

HECANET February 2006

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IN THIS ISSUE

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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- (1) HECA Developments
- (2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) Newsletter
- (3) UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its ninth special session
- (4) International Conference on Chemicals Management
- (5) UNICEF - Water Alert! Game
- (6) Public Health Association of South Africa 3rd annual conference
- (7) Philippines: children's environmental health activities
- (8) Poland: Conference: Vulnerability of the Fetus and Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy
- (9) 2005 Research Highlights: Health Effects of Particulate Matter and Ozone Air Pollution
- (10) ECOCLUBES 3rd International Meeting, 28th-4th May 2006, Argentina

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

As in previous months, the majority of articles that appeared in the media relating to children's environmental health, were focused on chemicals issues. Of particular note was coverage of the agreement reached by Governments on a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which includes recommendations on developing better methods to determine the impact of chemicals on human health, eliminating child labor that involves hazardous substances, and encouraging cleaner production and prevention of pollution. There was one article that pointed to the fact that with about 17% of US school-age children suffering from some form of neurodevelopmental impairment, researchers are taking a hard look at the impacts of low-dose exposures in utero and during childhood, and that some scientists believe that the growing burden of chemicals in the environment may play a role. More specifically, there were reports that EPA's current 'reference doses' for exposure to several phthalates may be far too high. Meanwhile, a jury in the American state of Rhode Island found major corporations liable for creating a public nuisance by making lead-based paints that have poisoned thousands of children. There was a study that reported that children who switched their diets for only a few days to organic foods dramatically and immediately lowered the amount of toxic pesticides in their bodies. Another US survey, this time of mercury contamination, concluded that Californians had among the worst levels, with nearly one-third of those tested having concentrations that exceeded safe levels. Pregnant women are of greatest concern for experts, as a fetus is susceptible to mercury's toxic effects on the brain. There were also a fair amount of articles related to the impacts of air pollution, including reports of a study of infant mortality in California that strengthens the link between fine particulate air pollution and infant mortality. There was also more coverage related to last month's release of a report from the Commission for Environment Cooperation which says that children exposed to air pollution - ranging from noxious auto emissions to tobacco smoke - are at greater risk of asthma, infant death syndrome and pneumonia. Meanwhile there was an outcry that a federal program designed to look at the effects of chemical pollutants and environmental toxins on future generations is in jeopardy because of budget-cutting initiatives proposed by the Bush administration.

There was an article that reported that one-third of the African population have no drinking water and almost half of the African people have health problems due to the lack of clean drinking water. UNICEF-Canada issued a report underscoring that curable diseases are still take a horrifying toll, with

pneumonia being a leading cause of death, followed by diarrheal disease, which kills 1.6 million under-fives, after they contract the disease from dirty water. Attention was also devoted to global warming, which some scientist conclude is already causing death and disease across the world through flooding, environmental destruction, heatwaves and other extreme weather events. The UN special envoy to the Horn of Africa, indicated that global climate change was the root cause for the failure of the past two rainy seasons in that region, and stressed that it was incumbent on the global community to come to the aid of those at risk. Five cycles of failed rain have led to crippling conditions in northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia, as well as severe water and food shortages in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Meanwhile, an early warning system based on climate models, average rainfall and data on seasonal malaria has been developed which can predict the risk of an epidemic of the killer disease 5 months in advance. Malaria, a parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes, kills more than a million people a year, mostly young children in Africa. 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) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General (b) Americas (c) Asia (d) Africa**

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

An update of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance partnerships is now available on partnerships database of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) website in time for CSD-14. The information provided will also be used to prepare the Secretary-General's report on Partnerships for this session of the CSD: <http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/browse.do>

The final report and presentations from the HECA Secretariat/WHO Regional Office for Africa inter-regional consultation on "Improving Children's Environmental Health in Settings - Experiences and lessons for policies and action" (Entebbe, Uganda, 29 November-2 December 2005) is now available on the HECA website: <http://www.who.int/heca/activities/entebbe/en/index.html>

This month's spotlight is on the HECA-supported project in Kanpur, India where the non-governmental organization Eco Friends is undertaking the "Environmental improvement programme for the children of pollution-affected Jajmau and Noraiakheda areas of Kanpur". The overall objective of the project is

to improve the environmental, health and sanitary conditions in two areas of Kanpur that are reportedly affected by toxic chemicals released by industry. Activities focus on educating, raising awareness and organizing children and community members around pollution-related health hazards and actions that can be taken. It is anticipated that the project will lead to improved environmental conditions in the area, provision of safe drinking water to the inhabitants of the project villages, as well as raised levels of awareness among children about environmental health risks and how they can protect themselves. More information: http://www.who.int/heca/activities/india_ecofriends/en/index.html

For more info:

Healthy Environments for Children Alliance: <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>

International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage: http://www.who.int/household_water/en/

The Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators: <http://www.who.int/ceh/indicators/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 contact us at: cehindicators@who.int or visit: <http://www.who.int/ceh/indicators/en/>

(3) UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) at its ninth special session

The [ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum](#) took place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) focusing on how best to deliver sustainable energy and more environmentally-friendly tourism. Other issues on the agenda included follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and UNEP's contribution to the Commission on Sustainable Development's 14th session, and international environmental governance. There was also an international exhibit on environmentally sound technology

At the opening of the GC/GMEF, the UN's Secretary-General's received the Global Leadership Award of the Zayed International Prize for the Environment: Dubai, honored for his commitment to sustainable development. In his [speech](#) he noted that, "The world remains captive to the old idea that we face a choice between economic growth and conservation. In fact, growth cannot be sustained without conservation. One of two jobs worldwide -- in agriculture, forestry and fisheries -- depends on the sustainability of ecosystems. Health problems cannot be fixed by the health sector alone. Our fight against poverty, inequality and disease is directly linked to the health of the earth itself".

UNEP launched its Global Environment Outlook [GEO year book](#) 2006 outlining the state of the global and regional environment, with a special focus on energy and air pollution. The section on [Indoor Air Pollution From Solid Fuels](#) contains some very relevant information related to children's environmental health - some extracts: "This has resulted in a host of problems, including damage to human health from indoor air pollution, pressure on natural ecosystems from fuel gathering, and excessive time spent on fuel collection by the poor at the expense of time for income generation, education, childcare and so on..." "In many developing countries, gender ascribed roles entrenched within the social and cultural fabric mean that women and girls are often responsible for fuel collection and cooking. Women may spend as much as three to seven hours per day by the cooking fire, exposed to smoke, often with young children nearby (ESMAP 2004). The potential health impacts of health-damaging pollutants from burning solid fuels are compounded by the constant proximity of the users to the source. Since the mid-1980s, many epidemiological studies have examined a range of health effects from indoor air pollution

due to solid fuel use. Various health effects have been found, including: acute lower respiratory infections in young children, the primary cause of childhood mortality; worldwide and the disease responsible for the most lost life years in the world. Indoor air pollution seems to play an important role, although the main risk factor is malnutrition; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, particularly in adult women who have cooked over unvented solid fuel stoves for many years; and lung cancer, mainly from coal smoke. It seems that young children are twice as likely to contract acute lower respiratory infections and women are three times more likely to suffer from chronic bronchitis if exposed to indoor air pollution from solid fuels (Smith and others 2004). Effects probably occur in men and school-age children as well (although both these groups typically spend less time inside the home) but few studies have been conducted". The chapter's conclusions point to the need for, "Consistent education and awareness programmes are needed to warn of the health impacts of pollution, and possible preventive measures. Like water and sanitation, indoor air pollution can be made a focus of primary health care programmes. With a consistent health focus, over time people will better understand the risks they and their children are exposed to, and this will enable them to make better decisions about fuel use. In urban areas, pollution alerts are an important tool in warning the public of days with high pollution levels. Such alerts are given out in several parts of the US, Europe and also in some cities in Mexico. Participation of affected people and user groups is essential for success". "For instance, poorer people are more vulnerable to air pollution, and therefore background mortality figures will be higher. Children, older people, and those with existing respiratory illnesses are also more vulnerable".

(4) International Conference on Chemicals Management

A new global initiative aimed at making chemicals safer for humans and the planet was agreed today at the [International Conference on Chemicals Management \(ICCM\)](#) held in Dubai, from 4–6 February 2006. Called the [Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management \(SAICM\)](#), the new initiative covers risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labeling up to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. It also carries provisions for national centres aimed at helping countries, especially in the developing world, train staff in chemical safety including dealing with spills and accidents. The initiative contained in the Dubai Declaration and agreed to by over 100 environment and health ministers puts the globe on track to meet a commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Here governments agreed to aim to use and produce chemicals in ways that minimize adverse effects to health and the environment. It is among the first concrete outcomes of the 2005 World Summit held in New York in September attended by heads of state. SAICM, a voluntary agreement, comes at a time when global chemical production is set to climb by as much as 80 per cent over the next 15 years. Between 70,000 and 100,000 chemicals may be already on the market with an estimated 1,500 new ones being marketed each year. Meanwhile chemical production is shifting from the developed to the developing world. Over the years a range of chemical-related treaties have come into force including the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants. It covers chemicals like the pesticide DDT and substances such as PCBs once widely used in certain kinds of electrical equipment. UNEP Executive Director, Dr. Toepfer said that it has been clear for some time that simply ticking off groups of chemicals one by one was becoming impractical, and that a new approach, a new way forward for chemicals management was needed, which is what SAICM now offers. The governments, meeting in advance of the [ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum](#), also gave support to a multi million dollar fund called 'Quick Start' Programme aimed at giving financial support to national action plans especially in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. UNEP, which helped organize the Dubai meeting along with other UN bodies and organizations and which involved participation from industry, business, trade unions and other civil society groups, will house the SAICM secretariat.

From the children's environmental health perspective, it is important to note that the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, addresses the need to close the gaps in the capacity to manage

chemicals safely between developed countries and developing countries and countries with economies in transition. ICCM participants further agree to work towards effective governance and support partnerships and transparency, as well as recognize the need to protect highly-vulnerable groups, children and “the unborn child.”

Furthermore a Ministerial panel discussion was held during the high-level segment (6 February) of the ICCM on ‘Environment and Health’ (with particular reference to women and children's health), organized by the ‘Network of Women Ministers for the Environment’, and coordinated by the Swedish Environment Minister.

From the children’s environmental health perspective, it is also interesting to note that in the [global civil society statement](#) to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its ninth special session, there was a section on ‘chemicals management’ which reads, “Chemicals offer many societal benefits, but the improper or inadequate management of chemicals, including substances in products and wastes and from accidents and releases, threatens the human rights to life, health and well-being of all people, especially children, vulnerable populations and future generations. Currently, decisions on production or authorization of chemicals are, too often, based on an evaluation of chemical effects on healthy adults, when they should instead be directed to protecting the most sensitive groups, particularly developing children”.

(5) UNICEF - Water Alert! Game

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Voices of Youth programme has launched Water Alert! – An interactive game intended to educate young people on global water, environment and sanitation issues. The object of the game is to ensure that people in a drought-challenged village, who are facing the threat of a flood, have water that is safe to drink and a clean and healthy school environment. The game is available in three languages online (English, French and Spanish) and a CD version includes a guide with instructions for use of the game as a teaching tool. To view/play the game click [here](#).

(6) Public Health Association of South Africa 3rd annual conference

The Third Annual Conference of the Public Health Association of South Africa will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 15-17 May 2006. The theme of the conference is "Making Health Systems Work" and will focus on the two sub-themes of: 1) decreasing the burden of diseases; 2) increasing equity, effectiveness and efficiency. The Call for Abstracts is open until 15 March. A number of people have expressed interest in submitting papers on issues in children's environmental health. Visit <http://www.wits.ac.za/phasa/abstract.htm> if you are interested in submitting an abstract and perhaps a session can be organized on children's environmental health.

(7) Philippines: children’s environmental health activities

Dr. Irma Makalinao, Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, will be conducting a ‘train the trainers’ seminar meeting for about 25-30 people on children's environmental health for the Department of Health (9-11 March 2006), with funding support from the Department of Health. She is organizing it through the Philippine Society of Clinical and Occupational Toxicology where she is the President. The participants from the Department of Health will include two representatives from each region of the country one coming from environment pillar and the other one is from the IMCI pillar (Integrated Management of Childhood Illness). Participants will, inter alia, find or develop applicable indicators.

Dr. Makalinao made a presentation (on 14 February 2006) to the Department of Pharmacology on a university-based continuing post-graduate course on "Teaching a Faculty to Teach Pediatric Environmental Health". The aim is to create a sustainable training program to increase the critical mass of people who think about the link between health and the environments of children through the

University of the Philippines College of Medicine Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology Graduate Program where she is the current head. The course would prepare the accredited medical universities to teach a core curriculum of pediatric environmental health for the medical students so that the awareness level can be raised while they are still students, so that if they decide to become general practitioners they are already able to make a good history and refer patients accordingly.

(8) Vulnerability of the Fetus and Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy - Krakow, Poland, June 2-3, 2006

'Vulnerability of the Fetus and Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy' - Krakow, Poland, June 2-3, 2006: The purpose of the Conference is to assess the weight of evidence and assemble new achievements on the effects of prenatal and early postnatal exposure to ambient and indoor pollutants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, particulate matter, and environmental tobacco smoke on fetal/child growth, neurobehavioral development, and childhood health status. Another purpose of this Conference is also to assess fetal responses to the changes in intrauterine environment caused by reduced food intake around the time of conception and during pregnancy.

(9) 2005 Research Highlights: Health Effects of Particulate Matter and Ozone Air Pollution

Now available: the American Lung Association's annual compilation of scientific studies on the health effects of particulate matter and ozone air pollution. This annotated bibliography presents brief summaries selected research papers published in 2005 (or in press in January 2006) on the health effects of particulate and ozone air pollution. Some of the highlights of the new studies include:

- Studies linking prenatal exposure to air pollution with increased risk of low birth weight, preterm birth, infant mortality, and cancer;
- Intervention studies showing that reductions in air pollution yield measurable improvement in children's respiratory health and reduction in premature deaths;
- A long-term study showing risk of premature death attributable to PM is three times greater than previously reported;
- Studies linking daily exposures in PM with increased hospital admissions for strokes, congestive heart failure, heart attacks, COPD and other respiratory problems;
- Research showing that coarse particles exacerbate respiratory disease;
- Three meta-analyses linking ozone air pollution with premature mortality and a multi-city study showing that effects are not due to temperature;
- Policy analyses showing the need for strong annual and daily fine particle standards to protect susceptible populations and provide equivalent levels of protection to different regions of the country.

The bibliography is available at: <http://www.cleanairstandards.org/article/articleview/454/1/15/>

(10) ECOCLUBES 3rd International Meeting, 28th-4th May 2006, Argentina

ECOCLUBES is an international youth movement that promotes citizen participation who work towards the improvement in the quality of life of the population. The next International Meeting of ECOCLUBES from 28th May to 4th June 2006 in Argentina. In a joint effort with other institutions, their public awareness campaigns utilize participatory strategies searching for neighbours' involvement in the implementation of proposals that may be evaluated in a practical manner and that are characterized by their support. The young people who integrate this international movement - which was founded in Argentina in 1992 and which today has almost 15,000 volunteers in 28 countries of the Americas, Europe and Africa - firmly believe that their daily actions are transforming them into responsible people actively constructing a common destiny. ECOCLUBES concentrates around 3 thematic areas at the international level: i) Integral Management of Waste ii) Sustainable Use of Water; iii) Prevention and fight against dengue. For more information: ECOCLUBES around the world (Europe, Africa, North America, Central America and South America) <http://www.ecoclubes.org/> ECOCLUBES in Argentina: <http://www.ecoclubes.org.ar/>

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

[Cutting Air Pollution Delivers “Big Bang for Your Buck”](#) Economic Benefits Range from Human Health up to Crops, Forests and Other Key Nature Services Says [Latest GEO Year Book](#). Economic gains include cuts in premature deaths and lower health care costs, as the toll from pollution-related diseases is brought down. Press Release. [UN Environment Programme](#). 7 February 2006.

[Cutting household smoke to improve quality of life](#) More than 2 billion people cook using solid fuels: twigs, agricultural residue, dung, coal and so on. Over 1.6 million people die as a direct result of indoor air pollution every year. Raising awareness about the dangers of indoor smoke and encouraging action to alleviate it could save many lives. Liz Bates. [Practical Action/ITDG](#), UK. 10 February 2006.

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Indoor NO2 exposure worsens kids asthma](#) Indoor exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO2) from gas-fueled stoves, even at levels well below the Environmental Protection Agency outdoor standard, may cause respiratory symptoms in asthmatic children living in multi-family housing units, new research suggests. [American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine](#). [Reuters](#). 2 February 2006.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Fine Particulate Matter Air Pollution and Selected Causes of Postneonatal Infant Mortality in California](#) A study of infant mortality in California strengthens the link between fine particulate air pollution and infant mortality. Higher levels of fine particle pollution are associated with an increased rate in overall postneonatal mortality. Tracey Woodruff. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). February 2006.

[Study targets deadly diesel pollution](#) Trains and boats powered by diesel-fueled engines cause about 4,400 premature deaths, nearly 5,700 nonfatal heart attacks and more than 73,000 asthma attacks in children, says a study. John Heilprin. [Associated Press](#). 3 February 2006.

[10,000 die from air pollution each year](#) Alarming figures indicated on Thursday that more than 10,000 Belgians die prematurely each year due to fine particles in the air. "Peaks such as we experienced on Wednesday and Thursday are — in the short-term — much more dangerous, especially for youths, the elderly and people who suffer from heart or lung problems." [Expatica](#), Netherlands. 3 February 2006.

[New EPA Soot Limits Faulted by Scientists](#) EPA said in 1997 that cutting fine-particle pollution would save 15,000 people/year from premature deaths from diseases aggravated by soot-filled air. EPA officials said the review was run appropriately and smoothly, and that Johnson was unconvinced there was evidence to support a more stringent standard. John Heilprin. [Associated Press](#). 3 February 2006.

[First lady: Child asthma rate 'horrific'](#) Every two-and-a-half hours, a child with asthma is born in Lebanon "raising the percentage of Lebanese children with asthma to a horrific 13%." Pollution, animal fur and skin, smoke, feathers, sudden change of weather and other elements can instigate an asthma attack. Karen Mneimne. [Beirut Daily Star](#), Lebanon. 9 February 2006.

[Leuenberger green-lights lower speed limits](#) Switzerland's reputation for clinical cleanliness has taken a battering recently from record levels of fine dust particles, which have prompted calls for immediate measures. "Mothers with children are already being advised to stay indoors during the day - that's unbelievable." Thomas Stephens. [Swiss Radio International](#), Switzerland. 3 February 2006.

[Winter air worst in years for Valley](#) The Valley's worst winter air pollution season in years is expected to continue today, affecting the noses, throats and lungs of thousands of residents. Children are especially at risk when the air quality is poor, she said, because they tend to spend more time playing outdoors. Matthew Benson. [Phoenix Arizona Republic](#), Arizona. 2 February 2006.

[Little relief in sight for deadly, dirty air](#) Unless lawmakers act, Virginians will pay to clean plants elsewhere as their own state's older, coal-fired plants remain deadly polluters. Not one dollar will be spent in Virginia, where two plants continue to sicken children and the elderly, hamper athletes, increase asthmatic attacks and kill 70 people each year. Editorial. [Roanoke Times](#), Virginia. 12 February 2006.

[Standards: Even Approved Amount of Ozone Is Found Harmful](#) A study sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that air even at the E.P.A.'s current acceptable level of ozone — 80 parts per billion — can bring on a significantly increased risk of premature death. Nicholas Bakalar. [New York Times](#). 28 February 2006.

[Does a new school cause air pollution?](#) It can. More traffic? Sure. Can it make kids unhealthy? Absolutely. A policy analyst with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Program was in town Wednesday to talk to Borough Council -- and two school board members -- about all the things a new school can mean to a community. [Pottstown Mercury](#), Pennsylvania. 11 February 2006.

[School campaign aims to stop idling behavior](#) Earlier this month, Jackson Middle School became the first Portland public school to put up signs reminding drivers to turn off their engines while they wait. Idling is one of the easiest ways to reduce toxic emissions such as carbon monoxide. Chatten Hayes. [Portland Oregonian](#), Oregon. 23 February 2006.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Smoke gets in your lungs](#) California is the first state to declare secondhand smoke a toxic air contaminant. Looking at studies, there's about a 1.6-fold increased risk for onset of asthma as a child in relation to exposure to secondhand smoke. There are around 31,000 episodes of asthma in children in California from secondhand smoke exposure each year. Ashley Ahearn. [Living On Earth](#). 4 February 2006.

[Tobacco foes see an opening](#) Secondhand smoke's designation as a toxic contaminant is giving extra ammunition for more restrictions. An estimated 4,700 Californians died annually from illnesses caused by secondhand smoke, including cancers and SIDS. Thousands more children suffer asthma attacks and other problems. [Registration Required]. Janet Wilson. [Los Angeles Times](#). 6 February 2006.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[New Global Chemicals Strategy Given Green Light by Governments](#) the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management or SAICM is a new global initiative aimed at making chemicals safer for humans and the planet. It covers risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labeling up to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. Press Release. [UN Environment Programme](#). 7 February 2006.

[Safely Managing Chemicals](#) Global agreement aimed at protecting health, environment could affect trade disputes. Recommendations include developing better methods to determine the impact of chemicals on human health, eliminating child labor that involves hazardous substances, and encouraging cleaner production and prevention of pollution. Cheryl Hogue. [Chemical & Engineering News](#). 28

February 2006.

[New Environmental Agreement Undermined by U.S.](#) Pesticide Action Network Updates Service. [PANNA](#). 14 February 2006.

[Summit focuses on chemical usage](#) Environment ministers from around the world are meeting in Dubai to discuss the rising use of man-made chemicals. The UN is hoping to get agreement on a new approach to managing chemicals, so minimising their effects on human health. Julia Wheeler. [BBC](#). 6 February 2006.

[Time to clean up the chemicals in Africa](#) In Africa, over 50,000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides and seriously contaminated soils have accumulated over the last 4 decades. These chemicals are a serious threat to the health of both rural and urban populations, often the poorest and most vulnerable, and contribute to land and water degradation. Clifton Curtis. [Khaleej Times](#), United Arab Emirates. 6 February 2006.

[New thinking on neurodevelopment](#) With about 17% of US school-age children suffering from some form of neurodevelopmental impairment, researchers are taking a hard look at the impacts of low-dose exposures in utero and during childhood. Some scientists believe that the growing burden of chemicals in the environment may play a role. Michael Szpir. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). February 2006.

[Toxic inheritance](#) Frederica Perera, DNA-damage detective, suspects that if a mother breathes in pollution, her child may develop cancer. Since 1998, her Mothers and Newborns Study has enrolled 700 women. It monitors women's exposures to airborne chemicals during pregnancies and tests their babies as soon as they are born. [Subscription required]. Jeff Wheelwright. [Discover](#). 15 February 2006.

[EPA's current 'reference doses' for exposure to several phthalates may be far too high.](#) This conclusion is based upon calculations, using pharmacokinetic models, of the maternal exposures that would have been required to cause urinary phthalate metabolite levels associated with altered genital tract development in boys. Marsee, K, et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). February 2006.

[Teflon chemical found in infants](#) Researchers report that 99% of 300 newborns tested were born with trace levels of a possible cancer-causing agent used to manufacture Teflon pans and dozens of other products. Researchers are trying to determine whether the chemical has harmed the infants, possibly by interfering with their thyroid glands and hormone levels. Tom Pelton. [Baltimore Sun](#). 6 February 2006.

[Teflon-Linked Dangers May Not Stick](#) E.J. Mundell. [HealthDay News](#). 23 February 2006.

[How one mine could save a Romanian town](#) As mining practices employed from the regimes of Caesar through Ceaucescu have left the people of Rosia Montana, Romania washing their kitchen garden vegetables - and watching their children play - in a river running red with toxic tailings. Mark Lange. [Christian Science Monitor](#). 6 February 2006.

[Chemical poisoning in Korea worse than other nations](#) Government research showed Koreans suffer more serious chemical poisoning than people in other industrialized nations. It is now investigating levels of lead and mercury of over 1,800 children, and to what degree infants and women who recently gave birth are exposed to heavy metals. Jin Dae-woong. [Seoul Korea Herald](#). 7 February 2006.

[Biomonitoring bill returns to Senate](#) The push to create a statewide system for tracking our bodies' levels of environmental pollutants such as plastic and flame retardants won't die. An investigation of a Berkeley family's body burden prompted them to make lifestyle changes. Douglas Fischer. [Oakland](#)

Tribune, California. 8 February 2006.

[Pollution in people](#) Biomonitoring tests reveal toxic chemicals are in all of us, so what does it mean to human health? Asthma affects more kids than ever before -- about 12 per cent of children under age 14. Are these increases in health problems a result of the increase in chemicals in our environment? Shelley Page and Susan Allan. Ottawa Citizen, Ontario. 15 February 2006.

[Tackling e-trash](#) E-trash contains heavy metals and flame retardants -- chemicals that could leach into groundwater if crushed in a landfill, or foul the air if burned in an incinerator. Traditional computer screens contain an estimated 4lb of lead, which can cause developmental delays if ingested by children. Flat-screens contain mercury. Colleen Diskin. Bergen County Record, New Jersey. 9 February 2006.

[Could cosmetics make your child sick?](#) A new study shows some cosmetics contain ingredients that have been linked to cancer in animals. While the FDA urges cosmetic makers to test products, it does not require them to test for safety before the products hit the shelves. While this can be dangerous for all of us, it's especially dangerous for young girls. Fox 53, Pennsylvania. 11 February 2006.

[The Lowdown on Sweet?](#) Dr. Soffritti, who has spent 28 years doing research on potential carcinogens, said he was trying to steer clear of the growing political maelstrom. But he added that he was concerned about the large numbers of people who use aspartame, particularly children and pregnant women. Melanie Warner, The New York Times. 12 February 2006.

[Limits on the table for food warning signs](#) Industry-driven legislation aimed at reining in California's Proposition 65 is gaining momentum in Congress. The 20-year-old law requires businesses of all types to alert the public to substances "known to the state to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm." [Registration Required]. Richard Simon. Los Angeles Times, California. 9 February 2006.

(b) Lead

[Steps to have lead removed from paint, toys welcomed](#) Most paint and toy shops and car manufacturers support the government's plans to regulate the use of lead in paint made for domestic use. "This action is a direct response to mounting evidence of the effects of lead poisoning on children under the age of four." Nomahlubi Sonjica. Port Elizabeth Herald, South Africa. 3 February 2006.

[Displaced Gypsies at Risk From Lead in Kosovo Camps](#) Health specialists say children are particularly vulnerable to this kind of pollution. Soon after the Roma moved in, the UN realized that they were living on contaminated land. Reports by the UN mission and the WHO dating to 2000 recommended their immediate removal. [Purchase required]. Nicholas Wood. New York Times. 5 February 2006.

[3 companies found liable in lead-paint nuisance suit](#) For the first time, a jury has found major corporations liable for creating a public nuisance by making lead-based paints that have poisoned thousands of children. The verdict may cost billions. Peter B. Lord. Providence Journal, Rhode Island. 23 February 2006.

[Lead paint ruling could lead to more lawsuits](#) Eric Tucker. Associated Press. 24 February 2006.

[Three lead paint makers are found guilty](#) Associated Press. CBS News. 23 February 2006.

[R.I. ruling puts onus on lead paint makers](#) Jon Brodtkin. Framingham MetroWest Daily News, Massachusetts. 24 February 2006.

[Lead paint a major health threat, lawyer for the state says](#) Children in Rhode Island continue to suffer from lead paint and more aggressive action is needed to protect kids and clean up contamination. Eric

Tucker. [Associated Press](#). 10 February 2006.

[Lead, radon & asbestos](#) Even though you can't smell them - and sometimes can't even see them -- they can be a tremendous detriment to your health. Children are particularly vulnerable. High levels of lead in the fetus and in children 6 and younger have been linked to slow growth, lowered IQ, and memory, behavior and learning problems. Kristine Kisky. [Clark Columbian](#), Washington. 25 February 2006.

[Lead exposure harms kids' ability to cope](#) Exposure to lead not only causes stunted IQs and behavior problems in children, the toxic metal also damages the brain's ability to handle stress, scientists said at a conference here. Christine Dell'amore. [United Press International](#). 19 February 2006.

[Smelter city families face removal](#) Health officials believe Port Pirie residents must be moved from areas where lead dust is dumped by the Zinifex smelter to stop the poisoning of children in the South Australian city. Michelle Wiese Bockmann. [Sydney Australian](#), Australia. 10 February 2006.

[The time is now to end childhood lead poisoning](#) We owe it to our children to eradicate childhood lead poisoning, and we can. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention call childhood lead poisoning the most preventable environmental health condition in the country. Benjamin Hooks. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), Wisconsin. 12 February 2006.

[Landlords steer clear of lead paint registry](#) Ben Jones. [Appleton Post-Crescent](#), Wisconsin. 12 February 2006.

[\\$20M in lead funding at risk](#) Nearly \$20 million set aside to clean up lead-tainted housing where thousands of New Jersey children are poisoned each year could be lost because state officials have been slow establishing programs, child advocates say. Judy Peet And Russell Ben-Ali. [Newark Star-Ledger](#), New Jersey. 12 February 2006.

[NJ child advocates: Lead clean up cash wasted](#) New York WINS Radio, New York. 13 February 2006.

[Lead paint a major health threat, lawyer for the state says](#) Children in Rhode Island continue to suffer from lead paint and more aggressive action is needed to protect kids and clean up contamination. Rhode Island is trying to hold four companies responsible for the widespread public nuisance it says is created by lead paint in homes and buildings. Eric Tucker. [Associated Press](#). 10 February 2006.

[Next steps on lead](#) Each year around 1,000 children test positive for lead poisoning in Monroe County. The new law is a major step. With efficient, timely implementation, advocates for children may finally be able to celebrate a drop in the number of kids whose blood is contaminated by lead. Editorial. [Rochester Democrat and Chronicle](#), New York. 6 February 2006.

[Keep up progress on making Rochester lead-safe](#) Derrick Hazle. [Rochester Democrat and Chronicle](#), New York. 12 February 2006.

[Ottawa urged to get rid of lead water pipes](#) Despite assurances that the water is safe in houses connected to the supply system by lead pipes, a city councillor and an advisory committee member say they need to be replaced. "Everybody knows lead is toxic and has tremendous negative health effects, particularly on a child's learning ability." Jake Rupert. [Ottawa Citizen](#). 15 February 2006.

[Tests show amounts of lead in popular dinnerware](#) An investigation found that dinnerware sold at some popular Center Florida department stores tested positive for amounts of lead. Lead can affect the brain,

central nervous system, kidneys and reproductive system. It is at least twice as dangerous for children than adults. [Orlando WKMG TV, Florida](#). 7 February 2006.

[Sweet little toxin](#) Dangerous levels of lead haven't changed the minds of children who continue to eat Mexican candy, parents who say they doubt the contamination claims, and shopkeepers who continue to stock the suspect brands on their shelves. [Registration required]. [Santa Fe New Mexican, New Mexico](#). 13 February 2006.

(c) Pesticides

[Scientists link hair shampoo with leukaemia](#) Exposure to household insecticides, including head lice shampoos, may increase a child's risk of developing leukaemia, a study has disclosed. It concluded that the risk of developing acute leukaemia was almost twice as high in children whose mothers reported using insecticides while pregnant and when children were small. [Apapa Vanguard, Nigeria](#). 28 February 2006.

[Organic diets keep kids pesticide free](#) Children who switched their diets for only a few days to organic foods dramatically and immediately lowered the amount of toxic pesticides in their bodies, researchers report. Christine Dell'amore. [United Press International](#). 23 February 2006.

[Organic food fends off pesticides](#) [Forbes](#). 21 February 2006.

[The effects of a conventional versus organic diet](#) New research shows an organic diet can decrease a child's exposure to organophosphate pesticides. The study supports the conclusion that dietary intake is a major source of OP pesticide exposure, but some children may receive even more exposure from the use of pesticides in the home. Julia Barrett. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). February 2006.

[Organic growth](#) Despite the higher prices, at least 35 percent of U.S. consumers regularly buy organic foods. "I have four young children, and I'm concerned how chemicals and other foreign ingredients might affect their health. If I can control some of the toxins in their bodies, and it helps them, it's worth its weight in gold." Joy Powell. [Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota](#). 26 February 2006.

[Fields of misery](#) A produce grower that subjects its field workers to dangerous pesticides should find no comfort in North Carolina. Three women who had worked in Ag-Mart fields here and in Florida gave birth to children with catastrophic defects. One of the two babies who were born last year died within days. Editorial. [Raleigh News & Observer, North Carolina](#). 24 February 2006.

[Pesticides may have cause birth defects for local worker](#) [Wilmington WWAY TV, North Carolina](#). 23 February 2006.

[Share the Love with Flower Workers](#) As many as 20% of floriculture workers in Ecuador are children. Young children and infants, whether exposed directly to pesticides in the fields and greenhouses or to residues in the home, are particularly vulnerable to pesticide exposure. [Pesticide Action Network Updates Service](#). 7 February 2006.

(d) Mercury

[The age of autism: Doctors for mercury](#) As doctors and health authorities fight state bans on mercury in vaccines and keep giving it to kids and pregnant women, one fact stands out: their certainty. Most childhood vaccines -- in the United States, not overseas -- are now thimerosal-free. Dan Olmsted. [United Press International](#). 10 February 2006.

[The age of autism: Snoozeweeklies](#) The nation's top two newsweeklies have just weighed in on the problems of boys and the decline in science literacy, failing to address a crucial part of the picture: the impact of environmental toxicity on children's development -- and America's future. Dan Olmsted. United Press International. 15 February 2006.

[Vaccine ingredient cause of controversy](#) The preservative thimerosal has been added to vaccines since the 1930s as a way to prevent contamination in multi-use vials. In the last decade, however, scientists and physicians have argued over whether it has done more harm than good. Chelsea Conaboy. Concord Monitor, New Hampshire. 13 February 2006.

[Did mercury cause Drew's autism?](#) Chelsea Conaboy. Concord Monitor, New Hampshire. 13 February 2006.

[Stopping the harmful effects of mercury](#) Today, our environment faces a problem: mercury. For adults, regular exposure to minute amounts of mercury from these products is not always life-threatening, but for children and infants, it can prove fatal. State Rep. [Purchase required]. Paul Casey. Winchester Star, Massachusetts. 2 February 2006.

[Food: Mercury Rising](#) Is your dinner fishy? There might be reason to worry. A recent study from the University of North Carolina at Asheville found that one in five women of childbearing age tested for mercury had levels that could cause neurological damage in babies. Karen Springen. Newsweek. 27 February 2006.

[One in Five Women Tested Nationwide has Mercury Levels Higher than EPA Limit](#) Mercury contamination is a particular concern for women of childbearing years (16 to 49 years old) and their small children (under the age of six) because mercury exposure in the womb can cause neurological damage and other health problems in children. Press Release. Greenpeace International. 9 February 2006.

[High mercury levels found in Californians](#) In a nationwide survey of mercury contamination, Californians had among the worst levels, with nearly one-third of those tested having concentrations that exceeded safe levels. Pregnant women are of greatest concern for experts, as a fetus is susceptible to mercury's toxic effects on the brain. [Registration required]. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 9 February 2006.

[Mercury elevated in hair samples](#) Michael Hawthorne. Chicago Tribune. 9 February 2006.

[Study: Mercury levels high in 1/5 of women](#) United Press International. 9 February 2006.

[1 in 4 Virginia women have too much mercury in their bodies](#) Tim Thornton. Roanoke Times, Virginia. 9 February 2006.

[Study finds elevated mercury levels in Va. women](#) Scott Harper. Hampton Roads Virginian-Pilot, Virginia. 9 February 2006.

[Frequent fish eaters have higher levels of mercury](#) Michael Flynn. Asheville Citizen-Times, North Carolina. 9 February 2006.

[N.C. women's bodies carry high mercury levels](#) Bruce Henderson. Charlotte Observer, North Carolina. 9 February 2006.

[Mercury test shows area women at risk](#) Lori Rackl. Chicago Sun-Times, Illinois. 9 February 2006.

[Utahns' mercury levels lower than nation's](#) Judy Fahys. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 9 February 2006.

[Mercury high in Island test group](#) Jan TenBruggencate. Honolulu Advertiser, Hawaii. 9 February 2006.

[Study: Hawaii residents have elevated mercury levels](#) Associated Press. 10 February 2006.

[While the governor waits, mercury bioaccumulates](#) During her 2002 campaign for governor, Granholm promised to place strict limits on mercury emissions from power plants. EPA estimates that a mercury level above 5.8 parts per billion in a pregnant woman's body places her fetus at increased risk of having developmental problems. Alex Nixon. Lansing City Pulse, Michigan. 15 February 2006.

[Bill sets goal of barring mercury](#) Environmentalists argue that Massachusetts lags behind in regulating the sale and disposal of products containing mercury, a well-known ecological and public health threat. Pregnant women, women of childbearing age, nursing mothers, and children under 12 are advised to avoid eating all freshwater fish. Kathleen Burge. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 2 February 2006.

[House mercury bill goes forward](#) Committee endorses the compromise measure to cut industrial emissions The Environmental Protection Agency is often quoted as saying 1 in 6 women of child-bearing age have unacceptably high levels of mercury in their bodies. Rex Springston. Richmond Times-Dispatch, Virginia. 9 February 2006.

[Mercury no more](#) Studies prove that it's a danger; N.M. must ban mercury in vaccines. In the face of the lack of federal oversight, shouldn't New Mexico's Legislature err on the side of caution and vote to protect our children from mercury? K. Paul Stoller. Albuquerque Tribune, New Mexico. 7 February 2006.

[South Bay's past fuels mercury fears](#) A new study finds widespread mercury contamination in women across the country. mercury is especially dangerous to developing fetuses. That's why women of childbearing age need to know how to reduce their chances of passing mercury to their unborn babies. Tony Russomanno. San Francisco CBS 5, California. 3 February 2006.

[Limits on the table for food warning signs](#) Industry-driven legislation aimed at reining in California's Proposition 65 is gaining momentum in Congress. In supermarkets, a sign is posted, usually near the seafood section, warning consumers, especially pregnant women and children, about the dangers of eating fish that contain mercury. [Registration Required]. Los Angeles Times, California. 9 February 2006.

[Things to do before you get pregnant](#) Take folic acid. Buy a new house. Get your mercury tested. Nearly a third of California's roughly 1,100 study participants showed mercury levels over the level the EPA considers the upper limit for women of childbearing age. Judith Lewis. LA Weekly, California. 16 February 2006.

[Go ahead, eat that tuna](#) New study in the Seychelles shows no intellectual damage in teens exposed to high levels of mercury while in the womb. They ate fish during pregnancy - lots of it. Their children are now teenagers and show no signs that their high levels of mercury exposure while in the womb led to any problems with intellectual development. Jamie Talan. New York Newsday. 20 February 2006.

[Seychelles study affirms benefits of eating fish](#) [Subscription required]. Financial Times, England. 20 February 2006.

[Eat more fish, toxins or not](#) Leigh Dayton. Sydney Australian, Australia. 19 February 2006.

[Study warns of high mercury levels in Berryessa fish](#) New studies showing high levels of mercury in certain fish from Lake Berryessa and Putah Creek warn child-bearing women and children under 17 to closely ration their intake of those species. Julissa Mckinnon. Napa Valley Register, California. 26 February 2006.

[Limited meals of fish urged](#) Some halibut and Pacific red snapper contain so much mercury that consumption should be limited, according to a Health Department survey. Children and women of child-bearing age should eat no more than 1 meal a week of those 2 species because of mercury contamination, based on EPA guidelines. Associated Press. Tacoma News Tribune, Washington. 17 February 2006.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[1/3 of Africans lack drinking water](#) One-third of the African population have no drinking water and almost half of the African people have health problems due to the lack of clean drinking water, a report said on Tuesday. Xinhuanet. 14 February 2006.

[New Scuffles Over Water](#) Groups that favor and groups that oppose the privatisation of water will return to the ring in March, during the 4th World Water Forum, in Mexico. Every day around the world, 2,000 to 5,000 people die from causes related to water shortages or poor water quality, and one billion people do not have ready access to water. Diego Cevallos. Tierramerica. 2 February 2006.

[China to provide more safe drinking water in rural areas](#) China is launching a huge campaign to ensure safe drinking water for about 100 million people in its rural areas who are suffering from serious shortage of water supply and disqualified drinking water. Xinhua News Agency, China. 2 February 2006.

[Amid water crisis, new treatment touted as the safe, cheap answer](#) Few Jakartans have access to safe drinking water. The majority risk their and their family's health by using water from rivers, wells and lakes. "Field tests show an 85 percent reduction on the risk of diarrhea, it helps to reduce household expenditure on kerosene and firewood." Tantri Yuliandini. Jakarta Post, Indonesia. 6 February

(4) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[Environmental degradation impacts children's health](#) A new report from the Commission for Environment Cooperation says children exposed to air pollution - ranging from noxious auto emissions to tobacco smoke - are at greater risk of asthma, infant death syndrome and pneumonia. Rosanne Skirble. Voice of America. 4 February 2006.

[Childhood diseases 'still killing millions'](#) Curable diseases still take a horrifying toll. Pneumonia is a leading cause of death, followed by diarrheal disease, which kills 1.6 million under-fives, after they contract the disease from dirty water. Mosquito-borne malaria is the largest cause of death in Africa, killing 3,000 children there each day. Olivia Ward. Toronto Star, Ontario. 22 February 2006.

[Global warming a major health risk - scientists](#) Global warming is already causing death and disease across the world through flooding, environmental destruction, heatwaves and other extreme weather events, scientists said on Thursday. And it is likely to get worse. Reuters. 9 February 2006.

[Early Warning System Predicts Malaria Epidemics](#) An early warning system based on climate models, average rainfall and data on seasonal malaria can predict the risk of an epidemic of the killer disease 5 months in advance. Malaria, a parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes, kills more than a million people a year, mostly young children in Africa. Patricia Reaney. Reuters. 2 February 2006.

[Malaria: Casting shadows](#) [Subscription required]. Economist. 2 February 2006.

(b) Americas

[Budget initiatives may doom toxins study](#) A federal program designed to look at the effects of chemical pollutants and environmental toxins on future generations is in jeopardy because of budget-cutting initiatives proposed by President Bush. Susanne Rust. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin. 9 February 2006.

[Pulling funds from kids study immoral](#) Carey Hamilton. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 9 February 2006.

[Budget Cuts Take Aim at Medical Programs](#) Lauran Neergaard. Associated Press. 7 February 2006.

[Child health study may never begin](#) Lois M. Collins. Salt Lake Deseret Morning News, Utah. 9 February 2006.

[Funding for wide-ranging kids' health study axed](#) Elizabeth Shogren. National Public Radio. 9 February 2006.

[Key National Study of Children's Health Would Be Canceled Under Bush's NIH Budget for 2007](#) [Subscription required]. Jeffrey Brainard. Chronicle of Higher Education. 9 February 2006.

[Children's health study not in budget](#) Laura Beil. Dallas Morning News, Texas. 12 February 2006.

[Short shrift for kids](#) Editorial. Boston Globe, Massachusetts. 20 February 2006.

[National Children's Study supporters rally for funds](#) Jeff Nesmith. Cox News Service. 24 February 2006.

[Children's health study is nixed](#) Evan Brandt. Pottstown Mercury, Pennsylvania. 19 February 2006.

[National children's study: Funds should be restored to vital long-term research](#) Editorial. Salt Lake Tribune, Utah. 14 February 2006.

[US launches two studies of genes and disease](#) Two U.S. research projects announced on Wednesday will develop new ways to analyze data try to find answers to those and other such health questions in the links among genes, environment and disease. Researchers will work to design new tools to measure environmental factors. Maggie Fox. Reuters. 9 February 2006.

[Programs to probe roots of common diseases](#) Jonathan D. Rockoff. Baltimore Sun. 9 February 2006.

[Federal project probes environment, genes](#) Lauran Neergaard. Associated Press. 9 February 2006.

[After September 11th The hidden killer](#) Separate studies conducted by other government agencies and independent researchers all found frightening levels of asbestos in homes and workplaces. Yet the EPA and Ms Whitman (a former New Jersey governor), encouraged thousands of New Yorkers to return to their schools, homes and offices. The Economist. 9 February 2006

[US Judge blasts EPA over Sept. 11 dust health dangers](#) A federal judge on Thursday scolded the Environmental Protection Agency and its former chief for not warning residents near the World Trade Center about health dangers. EPA "knowing the likely harm to those exposed to the hazardous materials, encouraged residents, workers and students to return to the area." Reuters. 3 February 2006.

[Whitman, EPA short on truth](#) Fred LeBrun. Albany Times Union, New York. 5 February 2006.

[Ruling favors cancer disclosure](#) Illinois officials cannot withhold information that could show whether a rare childhood cancer is appearing in "clusters". Some parents have blamed chemical waste or other

environmental factors. Such environmental links have not been scientifically proven, but have sometimes been accepted by courts. Kevin McDermott. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 3 February 2006.

[State study will examine "unusual pattern" of childhood cancer](#) A preliminary study of childhood cancer cases in Sandwich was released Monday by DPH, showing relatively high concentration of cases in the southeastern section of town. "Environmental contamination doesn't necessarily observe geopolitical boundaries." Robin Lord. Cape Cod Times, Massachusetts. 9 February 2006.

[Parents prod regulators to probe cancer](#) Robin Lord. Cape Cod Times, Massachusetts. 12 February 2006.

[Keizer child-care center offers toxin-free atmosphere](#) Iris Valley Learning Center in Keizer certified as eco-healthy by the Oregon Environmental Council. Sheila picks up her 4-year-old grandson from day care knowing that he has been in a safe environment - safe from chemicals, secondhand smoke and mold. Beth Casper. Statesman Journal, Salem, Oregon. 18 February 2006.

(c) Asia

[China's pollution galvanizes peasants to action](#) Mrs. Song never had much interest in politics but when factory pollution began poisoning well water and killing crops in the Zhejiang province in China, the young mother got angry. Song says her 5-year-old son is prone to frequent lung infections. Lindsay Beck. Reuters. 2 February 2006.

[Sea turns toxic, fishermen protest](#) Residents staying near the Tarapur industrial belt have suffered irreparable losses, both physical and financial, due to the increasing industrial pollution in the area. "We are suffering from skin diseases. Children and women are also affected and women have to get into this water. Our main fish has turned red." New Dehli CNN-IBN News, India. 8 February 2006.

[6,000 new cases of cancer in children every year](#) Every year over 6000 children between one month and 15 years are found suffering from different types of cancer. She attributed the situation to the genetics factor, environmental problems, frequent exposure of children to X-rays, radiation caused by high-tension wires over localities and viruses. Tanveer Sher. Lahore Daily Times, Pakistan. 8 February 2006.

[A deadly tide of mud](#) A landslide buried the village of Guinsaugon. Torrential rainfall causes floods and landslides, exacerbated by the climatic phenomenon La Niña. The Philippines has lost almost all its forest to logging and slash-and-burn farmers. There has been little mention of how a fast-growing population puts pressure on the environment. [Subscription required]. The Economist. 23 February 2006.

(d) Africa

[UN warns world on Africa drought](#) The world is in danger of allowing a drought in East Africa to become a humanitarian catastrophe. The UN special envoy to the Horn of Africa, Kjell Bondevik, says global climate change was the root cause for the failure of the past two rainy seasons, and it was incumbent on the global community to come to the aid of those at risk. BBC. 23 February 2006.

[On the brink of famine](#) Five cycles of failed rain have led to crippling conditions in northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia, as well as severe water and food shortages in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Malnourished children began showing up, usually coupled with other illnesses, like malaria or diarrhea related to drinking dirty water. Karen Palmer. Toronto Star, Ontario. 22 February 2006.

