric Environmental Health Units and the healthy settings approach. For more information, please go to <http://portal.sochipe.cl/principal.php>

### **(12) ISEE 19th Conference. Translating environmental epidemiology into action: Interventions for a healthy future. Mexico City, Mexico. 5-9 September 2007**

Topics of interest of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) 19th Conference included: Environmental health training programs focusing on developing countries; Implementation of research results in Latin America and Caribbean countries; Urban sprawl and mega cities in the developing world; Water, air quality/pollution and inherent health risks; Possible environmental health risks due to urban/rural poverty, quality of life; Noise pollution and vehicular traffic; Globalization and the risk of climate change; Weather and re-emergent illness issues; Pesticides; Gene-environment interactions and indoor air pollution; Sustainability and environmental health; Para-occupational exposures and health risks; Health risks in schools; Teaching environmental/occupational epidemiology; Environmental exposure to tobacco; Preventive strategies focusing on different demographics, mainly children and persons of advanced age; Natural disasters; Methods of assessing human health vulnerability; Direct effects of heat and heat waves; Other emerging health risks. For more information, please contact [isee2007@correo.insp.mx](mailto:isee2007@correo.insp.mx) or go to [www.isee2007mx.org](http://www.isee2007mx.org)

### **(13) World Rabies Day. 8 September 2007**

Rabies is a zoonotic viral disease, caused by a virus (Neurotropic lyssavirus) which infects domestic and wild animals and is transmitted to other animals and humans through close contact with saliva (i.e. bites, scratches, licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). The virus has affinity for the nervous system, and once symptoms of the disease develop, rabies is fatal to both animals and humans. The first symptoms are usually non-specific and involve the respiratory, gastrointestinal and central nervous systems. In the acute stage, signs of hyperactivity (furious rabies) or paralysis (dumb rabies) may predominate, but the disease eventually progresses to complete paralysis followed by coma and death in all cases, usually due to respiratory failure. Without intensive care, death occurs after approximately seven days of illness. An estimated 55,000 human deaths are caused by rabies each year. However, the true number of deaths is unknown due to gross under-reporting of human cases and deaths attributable to rabies. Children are at special risk due to the way they live and play: in closer proximity to, and more interaction with, dogs, than adults. Children are therefore more likely to be bitten by dogs, and to be severely exposed through multiple bites in high-risk sites on the body. On average, between 30% and 50% of human cases of rabies (and therefore rabies deaths) occur in children less than 15 years of age. Some epidemiological studies suggest an even higher incidence in childhood: up to 60% of rabies cases. Among children, those at the highest risk are 5 to 10 years old, as they are not so closely monitored by parents (unlike infants), most likely to play with dogs, and unable to identify abnormal dog behaviour. They are most likely to receive severe dog bites on the head, face and arms, wound sites most frequently linked to the virus transmission and infection. For example, in Latin America, 88% of the rabies infections were transmitted through dog bites, and 59% of bites in children under 10 years of age were on the head and neck. A large majority of the bites remain unreported, and often unknown to both parents and health officials. Consequently, truly exposed children may never receive timely and complete treatment. There is probably a disproportionately high number of young children contracting and dying of undiagnosed rabies, many more than even the most pessimistic estimates suggest.

The first World Rabies Day took place on 8 September 2007. It was an initiative of the Alliance for Rabies Control, with the support of several organizations, including the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control and the Prevention. The mission of World Rabies Day was to raise awareness about the importance of human and animal rabies, its prevention and the potential to eliminate the main sources, globally. Even though the major impact of rabies occurs in regions of the world where many other health and environmental priorities are present, rabies should no longer be neglected: new tools and technologies for human rabies prevention and dog rabies elimination are available. Specific events were held in the Americas (Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Haiti, Canada, U.S., among others), Europe, Asia (India, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, among others) and Africa (South Africa, Tanzania, West African French countries). For more information on these events and on World Rabies Day, please go to [http://www.worldrabiesday.org/index\\_en.php](http://www.worldrabiesday.org/index_en.php)

WHO information on rabies is available at: <http://www.who.int/rabies/epidemiology/en/>  
<http://www.who.int/phe> and at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/>

**(14) 1st Injury Prevention Conference for the UK and Ireland: Research into Practice for Child and Adolescent Injury. Bristol, UK. 13-14 September 2007**

The 1st Injury Prevention Conference for the UK and Ireland: [Research into Practice for Child and Adolescent Injury](#) conference focused on the prevention of unintentional injury to children and adolescents. Emphasis was placed on an evidence-based approach and how to translate evidence into practice. It took place on 13-14 September 2007 in Bristol, UK.

**(15) Clean Up the World Weekend 2007. 14-16 September 2007**

[Clean Up the World Weekend](#) is celebrated globally on the 3rd weekend in September. In 2007, Clean Up the World Weekend was held on 14-16 September. Clean Up the World encourages Members to organize a Clean Up event on, or around, Clean Up the World Weekend and to think of ways to engage the community in long-term environmental initiatives. The needs of each community are different and Members' campaign activities vary considerably.

**(16) International Ozone Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer 2007. 16 September 2007**

Celebrating 20 Years of Progress in 2007. 16 September marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the [Montreal Protocol](#), the landmark international treaty to protect the stratospheric ozone layer. To date, 191 countries have signed the Protocol, which prompts countries to phase out the production and consumption of ozone depleting chemicals. The Montreal Protocol has been hailed as perhaps the most successful international treaty to date and provides a message of hope for working cooperatively to solve major environmental problems.

In recognition of the importance of the Montreal Protocol and its works, various activities were organized in regions/countries world-wide to celebrate this event and to further raise awareness on ozone layer protection. The city of Montreal, Canada, where the Protocol was first signed, hosted the 20th anniversary of this multilateral environmental agreement.

**(17) Mobility Week 2007. 16-22 September 2007**

From 16 to 22 September 2007 the European cities and towns had the opportunity to participate to the most widespread event on sustainable mobility, the [European Mobility Week](#). A full week of events dedicated to sustainable mobility was organized in more than 1300 cities and towns. It was the proper moment to raise the debate on the necessity for changes in behaviour in relation to mobility and in particular the use of the private car in urban areas and on the need to reallocate road space to other means of transport for improving the mobility in cities and towns.

**(18) "Playing it Safe: Service Provider Strategies to Reduce Environmental Risks to Child Health". Ontario, Canada. 9 October 2007**

[Best Start Resource Centre](#) is pleased to present their fifth and final regional workshop (in English) on "Playing it Safe: Service Provider Strategies to Reduce Environmental Risks to Child Health". Presented in partnership with the [Canadian Environmental Law Association](#) and

the [Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment](http://www.beststart.org/events/detail/playingitsafe_k.htm) , this workshop is for service providers who work in the areas of preconception, prenatal and/or child health. This includes organizations or groups that address environmental risks to child health including: early learning practitioners, environmental action groups, health care providers, health promoters and community development workers. Important information will be shared about environmental risks to child health, including environmental exposures at home, work, school and outdoors, in the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the products we use. The workshop will also provide simple child proofing tips and service provider strategies to reduce the risks to preconception, prenatal and child health. It will help you identify the risks of highest concern in your community, and initiatives that will support or enhance existing programming. The workshop will take place at Confederation Place Hotel, 237 Ontario St. Kingston. Register online or download a faxable registration form at:

[http://www.beststart.org/events/detail/playingitsafe\\_k.htm](http://www.beststart.org/events/detail/playingitsafe_k.htm)

**(19) Second Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Reception. Washington DC, U.S. 10 October 2007**

The Board of Directors for the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN) are organizing the Second Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Reception, on 10 October in Washington, DC, to honor leading advocates for children's environmental health and to celebrate the great work of CEHN. [CEHN](http://www.cehn.org) is a national multi-disciplinary organization, whose mission is to protect the fetus and the child from environmental health hazards and to promote a healthy environment. For more than 15 years, CEHN has worked to protect children from harmful substances in their environments, whether it is pesticide residues on children's food, air pollutants that can trigger asthma attacks, or plastic additives that can mimic or distort a child's own hormones. They accomplish this through training programs targeted at groups ranging from health care providers to religious leaders; through supporting and disseminating vital research and shaping the research agenda; and by serving as the voice of children's environmental health in Washington D.C. The awards are meant to raise awareness of effects of environmental hazards to children's health, to acknowledge effective children's environmental health advocates, and to raise support for CEHN important programs. Guests last year included distinguished health professionals, public health advocates, researchers, and community-based leaders within the field of children's environmental health. The event highlighted not only the history and work of CEHN but also children's unique vulnerabilities and susceptibilities when they are exposed to environmental toxicants. The reception will take place in Nortel Offices, 101 Constitution Avenue NW, Suite 325 East, Washington DC . For more information and registrations, send an email to [cehn@cehn.org](mailto:cehn@cehn.org)

**(20) 14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 - 14 October 2007**

14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 to 14 October 2007. For more information, please go to <http://www.mesaep.net/symp2007/first.html>

**(21) VIII National Conference of the Polish Society of Environmental Medicine. Wrocław, Poland. 19-21 October 2007**

VIII National Conference of the Polish Society of Environmental Medicine. Wrocław, Poland. 19-21 October 2007. For more information, please contact: [konferencja2007@imp.sosnowiec.pl](mailto:konferencja2007@imp.sosnowiec.pl)

**(22) 12th PBC International Conference. Beijing, China. 26-29 October 2007**

Pacific Basin Consortium for Environment and Health Sciences (PBC) [12th International Conference Environment and Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Challenges and solutions](#). Beijing, China. 26-29 October, 2007.

**(23) The Effect of Environmental Pollutants on Foetal and Child Development: A Global Issue. A Programme for Global Paediatric Research Symposium. Hangzhou, China. 26-27 October 2007**

The Effect of Environmental Pollutants on Foetal and Child Development: A Global Issue. A Programme for Global Paediatric Research Symposium. Hangzhou, China. 26-27 October 2007. For more information, please go to the conference website: [www.chinamed.com.cn/pgpr2007](http://www.chinamed.com.cn/pgpr2007) or contact the conference co-chairs: [Alvin Zipursky](#) and [Xiaoming Shen](#)

**(24) The Interface of Chemistry and Biology in the “Omics” Era: Environment & Health and Drug Discovery. Bangkok, Thailand. 25-29 November 2007**

Sixth Princess Chulabhorn International Science Congress - “[The Interface of Chemistry and Biology in the ‘Omics’ Era](#)” Bangkok, Thailand. 25-29 November 2007.

**(25) 8th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment: Climate Change Science and Solutions. Washington. U.S. 16-18 January 2008**

The National Council for Science and the Environment invites you to participate in the 8th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment, Climate Change Science and Solutions to develop comprehensive strategies for protecting people and the planet against the impacts of global climate change. Register online before November 2 to receive the early registration rate. Visit [www.NCSEonline.org/2008conference](http://www.NCSEonline.org/2008conference) to register, view the conference agenda, and get important information on travel and lodging. Review the online descriptions of the breakout sessions, symposia, and workshops before you register, as you will be prompted to choose one from each category during the registration process. Skill-building workshops, targeted breakout sessions, and plenary sessions will provide participants with an expansive understanding of climate change solutions—and how we can achieve them. Visit the conference website to learn about the Showcase of Solutions Exhibition and Poster Session, and the many opportunities for participation. The Conference will take place at Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington, DC.

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

The [Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity](#) COHAB 2. Galway, Ireland. 25 - 28 February 2008.

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

The Government of Senegal will host Forum VI in Dakar from 15 to 19 September 2008. A pre-meeting is scheduled for 13 & 14 September. The theme of Forum VI is "IFCS Global Partnerships for Chemical Safety – Contributing to the 2020 Goal". Plenary topics include nanotechnologies and nanomaterials: opportunities and challenges; substitution and alternatives; lead and cadmium: need for international action?; and ecologically sound and integrated pest and vector management. An overview of the agenda topics is available on the [IFCS Forum VI website](#). IFCS participants have committed their time and expertise to ensuring the preparation of an agenda that will contribute substantively to meeting the 2020 Goal agreed by governments and other stakeholders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. Information on the working groups preparing the plenary agenda topics is available on the IFCS website at: <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum6/en/index.html>

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

On 11th October 2007, in Washington, U.S., the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA US) will host the "Children's Environmental Health Excellence Awards Ceremony", where the [Asociacion Argentina de Medicos por el Medio Ambiente](#) will receive the Excellence Award. The US EPA Children's Environmental Health Awards aim to increase awareness and stimulate activity by recognizing efforts that protect children from environmental health risks at the local, regional, national and international level. Excellence Awards are presented to groups or individuals that exemplify invaluable leadership in the protection of children from environmental health risks.

Training course for health care providers on children's environmental health: "When children need special protection" "Environmental threats to children's health" at the Argentinean Pediatrics Society (SAP), using the WHO Training Package for the Health Sector on CEH. Organized by SAP, AAMMA, ISDE. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 4 August 2007.

Conference: "Embryo-fetal origin of disease" by Dr. Ana Soto (Tufts University, Boston, U.S.). Buenos Aires, Argentina. 15 August 2007.

Conference: "Environmental pollution: Children's chemical safety: Problems regarding the use and packaging of pesticides in Argentina and effects on health" in the context of the "Jornadas Regionales de Pediatría". Córdoba, Argentina. 13 September 2007.

Upcoming training: "Children's environmental health: basic training" using the modules of the WHO Training Package for the Health Sector on Children's Environmental Health. Co-organized with the Brazilian Toxicological Society in the context of the XV Brazilian Congress of

Toxicology. Buzios, Brazil. 18 November 2007. For more information, please go to <http://www.jz.com.br/congressos/2007/toxicologia/pt/cursos.php>

Special announcement: Lorenzo Tomatis, President of the International Scientific Committee of ISDE and former President of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (the cancer agency of WHO), passed away on 21 September 2007, leaving his colleagues and friends heartbroken, dismayed and alone. Lorenzo Tomatis will be missed as the great physician, researcher, writer and person he was. ISDE is asking all those who had the opportunity to know Lorenzo Tomatis and to learn something from him, to send their memories, messages and related documents to: [isde@ats.it](mailto:isde@ats.it)

For more information on these and other news and projects, please visit: [www.aamma.org](http://www.aamma.org) and [www.isde.org](http://www.isde.org)

### **(29) EPA activities on children's environmental health**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Center for Environmental Research and Office of Children's Health Protection, in partnership with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), are sponsoring a [workshop](#) "Children's Environmental Health Workshop: Discover, Treat, Prevent, Prepare" featuring researchers, clinicians, and health promotion advocates of the EPA National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Children's Centers, ATSDR Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, and the EPA Health Care Provider Capacity Building grantees. The primary focus of the workshop will be to make connections from science to mainstream practice and to identify the opportunities for incorporating the results of environmental health science research into health care and environmental health policy. The workshop will take place October 11 and 12 and is open to the public. Scheduled meetings on October 10 and 13 are open to grantees only.

The Children's Environmental Health Excellence and Recognition Awards Ceremony will begin at 6:00 p.m. on 11 October 2007. The awards ceremony is open to the public.

An EPA and Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-sponsored webinar featured experts on lead poisoning prevention. The webinar was conducted entirely in Spanish for members of the Latino community and those who work with them. The theme was "Things Children Put in Their Mouths May Contain Lead - And Could Harm Them! You Can Prevent Lead Poisoning" and it took place on 1 October. The Webcast was directed to Hispanic community leaders and was offered solely in Spanish. In celebration of both Hispanic Heritage Month and Children's Health Month, five Federal Agencies have come together to sponsor the Lead Poisoning Prevention Campaign for Hispanics to spread the word to the Hispanic community about the importance of decreasing children's contact with lead. This Webcast urged Hispanic Leaders to raise awareness of this important health issue within their communities. Issues addressed included: an overview of the Federal Hispanic Lead Poisoning Prevention campaign; the importance of lead poisoning prevention; the health effects and exposure routes of lead; lead poisoning prevention resources; and case studies concerning lead exposure.

### **(30) What is SILENCE?**

[SILENCE](#), a research project funded by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission, aims to develop an integrated methodology and technology for improved control of surface transport noise in urban areas. Issues that will be covered, include noise control at the source, noise propagation, noise emission, and the human perception of noise.

SILENCE will provide relevant and world-leading technologies for efficient control of surface transport noise, innovative strategies for action plans for urban transport noise abatement and practical tools for their implementation, and will bring about a significant reduction of people's exposure to noise, especially in urban conditions.

### **(31) Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency: public consultation**

[Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency](#) (PMRA) is the federal regulatory body responsible for the registration of pesticides in Canada. In order to be registered, pesticides have to be efficacious, of value and of acceptable risk to human health and the environment. Therefore, the PMRA conducts scientific risk assessment and part of this assessment examines human health risk to pesticides' applicators, workers entering a treated area and any other persons exposed directly or indirectly to pesticides. The Safety/Uncertainty Factors document presently open for public consultation outlines how these factors will be applied by Health Canada's PMRA as part of the human health risk assessment of a pesticide. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency would appreciate it if your organization could provide comments on the proposed [Use of Uncertainty and Safety Factors in the Human Health Risk Assessment of Pesticides](#) by October 22, 2007.

In addition, you are welcome to attend two face-to-face meetings to discuss the proposed PMRA approach on the following dates and locations. The first was held on 10 September, as an initial information and consultation session and the second will be held on 10 December 2007 at the Hampton Inn, 200 Coventry Road, Ottawa and will be a full day focus group discussion to address outstanding issues and comments received on the subject. For any additional information and to confirm your presence at the consultation meeting, please contact Bernadette Murphy at (613) 736-3453 or [Bernadette\\_Murphy@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:Bernadette_Murphy@hc-sc.gc.ca) Please confirm your intent to attend the second event before 12 November 2007.

### **(32) International Movement Water and Youth**

[The International Water and Youth Movement](#) was born from the challenge by young people from different organizations to design together a new society. The aim is to unify strategies in order to affect public policies on the issue of water and youth and to make a strong impact with their actions. The first step was the 1st International Water and Youth Meeting, summoned by more than 300 organizations, from 70 countries, where around 400 young people gathered. There it was decided to set up around 20 National Committees.

A [campaign](#) is proposed to be held in Nairobi- Kenya between 24-26 October 2007. The intention is to approach the varied and complex problems of water in the grassroots level by

bringing together experiences and ideas of over 40 youths from different African nations, and at the same time not only focus on problems but also on solutions.

### **(33) Open access for a global scientific and medical research community**

This [site](#) aims to provide resources about open access and internet technologies in the developing world. Emphasizing the benefits to the developing world of increased internet technologies and open access to research, we hope to encourage projects and initiatives, and to showcase research published in open access journals that are of relevance to emerging countries.

### **(34) New NIOSH fact Sheet: Reducing Pesticide Exposure at Schools. September 2007**

Pesticides play an important role in food supply protection and disease control, but they can also be harmful to human health. The term pesticide applies to insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, disinfectants and various other substances used to control pests. Pesticides are often applied at schools to help maintain sanitary conditions and suppress rodents and insect populations. Exposures and potential health risks to children and school staff can be reduced by avoiding routine pesticide applications through an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM is an alternative pest-control technique that manages and suppresses pests by preventing their access to food, water and shelter. These strategies can be more cost-efficient than traditional pest control options. Using IPM at schools can reduce pesticide exposure of workers and students. To access the fact sheet, please go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-150/>

### **(35) Game: Stop Disasters**

An on-line game to teach children how to save lives and livelihoods. The secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction launches an on-line game aimed at teaching children how to build safer villages and cities against disasters. This initiative comes within the 2006-2007 World Disaster Reduction Campaign “Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School”. To access the game please visit: [www.stopdisastersgame.org](http://www.stopdisastersgame.org)

### **(36) Report: A Brush with Toxics: An Investigation on Lead in Household Paints in India**

The idea behind this research was to determine concentration of lead in decorative paints of all types viz., plastic, enamel and exterior intended for residential use. Although lead as a source of health hazard has been studied in soil, atmosphere and toys, very few studies have been done on paints in India. The [report](#) is by Dr. Abhay Kumar, Toxics Link.

### **(37) Report: Prescription for a Healthy Canada**

While most developed countries have adopted national health and environment strategies, Canada has not. [Prescription for a Healthy Canada](#) calls on the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to adopt a national environmental health strategy for Canada. Each year, millions of Canadians become ill or disabled after being exposed to environmental contaminants linked to asthma, gastrointestinal illness, poisonings, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, developmental disorders, birth defects, and

reproductive problems. Unlike the U.S., Australia, and the European Union, Canada lacks both a national program to monitor children's exposures to environmental contaminants, and a national system to track diseases and deaths caused by environmental contaminants. The recommendations in Prescription for a Healthy Canada for reducing air pollution, protecting water quality, improving food safety, addressing threats posed by consumer products, and banning the most hazardous substances currently being used will put Canada in step with world leaders in environmental health.

### **(38) New book: The Secret History of the War on Cancer**

For much of its history, the cancer war has been fighting the wrong battles, with the wrong weapons, against the wrong enemies. [The Secret History of the War on Cancer](#) by Dr. Devra Davis shows, decade by decade, how the campaign has targeted the disease and left off the table the things that cause it—tobacco, alcohol, the workplace, and other environmental hazards. Conceived in explicitly military terms, the effort has focused on defeating an enemy by detecting, treating, and curing disease. Overlooked and suppressed was any consideration of how the world in which we live and work affects whether we get cancer. The result is appalling: over 10 million preventable cancer deaths over the past thirty years. This has been no accident.

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## ARTICLES

### **(1) AIR POLLUTION:**

#### **(a) Indoor air pollution**

[Smoke and malaria: are interventions to reduce exposure to indoor air pollution likely to increase exposure to mosquitoes?](#) Literature on the effect of soot on the efficacy of insecticide-treated bed nets was considered, but no direct impact was shown. Efforts to reduce indoor air pollution remain desirable even in areas of malaria transmission. A. Biran. [Trans R Soc Trop Med Hyg](#). 20 September 2007.

[Environmental groups petition U.S. to regulate air fresheners](#) A group of environmental organizations is asking the government to crack down on air fresheners, products that studies show can aggravate asthma and pose other health risks. Also found in air fresheners are phthalates, chemicals that are restricted in toys and child care products for children 3 and under. J. Kay. [SFGate](#). 20 September 2007.

[Zimbabwe: Energy Crisis Threatens Environment](#) Despite the fact that Africa has abundant energy resources, it is estimated that 600 million Africans do not have access to electricity, and use wood for cooking and heating. Four hundred thousand Africans, mainly women and children, die every year of respiratory diseases related to indoor air pollution. J Mujokoro. [AllAfrica.com](#). 18 September 2007.

[Indoor air pollution widespread in Asia](#) Luong Van Inh is among a neglected group of Asians threatened by an environmental hazard rarely considered: indoor air pollution. Caused by burning wood, coal or other cheap fuels in kitchens, it kills about 1.5 million people worldwide each year. Women and children are the hardest-hit because they are at home the most. Tehran Times. 15 September 2007.

[Household Mold Linked To Depression](#) A groundbreaking public health study has found a connection between damp, moldy homes and depression. The study, led by Brown University epidemiologist Edmond Shenassa, is the largest investigation of an association between mold and mood and is the first such investigation conducted outside the United Kingdom. Science Daily. 30 August 2007.

### **(b) Outdoor air pollution**

[Synergistic Effects of Traffic-Related Air Pollution and Exposure to Violence on Urban Asthma Etiology](#) The study provides evidence of a synergistic effect between social and physical factors in asthma etiology. It also provides a model for retrospectively estimating traffic-related exposures, accounting for intra-community heterogeneity and temporal trends using GIS. J. Clougherty. EHP. August 2007.

[Mexico City pollution harms child lung growth: study](#) Contaminated air that hangs over the Mexican capital, one of the world's biggest cities, does more damage to children than cigarette smoke and may cause chronic lung diseases when they are adults, a study showed. The study of 3,170 children found that pollution prevented young lungs from growing and working properly. Reuters. 15 August 2007.

### **(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**

[Cars With Kids: NYC's Next Smoking Ban?](#) Big Apple Could Be Newest Locale to Institute Secondhand Smoking Policy Under the NYC proposal, police could stop any drivers caught smoking with a passenger who appears younger than 18. The offence, if approved by the city council and ultimately Mayor M. Bloomberg, would earn the driver a \$100 fine. D. Schoetz. ABC News. 16 August 2007.

[A Change in the Air: Smoking Bans Gain Momentum Worldwide](#) The war against Big Tobacco has made key strides in many developed countries, where tobacco use is decreasing, and more and more people enjoy legal protection from second-hand smoke. But that battle is just getting under way in developing countries, where untold numbers face growing risks. C. Schmidt. EHP. August 2007.

### **(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General**

[Does a chemical formed in cooking french fries really cause cancer?](#) Acrylamide is classified by WHO as a probable human carcinogen. But animal studies used doses 1,000 to 100,000 higher than those in the human diet. At levels humans are exposed to by diet, acrylamide "is not

sufficient to cause cancer," concluded a Harvard School of Public Health epidemiologist. [The Boston Globe](#). 24 September 2007.

[Taking a persistent industry to the woodshed](#) Apparently, the profit motive for the wood industry exceeds its interest in protecting young children from potential exposure to arsenic. While the chemical mixture now used in treated wood does not appear to have deleterious effects, we can't expect the industry to be the first to tell us if it does. T. Vitaglione. [The News & Observer](#). 23 September 2007.

[Danger to children from food and drink additives is exposed](#) Study links to hyperactivity and disruptive behaviour. Government body tells parents to check packaging labels. Angry reaction as decision on law change is passed to Europe. Parents are to be warned of the dangers of giving their young children drinks, sweets containing specified artificial additive. R. Smithers. [The Guardian](#). 6 September 2007

[First Experimental Demonstration of the Multipotential Carcinogenic Effects of Aspartame Administered in the Feed to Sprague-Dawley Rats](#) APM is a multipotential carcinogenic agent, even at a daily dose of 20 mg/kg body weight, much less than the current acceptable daily intake. A reevaluation of the guidelines on the use and consumption of APM is urgent. M. Soffritti. [EHP](#). September 2007.

[Arsenic Exposure and Cognitive Performance in Mexican Schoolchildren](#) In conclusion, our study of a population of children living in an area contaminated with both As and lead showed that As contamination affected children's cognitive function independent of any effect of lead, even in children with UAs below the safe declared concentration limit of 50 µg/L. J. Rosado. [EHP](#). September 2007.

## **(b) Lead**

[Playing with danger](#) Experts are now saying that there may be no safe level of lead in children's toys and products. Lead is found in the environment, so getting to zero could be impossible. But lead is a cumulative poison and microscopic amounts here and there can add up. Experts say it's feasible to lower the permissible lead level in paint used for toys. S. Desmon. [Baltimore Sun](#). 13 September 2007.

[Mattel Recalls 9 Million Chinese-Made Toys](#) Toymaker Cites Hazards From Lead Paint And Magnets; Warns More Recalls Possible. Mattel has recalled 9 million Chinese-made toys, including Polly Pockets sets and Batman figures, because of dangers to children from lead paint or tiny magnets that could be swallowed. It's the 2nd major recall in 2 weeks from Mattel. [CBS News](#). 14 August 2007.

[Lead Exposure in Children: WHO Information note](#) The effects on the nervous system in children as chronic exposure are linked to a lowering of the IQ. Epidemiological studies consistently found adverse effects in children at blood lead levels down to 10 µg/dl and a publications suggest that lead-induced IQ decrements in children may occur at blood lead levels well below 10 µg/dl. [WHO](#). 6 August 2007

[The Relationship between Early Childhood Blood Lead Levels and Performance on End-of-Grade Tests](#) Our emphasis on population-level analyses of children who are roughly the same age linked to previous (rather than contemporaneous) blood lead levels using achievement (rather than aptitude) outcome complements the work in this area by previous researchers. ML. Miranda. EHP. August 2007.

### **(c) Pesticides**

[Study suggests DDT, breast cancer link](#) Exposure in childhood is key, quintupling the risk among women with high levels of the pesticide, researchers say. Women heavily exposed to the pesticide DDT during childhood are five times as likely to develop breast cancer. If the early-exposure theory is true, breast cancer rates could rise as the DDT generation ages. M. Cone. LA Times. 30 September 2007.

[DDT's resurrection](#) One year after WHO recommended the use of DDT in developing countries to prevent the spread of malaria, the debate over its safety continues. Scientists continue to find the legacy of the neurotoxin's historic use. In Costa Rica and other areas in America, researchers have been working on an integrated pest management approach to controlling malaria. ES&T. 29 August 2007

[Pesticide Urinary Metabolite Levels of Children in Eastern North Carolina Farmworker Households](#) Children in farmworker homes experience multiple sources of pesticide exposure. Pesticides may remain in their environments for long periods. Research is needed with more precise measures of exposure and on the health effects of concurrent exposure to multiple pesticides. T. Arcury. EHP. August 2006.

### **(d) Mercury**

[LEAD, MERCURY, PCBs: Contaminant levels dropping among Arctic mothers, blood studies show](#) A new study has found that levels of contaminants, including lead, mercury and PCBs, are dropping in the bodies of some aboriginal mothers, suggesting that global efforts to reduce pollutants accumulating in Arctic food animals may be paying off. B. Weber. The Globe and Mail. 29 September 2007.

[Study: Preservative doesn't raise neurological risk in kids](#) A mercury-based preservative once used in many vaccines does not raise the risk of neurological problems in children, concludes a large federal study that researchers say should reassure parents about the safety of shots their kids received a decade or more ago. The study did not examine autism. A. Chang. Examiner.com. 26 September 2007.

### **(3) WATER AND SANITATION**

[Water can drain a city's resources.](#) Here are numbers about something wet: water. Less than half of Asians have access to improved sanitation; situation in rural areas is less than half that in urban settings. 9 out of 10 people in North America and Europe have access to safe drinking

water. More than 2 million children die every year from water-related diseases. D. Murali. [The Hindu](#). 29 September 2007.

[The Global Water Crisis: Innovations to Watch For](#) Water pervades all sectors of society and is critical for short-term survival and human health as well as long-term economic development and environmental sustainability. Contaminated water causes millions of preventable deaths every year, especially in children, the elderly and the sick. Wall Street Journal. [Nextbillion.net](#). 24 September 2007.

[Camp sewage sparks alarm](#) Overflowing human waste from a labour camp is causing sickness among children living in the area, it was claimed. Residents are now calling for the eviction of more than 200 workers who live there. They are demanding their immediate relocation and say the smell from the camp, in East Eker, is making life unbearable. M. Al A'Ali. [Gulf Daily News](#). 19 September 2007.

[Q&A: "It's a Brave Politician Who Will Talk About Toilets"](#) Interview with Clarissa Brocklehurst, UNICEF Water and Environmental Sanitation Chief. Many families actually want to have a toilet for the privacy, convenience and the dignity that it offers. And we value that particularly because we work a lot with women as mothers of children. Sanitation is an institutional orphan. [IPS](#). 17 September 2007

#### **(4) GLOBAL CHANGE**

[Youth coalition challenges UN meeting to take stand on climate change](#) A representative of environmental youth groups challenged global leaders gathered at the United Nations to take decisive action to curb the threat posed by climate change. "I challenge you to show true leadership," she said. A timetable of targets is indispensable in combating climate change. [UN News Centre](#). 24 September 2007

[Poor at risk, action needed on warming-UN draft](#) "In all regions there are certain sectors and communities which are particularly at risk, for example the poor, young children, the elderly and the ill," it says. The report, prepared by 40 experts, sums up 3,000 pages of science. The poor depend heavily on farming that may be disrupted by shifts in rains or desertification. [AlertNet](#). 24 September 2007

[Climate Change Spurring Dengue Rise, Experts Say](#) Climate change is accelerating the spread of dengue fever throughout the Americas and in tropical regions worldwide, researchers say. By 2085 climate change will put an estimated 3.5 billion people at risk of dengue fever, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said. E. Barclay. [National Geographic News](#). 21 September 2007

#### **(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

[The High Price of Beauty](#) Studies show that when laboratory workers are exposed to solvents without proper ventilation, there is a small but increased risk for miscarriages and birth defects similar to fetal alcohol syndrome. The one thing scientists, advocates, industry and government

agencies agree on is that more education about "best practices" is crucial. V. Sole-Smith. The Nation. 20 September 2007.

[Man-made chemicals blamed as many more girls than boys are born in Arctic](#) High levels can change sex of child during pregnancy. Survey of Greenland and east Russia puts ratio at 2:1. Scientists measured chemicals in blood that mimic hormones and concluded they could trigger changes in the sex of unborn children in the first 3 weeks of gestation. P. Brown. The Guardian. 12 September 2007.

[Maternal Serum Polychlorinated Biphenyl Concentrations across Critical Windows of Human Development](#) PCB concentrations declined significantly during the periconception window of human development among women achieving pregnancy. Findings suggest a relatively dynamic nature of PCB concentrations during the earliest windows of human development M. Bloom. EHP. September 2007.

[Small doses of chemicals harm foetus](#) Scientists found congenital malformations and other adverse outcomes when mothers were exposed to toxic chemicals, even in subtle amounts, during or prior to pregnancy. Such toxic exposure before and after birth could lead to disabilities and abnormalities in energy metabolism, endocrine functions and organ development. S. Priyadarshini. Down to Earth. 31 July 2007.

#### **(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General**

[The future they want](#) At the Tunza International Youth Conference, young people discussed responses to the destruction of the planet. A student of Ubon Ratchathani strongly believes in the potential of solar energy and the possibility of it being shared across borders. At the Conference, he proposed the possibility of technology he called "solar credits". V. Chinvarakorn. Bangkok Post. 2 October 2007.

[Nintendo Goes Green with Environmental Game and 500 Trees](#) In honor of the launch of Chibi-Robo, Nintendo is offering 500 tree seedlings to kids who want to help keep their environments clean and beautiful. Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol is one of the first games based on the growing environmental movement, and it's a great way to get kids and their parents on a green path. PRNews. 2 October 2007.

[UNICEF Humanitarian Action Update South Asia floods](#) UNICEF is responding to needs of children and women in the areas of health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and child protection. Its priority is to prevent serious disease outbreaks and to protect the health and nutritional status of women and children. It also focuses on getting children back to school. ReliefWeb. 25 September 2007.

[Child mortality at record low; UNICEF predicts further drop](#) For the first time since record keeping began in 1960, the number of deaths of young children around the world has fallen below 10 million a year, according to UNICEF figures. Public health triumph was raised partly from campaigns against measles, malaria and bottle-feeding. D. McNeil Jr. International Herald Tribune. 13 September 2007

[Workgroup Report: Developing Environmental Health Indicators for European Children: World Health Organization Working Group](#) A working group coordinated by WHO developed a set of indicators to protect children's health from environmental risks and to support European policy needs. The group developed a core set of 29 indicators for implementation K. Pond. EHP. September 2007.

[Poison found in kids' clothes from China](#) Scientists found formaldehyde in clothes at levels 500 times higher than is safe. Research supported by WHO shows exposure to formaldehyde in concentrations of 20 ppm can cause eye, skin and nasal irritations, respiratory problems, asthma and cancer. Potential harm wasn't limited to clothing made in China. K. Arnold. Sunday Star Times. 19 August 2007

[Poor Diet Affects Respiratory Health of Teenagers](#) New epidemiologic research on teenagers in North America shows that a diet poor in essential vitamins and minerals, and other antioxidant compounds is linked to increased risk for developing respiratory conditions including asthma and reduced lung function. The study was conducted in high school seniors in the U.S. and Canada. F. Speizer. NIEHS.

#### **(b) Americas**

[Indigenous Children's Deaths Highlights Need for Better Health](#) The recent deaths of indigenous children in Panama illustrate the urgent need to improve the health of indigenous peoples in Central America, said IOM. National and international media have reported the deaths of an unconfirmed number of Ngobe-Bugle indigenous children in Panama due to respiratory illnesses. IOM. 5 October 2007.

[Schools Embrace Ways to Help Environment](#) Chapman hopes to plant a rooftop garden at Olathe South High School, encourages classmates to recycle plastic bottles and paper, and wants them to reduce their use of disposables in the school cafeteria. While students push for change, many Kansas City districts are embracing environmentally-friendly policies at schools Washington Post. 2 October 2007

[EPA Moves to Make Drinking Water Safer](#). New Rules Aim to Reduce Lead, Keep Consumers Informed About Potential Risks. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued new national water regulations that it said will help reduce lead in drinking water, keep utilities honest in testing for lead and warn the public when water poses a health risk. C. Leonnig. Washington Post. 27 September 2007.

[Flattened by hurricane, Mosquito Coast faces hunger and disease](#) Destruction of rainforest heralds long-term misery for impoverished villagers The residents of hundreds of shattered villages are at risk from hunger, exposure, contaminated water and disease spread by rats and mosquitoes. Infants have started succumbing to malaria, dengue and diarrhoea. R. Carroll. The Guardian. 26 September 2007.

[Mexico: Electrochemical Gold Purification](#) Mexican researchers began operating a prototype electrochemical reactor that separates gold and silver from other minerals, without producing toxic residues. The reactor utilizes thiourea, a non-polluting compound. The method will be a boost to profitability of the companies and benefit the communities where the mines are located. [Tierramérica](#). 3 September 2007.

[UN sends teams to hurricane struck Jamaica, Belize](#) The UN said that it had sent two emergency teams to Jamaica and to Belize to help organise relief efforts in the wake of hurricane Dean. Hurricane Dean slammed into Mexico, lashing the Yucatan Peninsula with monstrous winds and driving rain, after gaining strength as it swept through the Caribbean. [Caribbean Net News](#). 22 August 2007.

[Sad Tale of Argentina's Tercero River](#) Argentina's polluted rivers are not limited to Buenos Aires. The transparent waters that feed the Tercero River, in central Argentina, become a dark stew in just 300 kms. The water is used to supply a population of about 55,000, and for irrigating crops. The river is a recreational resource, with beaches and fishing spots. C. Mazzeo. [Tierramérica](#). 20 August 2007.

[Toll Climbs in Peru; Areas Lack Water and Power](#) A day after a powerful earthquake devastated cities along Peru's southern coast, government officials put the death toll at 437, with at least 17,000 people displaced and with wide areas without power, telephone service or road access. People need tents, water and food, because there is nothing. S. Romero. [The New York Times](#). 17 August 2007.

[WHO Chief Starts SouthAm Tour of Uruguay](#) Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, is to start her first tour of Uruguay. "Our maximum concern must be always focused on underprivileged and vulnerable groups. Those groups often look hidden, because they live in distant rural zones or poor neighborhoods, and hardly have political voice," Chan stated. [Prensa Latina](#). [Topix](#). 15 August 2007.

## **(c) Asia**

[Something in the air?](#) Locals think they know why their children are sick. Out of a population of 3,400, at least 10 children have been born with an affliction diagnosed by local doctors as cerebral palsy. It is unprecedented for the incidence of cerebral palsy to "cluster" in this way. Like other Chinese companies, PetroChina promotes "harmonious communities". [The Economist](#). 27 September 2007.

[Cholera in Iraq - update 2](#) Since late August 2007, an outbreak of cholera has spread to 25 districts of Northern Iraq and 4 districts in Southern Iraq and across the centre of the country. It is estimated that more than 30,000 people have fallen ill with acute watery diarrhoea. The case fatality rate, 0.52%, has remained low throughout the outbreak but continues to spread across Iraq. [WHO](#). 25 September 2007

[Health advocates promote zinc in diarrhea management](#) Health advocates are promoting Zinc as another and effective treatment to manage diarrhea in the Philippines. In a launching of "Zinc

Intervention Promotion Strategy for Diarrhea Management in Sarangani," Dr. Acuin from University of the Philippines said "diarrhea continues to be the leading cause of child's death" worldwide. [PIA](#). 20 September

[Suspected food poisoning hits 260 children in China](#) Two hundred and sixty children have been hospitalised for suspected food poisoning after having school breakfast in northwest China. Mass food poisonings are frequent in China, often triggered by the unsafe handling of food. China has been plagued by a spate of food safety scandals in recent months. AFP. [Yahoo News](#). 20 September 2007.

[Asian Countries urged to step up dengue control efforts](#) WHO urged Asian countries to strengthen dengue fever control measures with the region facing a rise in dengue cases and fatalities. A surge in dengue infections has put around 1.8 billion people in the Asia-Pacific region at risk. People live in high-density urban areas, prone to dengue outbreaks. Bangkok Post. [EcoEarth.Info](#). 20 September 2007.

[Electrifying public transport seen helping cut deadly pollution](#) In the Philippines, the smoke-belching jeepney that has been the backbone of commuter transport is also said to be one of the biggest contributors to air pollution. 2,000 people die each year in the Philippines due to the effects of air pollution and more than 9,000 suffer from chronic bronchitis. [The Manila Times](#). 17 September 2007.

#### **(d) Africa**

[Another disaster brews in Darfur](#) As the Darfur conflict approaches its fifth year, the environmental strain of the crisis is quickly depleting western Sudan's already-scarce natural resources. And experts say that is exacerbating chronic shortages of land and water that contributed to the fighting in the first place. Western Sudan has grappled with climatic changes M. Cone. [LA Times](#). 1 October 2007.

[Nigeria: 'Potable Water for All By 2015'](#) Wife of the President Umaru Yar'Adua said her husband is determined to provide safe and potable water by the year 2015. She said according to WHO, 80% of sicknesses can be linked to inadequate water and sanitation, there is an urgent need to fight this scourge to curb the rates of deaths, especially in children. D. Oyedele. [This Day](#) (Lagos). 26 September 2007

[More cash needed for Sudan flood appeal-UN](#) Throughout Sudan heavy rains sparked flash floods and rivers burst their banks, sweeping away tens of thousands of homes, many built beside rivers, the only source of water. At least 131 people have been killed and water-borne diseases such as cholera, which if untreated can kill within 24 hours, have spread. Reuters. [AlertNet](#). 24 September 2007.

[African deluge brings misery to 1.5m people](#) The floods have hit the most vulnerable people the hardest, the UN says. According to UNICEF most of the affected people were already living on a knife edge with food shortages before the floods arrived. A high percentage in some countries

are living in refugee camps. "In some cases the camps have also flooded." J. Vidal. [The Guardian](#). 20 September 2007

[ZIMBABWE: Parched city braces for disease outbreak](#) Zimbabwe's economic recession, which has seen inflation climb to 6,000 percent and shortages of electricity, fuel and food become commonplace, is deepening the plight of residents, because many borehole pumps are driven by electric motors. The difficulty in obtaining water means children leave for school without washing. [IRIN](#). 19 September 2007.

[Ending Malaria Deaths in Africa \(extended version\)](#) One of the world's worst killers can be stopped soon if we make the investment. Most promising long-term solution is a vaccine; candidate vaccines are in clinical trials. Even as we await a vaccine, a confluence of advances gives a chance for a breakthrough in the near term. Malaria control is the bargain of the planet. J. Sachs. [SCIAM](#). 19 September 2007.

[Uganda: Harvesting Rainwater - a Smart Way to Avert Floods](#) Rainwater harvesting is the process by which rainwater from the roofs of buildings is captured. This water can be used for domestic needs, and irrigation. Mr. Buyinza, Makerere University, says if water from the roofs is collected, little water would end up in the channels or people's compounds. J. Nafula. [AllAfrica.com](#). 19 September 2007

#### **(e) Europe**

[Update on Chikungunya in Italy](#) Major efforts are being implemented to control the outbreak of chikungunya fever in North-East Italy. The Italian authorities have reported a total of 101 confirmed cases, with a further 133 suspected cases awaiting laboratory confirmation. Chikungunya virus was isolated from local "tiger mosquitoes" and there is evidence of local transmission. [ECDC](#). 24 September 2007.

[MEPs put health and environment at heart of pesticides regulation](#) The environmental and health NGOs welcome the MEPs' strong support for ensuring that neurotoxic and immunotoxic pesticides are included among the substances which are recognised as being harmful to human health and the environment and which will not be authorised. [EEB/HEA/PANEurope](#). 12 September 2007.

[Dozens killed in violent Greek fires](#) Raging forest fires killed at least 46 people and trapped many more in villages surrounded by flames. Soaring temperatures, hot winds, drought and arson have been blamed for the unusual number of fires. "Help, we need help. We have children and elderly who need assistance." a resident from Styra said. V. Triandafyllou. [Mail and Guardian online](#). 25 August 2007.

[POPS in Eastern Europe and children's exposure](#) In Azerbaijan, documents confirm application of DDT in 1989. There are statistics on a high incidence of children diseases (respiratory diseases, nervous, gastric-intestine, immune disorders, etc.), associated with DDT contamination of breast milk, groundwater sources of drinking water, air, soil and some food products. O. Speranskaya. [IPEN](#). August 2007

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