

## HECANET March-April-May 2006

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### IN THIS ISSUE

We would like to inform our subscribers that the current issue of HECANET covers three months (March, April and May 2006). Due to administrative changes, UNEP has transferred the lead role in preparing HECANET to WHO, although it will continue to be a joint effort of both organizations. We are also initiating the process of developing a new format for the newsletter and will soon be contacting you to get your views and suggestions for the coming issues.

#### EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

Articles this month addressed the WHO report: "Fuel for life", a publication that looks at solutions for indoor air pollution caused by solid fuels. More evidence deals with how early life is affected by exposure to chemicals and how the first years are key in determining a person's future health. Vaccines and dental amalgams are once again questioned on whether the mercury they contain is dangerous to health. A new straw that purifies water as it is drunk is presented. Chernobyl and its health aftermath are revisited, 20 years after the disaster. Also, the health effects of global warming continue to be covered by the media. 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**

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**Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA)** is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

**HECANET** is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

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### **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

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

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>

For more information on HECA's latest developments, please visit:

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) WHO Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) Newsletter**

The topics raised in the March issue of the [Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators Newsletter of March 2006](#) include new publications: "[Children's Environmental Health Indicators: A Survey](#)" (OECD) and "[Children's Health & the Environment in North America - A First Report on Available Indicators and Measures](#)" (CEC). It also includes information on pilot projects and indicator projects: Environment and Health Information Systems in Europe, Children's Environmental Health Indicators at the US – Mexico Border, Children's Environmental Health Indicators in South America and Indicators for the Global Strategy on Diet and Physical Activity. Regional pilots and CEH indicator projects are already underway in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and North America. Two regional pilots are highlighted in each newsletter; news on other pilots is available on the [CEH web site](#) in the indicators section (regional pilots).

For further enquiries or information on past issues of the CEHI Newsletter, please visit the website <http://www.who.int/ceh/newsletter/en/index.html> or contact: [cehindicators@who.int](mailto:cehindicators@who.int) if you wish to be added to the distribution list.

#### **(3) WHO Training in Reproductive Environmental Health**

In view of the increasing demand for strengthening the research capabilities in reproductive health,

especially in countries in need, the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH) have initiated a postgraduate research training programme on reproductive health. For the first time, in March 2006, the environmental influences on pregnancy and perinatal health were addressed.

The primary aim of this innovation into the training programme was to acquaint trainees with the most recent knowledge about the environmental influences on pregnancy and perinatal health, facilitate a critical appraisal of the strength of the supporting scientific evidence, enable students to identify and address priority environmental influences and encourage students to consider these influences, both beneficial and negative, in their research methodology and scientific writing.

This pilot 3 hour course will be further developed into a more comprehensive course in 2007.

For more information on the training, please visit the webpage of the GFMER at [www.gfmer.ch](http://www.gfmer.ch)

#### **(4) WHO Alberta Symposium Child Health and the Environment (CHE) Symposium**

The Alberta Symposium Child Health and the Environment (CHE) Symposium took place in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on March 24 2006. Over 110 professionals and 54 organizations participated at the event organized by the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR), the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada. The purpose was to present and discuss global, national and local perspectives on CHE, define challenges, focus on best practices and identify opportunities for joint actions on the research, policy and practice domains. The audience consisted of health care professionals (paediatricians, nurses, EH officers, educators), representatives from universities, institutes, NGOs and government. Working groups discussed specific issues and reported in plenary on: educational needs, research on biomarkers, child cancer projects, risk communication, child injuries, funding opportunities, international activities and other.

#### **(5) WHO Children's Health and the Environment - A Global Perspective - Manual**

This ground-breaking manual incorporates both developing and industrialized country outlooks to give a comprehensive international account of how environmental quality can influence the health and development of children from conception through adolescence.

Geared specifically towards the health sector for both public health specialists and clinicians who have a stake in minimizing adverse environmental impacts on children's health and development, the resource manual provides background information on an array of illnesses caused, triggered or exacerbated by hazards present in the places where children live, play, learn and work, or where they are exposed to extreme conditions. It also outlines exposure routes, signs and symptoms, basic treatments and prevention, as well as supplies ample resources for consultation. Furthermore, it presents interesting case studies, referenced throughout the book, to give concrete and tangible examples of environmental illnesses, with a particular focus on children in developing countries.

More information on this manual will soon be available at <http://www.who.int/ceh/en/>

#### **(6) WHO Fuel for Life - Report**

Energy is essential to meet our most basic needs: cooking, boiling water, lighting and heating. It is also a prerequisite for good health – a reality that has been largely ignored by the world community. The just released WHO report “[Fuel for life: household energy and health](#)” gives an overview of the health impacts of indoor air pollution from solid fuel use and describes solutions to promote health and

development in the context of the household energy challenge. Innovative policy approaches and a rigorous acceleration of investments is needed now to save lives and enable development.

The publication concludes with several key points. Cooking with wood, dung, coal and other solid fuels is a major risk factor for pneumonia among children and chronic respiratory disease among adults, with more than two thirds of these deaths occurring in South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Every year, the killer in the kitchen is responsible for 1.5 million deaths. Progress in access to modern cooking fuels since 1990 has been negligible. To halve, by 2015, the number of people without access to such fuels, 485 000 people will need to gain access to modern energy services every day for the next 10 years. Health and productivity gains can more than pay for lifting people out of energy poverty. For example, investing US\$ 13 billion per year to halve, by 2015, the number of people worldwide cooking with solid fuels by supplying them with liquefied petroleum gas shows a payback of US\$ 91 billion per year. Taking household energy solutions to scale will overcome a major barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Improved household energy practices promote education, empower women, save the lives of children and their mothers and benefit our forests and our climate. Evaluating the impacts of household energy projects and programmes will shed light on how different technical solutions could be fine-tuned to maximize their health, social and environmental benefits. Learning from their experience will provide a recipe for putting into action successful, large-scale programmes.

"Making cleaner fuels and improved stoves available to millions of poor people in developing countries will reduce child mortality and improve women's health," WHO Director General Lee Jong-wook said.

"It is a travesty that 1.5 million lives a year - many of those of children whose lives have not even started - are snuffed out every year because of needless exposure to indoor smoke. We have simple, affordable solutions; let us ensure that they reach the people who can benefit from - and live by - using them," said Dr Maria Neira, WHO's Director for Public Health and Environment.

### **(7) WHO 59th World Health Assembly**

The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly (WHA) opened on 23 May 2006 in sombre mood following the death early on Monday morning of the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Dr Lee Jong-wook. Dr Lee, who was 61 and had been in his post since July 2003, died following a sudden illness.

Issues discussed by the WHA this year include: strengthening pandemic-influenza preparedness and response, including the application of the International Health Regulations 2005; infant and young child nutrition; HIV/AIDS; polio eradication; sickle-cell anaemia; smallpox eradication and the destruction of variola virus stocks; prevention of avoidable blindness; international trade and health; tobacco control; and intellectual property rights.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in his keynote address to the 59th World Health Assembly noted, "If we poison and pollute our earth, we poison and pollute ourselves. Food colourings and additives can cause a range of health problems in adults and children; hydrogenated fats and unhealthy diets are linked to heart disease and – frighteningly – the residue from pesticides used in conventional farming methods can remain in our bodies for years".

### **(8) UN Commission for Sustainable Development: Household Energy, Indoor Air Pollution and Health at the 14th Session of the CSD**

The 14th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-14) took place in New York from 1st to 12th May 2006. Established by the United Nations in 1992 to ensure effective follow-up to

the Rio Earth Summit, the CSD is the high-level forum for discussing sustainable development within the UN. Energy for sustainable development is the main theme of CSD-14 and CSD-15. On 11 May, WHO, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air, Practical Action and the US Environmental Protection Agency organized a joint side event entitled "4000 deaths a day from cooking fires? Lets prevent them!". By drawing attention to the severe risks of using biomass and coal for cooking and heating in developing countries, the side-event made the case for the urgent need to improve access to household energy among the poor. Drawing on their new report "Fuel for life: household energy and health", WHO laid out the challenge: Every year, indoor air pollution is responsible for more than 1.5 million deaths, mostly among children and women. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals nearly 500 000 people will need to gain access to cleaner fuels or modern cooking technologies every day between now and 2015. Ministers and other high-level panelists from affected countries and potential donors were asked to respond to the challenge. Following the statements, a lively discussion ensued and further highlighted the significance of the health burden as well as difficulties in scaling up effective solutions.

### **(9) Second Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**

WHO/UNEP Letter of Agreement announced at Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs): The second Conference of the Parties to the UNEP POPs Convention was held in Geneva from 1-5 May. On 3 May, the signing of Letter of Agreement between WHO and UNEP intended to promote the implementation of an expanded global survey of human milk for POPs was announced. The potential human health effects of POPs (such as DDT) include a range of adverse health effects, such as cancer, immunotoxicity and disruption to the endocrine system. As POPs have a capacity to accumulate in fat-containing foods, such as milk, the Convention identified human milk as one of the likely matrices to be monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the convention in reducing or eliminating the emission of POPs. The effectiveness evaluation must be performed within four years of the ratification of the treaty and WHO's experience with human milk will serve as a platform for obtaining reliable and comparable data from all 122 signatory countries by the May 2008 reporting deadline. Based on data obtained to date, it should be emphasize that WHO confirms its recommendation that all infants should be exclusively breastfed at least until the age of 6 months.

For more information on the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on POPs, please go to [www.pops.int](http://www.pops.int)

### **(10) Playing it Safe : Service Provider Strategies to Reduce Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health**

[Playing it Safe : Service Provider Strategies to Reduce Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health](#) Best Start Resource Centre, 2006, in collaboration with the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE), a multi-sectoral collaboration of organizations working to protect children's health from environmental exposures and toxic chemicals.). This manual will guide service providers to promising strategies to address environmental risks to preconception, prenatal and child health. A companion to "Child Health and the Environment – A Primer", the resource uses program examples, insights and tips to share strategies that practitioners can use to address environmental risks to preconception, prenatal and child health. Information is included about the context of this work, underlying factors, important considerations, as well as steps to plan, implement and evaluate work on this topic.

### **(11) US/EPA New Edition of Hispanic Environmental Health Page Focuses on Pesticides**

EPA announced a new Hispanic environmental health page on pesticides in its Spanish-language portal. The new page "[El medio ambiente y su salud : Pesticidas](#)" discusses health and environmental issues associated with the proper use of pesticides and informational resources in Spanish and English. This Hispanic Web site is part of the agency's continuing expansion of outreach to the Hispanic community in the United States and Puerto Rico. The Hispanic environmental health page, "[El medio ambiente y su salud](#)," focuses on the agency's overall efforts to educate Hispanics, researchers, and health care providers on how environmental health issues affect the different Hispanic communities. The page is updated regularly with new information on developments and policy. Since its launch last year, this popular page has covered issues such as asthma, mold and carbon monoxide. This segment of EPA's Spanish-language portal will feature other environmental issues such as green technology and drinking water in the near future.

### **(12) US/EPA: A Framework for Assessing Health Risks of Environmental Exposures to Children**

EPA is announcing that Eastern Research Group, Inc., an EPA contractor for external scientific peer review, plans to convene an independent panel of experts and organize and conduct an [external peer review workshop](#) to review the external review draft document titled, 'A Framework for Assessing Health Risks of Environmental Exposures to Children' (EPA/600/R-05/093A). The draft document was prepared by the National Center for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) within EPA's Office of Research and Development. The [draft document and EPA's peer review charge](#) are available primarily via the Internet on NCEA's home page. EPA is releasing this draft document solely for the purpose of pre-dissemination peer review under applicable information quality guidelines. This document has not been formally disseminated by EPA. It does not represent and should not be construed to represent any Agency policy or determination. Eastern Research Group, Inc. invites the public to register to attend this workshop as observers. In addition, Eastern Research Group, Inc. invites the public to give oral and/or provide written comments at the workshop regarding the draft document under review. On March 14, 2006, EPA announced a 45-day public comment period on the draft document (71 FR 13125). The public comment period and the external peer review workshop are separate processes that provide opportunities for all interested parties to comment on the document. EPA has provided Eastern Research Group, Inc. with the public comments EPA received. In preparing a final report, EPA will consider public comments it received during the public comment period and will consider the Eastern Research Group, Inc. report of the comments and recommendations from the external peer-review workshop. The peer-review panel workshop will begin on June 6, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. and end at Noon on June 7, 2006, at Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue, NW.

### **(13) Vulnerability of the Fetus and the Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy**

Vulnerability of the Fetus and the Infant to Ambient Pollutants and Reduced Food Intake in Pregnancy, Kravov, Poland, June 2-3 2006. For more information, please go to <http://www.symposium.pl/konferencje/epidemiologia/> or refer to [HECANET Newsletter](#) of February 2006.

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## **ARTICLES**

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

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

[Press Conference on WHO report 'Fuel for life: household energy and health'](#) Half of the world's population, some 3.2 billion people, relied on solid fuels, such as wood, dung and coal for cooking, boiling water and other basic energy needs. That translated into 4,000 people dying every day, mostly women and children. [UN News and Media Division](#). 4 May 2006

[Unclean fuels kill 1.5 million people per year: UN](#) Half the world's population burns wood, coal, dung and other solid fuels to cook food and heat their homes, exposing them to dangerous smoke WHO said. Making better-ventilated stoves available to half of those currently using inefficient cookers could save \$34 billion in fuel expenditure each year. [Reuters](#). 4 May 2006.

[1.5 mn people die each year from household fuels: WHO](#) Each 100 million homes switching to cleaner fuels for cooking would lead to 473 million fewer women, children and men exposed to harmful indoor air and 282,000 fewer deaths from respiratory diseases per year. Indoor air pollution is a major risk factor for pneumonia among children. [New Kerala](#), India. 5 May 2006.

[Unclean fuels kill millions per year, says UN](#) WHO said women and children in Africa and Asia were especially vulnerable to indoor air pollution from open fires and poorly ventilated stoves. "Day in day out, and for hours at a time, women and their small children breathe in amounts of smoke equivalent to consuming two packs of cigarettes per day," WHO said. [IOL](#), South Africa. 4 May 2006.

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

[In Utero Exposure To Urban Air Pollutants Can Increase Risk](#) Prenatal exposure to air pollutants in New York City can adversely affect child development, according to the results of a [study](#) released today by the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health. The study is the first to reveal that those pollutants can affect cognitive development during childhood. [Science Daily](#). 25 April 2006.

[The Cancer Differential: Minorities in Racially Segregated Urban Areas at Higher Risk than Whites](#) Minority populations living in highly segregated metropolitan areas in the US have higher estimated lifetime cancer risks from air toxics than whites. Most significant contributors to cancer risk were mobile sources (vehicles, airplanes, and trains). Tanya Tillet. [EHP](#). March 2006.

[The Exposure-Response Curve for Ozone and Risk of Mortality and the Adequacy of Current Ozone Regulations](#) O3 levels below U.S. EPA regulations have been associated with increased frequency of respiratory symptoms in children with asthma . Any reduction in O3 levels, should yield important benefits to public health, even in areas that meet current standards. Michelle Bell. [EHP](#). April 2006.

[Kenya: Smoking Cars to Lose Licences](#) Smoke-emitting vehicles are to be driven off the roads Kenya as the Government prepares to enforce the anti-pollution clause in the Traffic Act. Respiratory ailments are second only to malaria as a leading cause of morbidity and death in Kenya. Harmful emissions by cars slow down mental development in children. Fred Mukinda. [The Nation](#) , Nairobi. 9 May, 2006.

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

['Smoking Room' at Home Won't Shield Asthmatic Kids](#) Simply moving to another room to smoke in the family home won't do much to protect asthmatic children, a new study finds. In fact, asthmatic kids who live with smokers are 10 times less likely to be protected by any smoking ban in the home and car than children who live in homes with nonsmokers. [HealthDay News](#). 16 March 2006.

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

[National Plans for Eliminating 12 Extremely Hazardous Chemicals](#) The [Stockholm Convention](#), targets 12 hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals that can kill people, damage the nervous and immune systems, cause cancer and reproductive disorders and interfere with normal infant and child development. Press Release. [United Nations Environment Programme](#). 27 April 2006.

[Study finds in utero arsenic exposure tied to lung disease](#) Children who are exposed to high levels of arsenic in their drinking water are seven to 12 times more likely to die of lung cancer and other lung diseases in young adulthood, a new study by University of California, Berkeley, and Chilean researchers suggests. Liese Greensfelder. [UCBerkeleyNews](#). 27 March 2006.

[A toxic life](#) We're polluted from head to toe and though scientists can now measure minute amounts of chemicals in our bodies, no one knows the long-term health effects. Scientists have studied levels of toxic chemicals on breast milk, childhood lead exposure or occupational hazards. It's a big red flag, Babies aren't supposed to be born pre-polluted. Nancy White. [Toronto Star](#). 21 April 2006.

[Greenpeace report reveals the impact of toxic chemicals on reproductive health](#) 'Fragile: Our reproductive health and chemical exposure', collates the findings of peer-reviewed scientific studies of recent years. Exposure to some commonly used chemicals takes effect almost from the moment a child is conceived. Greenpeace Southeast Asia. [Samar News](#), Philippines.. 2 May 2006.

[Sour Finding on Popular Sweetener Increased Cancer Incidence Associated with Low-Dose Aspartame Intake](#) New research out of the European Ramazzini Foundation of Oncology and Environmental Sciences bolsters recent calls for reconsideration of regulations of aspartame's widespread use in order to better protect public health, particularly that of children. Nathaniel Mead. [EHP](#). March 2006.

[Chicken With Arsenic? Is That O.K.?](#) Arsenic may be called the king of poisons, but it is everywhere: in the environment, in the water we drink and sometimes in the food we eat. Those at greatest risk from arsenic are small children and people who consume chicken at a higher rate than what is considered average: two ounces per day for a 154-pound person. By Marian Burros. [NY Times](#). 5 April 2006.

## **(b) Lead**

[Reduced Intellectual Development in Children with Prenatal Lead Exposure](#) Lead exposure around 28 weeks gestation is a critical period for later child intellectual development, with lasting and possibly permanent effects. There was no evidence of a threshold; strongest lead effects on IQ occurred within the first few micrograms of BPb. Lourdes Schnaas et al. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). May 2006.

[The Gambia in the process of switching to unleaded fuel](#) The Gambia is in the process of joining the rest of the world in phasing-out leaded gasoline that has been linked to disease and environmental damage. Klaus Toepfer, head of the Nairobi based UNEP, described Africa's situation to unleaded fuel as "a real environmental and health achievement." Sheikh Alkinky Sanyang. [Daily Observer](#). 28 March 2006.

## **(c) Pesticides**

[Researchers Look at Farm Kids, Pesticides](#) Preliminary results of a study of North Dakota farm children exposed to pesticides show they performed significantly lower than their peers on IQ tests, though scores are still considered normal. They will go on to determine whether there is a correlation between the level of exposure to pesticides and performance on mental functions. [CBS News](#). 25 March 2006.

[World Activists Press for Action on Global Poisons](#) During the second meeting of parties to the Stockholm Convention on POPs (COP2) on 1-5 May with more than 450 delegates and observers from

122 countries, chocolate was served to government officials to highlight contamination of common foods. In an open letter to delegates, NGOs urged officials phase out POPs. [PANUPS](#). 18 May 2006.

#### (d) Mercury

[Vaccinations: Friend or foe?](#) Concern is rising that tiny drops of mercury injected into millions of infants may be causing autism, attention deficit disorder and brain damage. Since the 1930s ethyl mercury has been added to a variety of vaccines as a preservative, in the form of Thimerosal. Tony Carnie. [KwaZulu-Natal Mercury](#), South Africa. 18 May 2006.

[Studies Find No Ill Effects From Mercury in Fillings](#). The first clinical trials to study the safety of mercury amalgam dental fillings showed no mental or physical impairments in children carrying the fillings for as long as seven years. "During the period when the children are growing and developing, we didn't see any effect" Thomas H. Maugh II. [LA Times](#). 19 April 2006.

### (3) WATER AND SANITATION

[Argentina: Open Sewers a Health and Environmental Risk](#) The gap between the rich North and the impoverished developing South is reproduced in the Argentine capital. People on the south side of Buenos Aires are "on the verge of a health and sanitation collapse." Contamination of water from open-air sewers especially affects children. Marcela Valente. [Inter Press Service News Agency](#). 25 April 2006.

[Cholera outbreak aggravates threat to child survival in Angola](#) Angola, which already has one of the highest under-five mortality rates in the world, is facing a new threat of cholera, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said. The outbreak and quick spread of the cholera epidemic was largely due to poor sanitation and a shortage of safe drinking water in the country. [Xinhua](#). 12 May 2006.

[Angola: UN health agency sends in more international experts as cholera toll rises](#) As Angola's worst cholera outbreak in almost two decades continues to rage on with 546 new cases and 31 deaths reported in just 24 hours, the UN sent six international experts to reinforce national coordination, water and sanitation, logistics and epidemiological surveillance. [UN News Centre](#). 18 May 2006.

[New straw to kill disease as you drink](#) A new straw that purifies water as it is drunk is hoped to be part of a solution to water-borne disease killing thousands in developing countries. Water from most sources can be drunk. In the developing world, one person in six does not have access to drinking water, and 6,000 people a day die from water-borne diseases. [BBC News](#). 4 May 2006

#### (4) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[The Chernobyl disaster](#). On 26 April 1986, one of 4 nuclear reactors at the Chernobyl power station exploded. Contamination still a problem and disputes continue about how many will eventually die. Most obvious health impact is a sharp increase in thyroid cancer. About 4,000 cases of the disease have been seen, mainly in people who were children or adolescents at the time. [BBC News](#). 24 April 2006.

[Secretary-General calls for 'revolution in energy efficiency' at high-level meeting of sustainable development commission](#) We need a revolution in energy efficiency. We need to scale up investment in mature renewables such as wind, hydro and solar energy. And we need to intensify research and development into promising longer-term sources." [UN News and Media Division](#). 10 May 2006.

[Annan calls for new approaches to energy efficiency](#) United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan today called for new approaches to energy use with a focus on greater efficiency, increased investment in renewable sources and new technologies. "Conventional power stations waste 65 per cent of the energy they generate." [UN News Centre](#). 10 May 2006.

[UN child study says first five years are key](#) Children's growth is influenced more by environmental factors than genetics up to the age of five. "Children from India, Norway and Brazil all show similar growth patterns when provided healthy growth conditions in early life," WHO said. "New growth standards should ensure more babies benefit from breast milk for longer ". [Reuters Health](#). 27 April 2006.

[Around the World, Warmer Temperatures Mean More Infections](#) "Depending on the warming trend that unfolds in the years ahead, we have to accept that habitats will change. New bugs can be expected to settle in. Every organism will find a niche. With the tampering of the environment, we really can't predict exactly what those changes will be." Joy Victory. [ABC News](#). 25 April 2006

### **(b) Americas**

[A giant US study on children's health might be orphaned, researchers](#) fear The 100,000 children be in the study have not even been conceived yet. They were to be followed from the womb to their 21st birthdays to find the roots of diseases from autism to asthma. The White House proposed eliminating the \$2 billion National Children's Study altogether. Scott Allen. [The Boston Globe](#). 27 March 2006.

### **(c) Asia**

[Where computers go to die -- and kill](#) For years, developed countries have been exporting tons of electronic waste to China for inexpensive, labor-intensive recycling and disposal. Since 2000, it's been illegal to import electronic waste into China for this kind of environmentally unsound recycling. But tons of debris are smuggled in with legitimate imports. Elizabeth Grossman. [Salon](#). 10 April 2006.

### **(d) Africa**

[UN marks Africa Malaria Day by stressing need combination drugs, treated nets](#) The UN today marked Africa Malaria Day by highlighting the need to provide universal access to artemisinin-based combination therapies as quickly as possible on a continent where the mosquito-borne disease kills an estimated 1 million children below the age of five every year. [UN News Centre](#). 25 April 2006.

[Climate change may kill millions in Africa-report](#) Disease spread by global warming could kill an extra 185 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by the end of the century and turn millions more into refugees unless rich nations take action now, a report said. Global warming should allow carriers like mosquitoes to expand their ranges. Jeremy Lovell. [Reuters](#). 14 May 2006.

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