

HECANET * December 2006 - January 2007**

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IN THIS ISSUE

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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- (1) HECA Developments**
- (2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI)**
- (3) WHO's photo and video contest, "Images of Health and Disability"**
- (4) 24th Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP**
- (5) Global Environmental Outlook Yearbook 2007. UNEP**
- (6) Humanitarian Action Report 2007. UNICEF**
- (7) UNICEF report: The state of the world's children, 2007: Women and children, the double dividend of gender equity**
- (8) WHO Training in Reproductive Environmental Health. Geneva, Switzerland. 26 February 2007 to 28 March 2007**
- (9) Stockholm Convention COP-3. Dakar, Senegal. 30 April to 4 May 2007**
- (10) 4th International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. Vienna, Austria. 10 to 12 June 2007**
- (11) Tunza International Youth Conference 2007. Leverkusen, Germany. 8 to 12 September 2007**
- (12) 14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 to 14 October 2007**
- (13) Graduate Certificate in Children's Environmental Health. 2007**
- (14) 2nd Seminar on Children's Health and Environment. Nicosia, Cyprus. 8 December 2006.**
- (15) NIEHS Children's Environmental Health Research Workshop. NC, US. 22 to 23 January, 2007**
- (16) Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility, San Francisco, U.S. 28 to 30 January 2007**
- (17) 7th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment: Integrating Environment and Human Health. Washington, U.S. 1 and 2 February 2007**
- (18) EPA's TEACH: new chemical summaries on Formaldehyde and on Permethrin and Resmethrin**
- (19) IFCS Forum V Executive Summary and Final report**
- (20) 2007-2008 World Cancer Campaign – “Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s World” and related activities in Spain**
- (21) The New EU Chemicals Legislation – REACH**
- (22) Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury: "Halting the Child Brain Drain Report"**
- (23) Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. IPCC**
- (24) Pesticide use reduction for better health: scientific evidence and best practices for a European approach. Brussels, Belgium. 7 March 2007**
- (25) NewGeneris Project: Newborns and Genotoxic exposure risks**

- (26) Revision of GS-37, environmental standard for institutional and industrial cleaning products**
- (27) Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning**
- (28) Beyond Pesticides**
- (29) Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits**
- (30) Activities of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) and Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA)**

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

Articles in this issue refer to the increasing air pollution in cities: smog affects particularly Asiatic areas. Environment scientists urge for tougher smog rules. Women and young girls are the main victims of indoor air pollution, specially in developing regions, where heating and cooking with biomass can be a common sight in poor homes. Environmental tobacco smoke is linked to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children. In the chemicals section, our houses and our bodies can be ridden with chemicals of different origins, and Bisphenol A and phtalates show worrisome early-life effects that affect among others, reproductive health. Lead has been found in vitamins and there is debate on as whether it will still be considered a criteria pollutant. Several articles explore the health effects of pesticides, specially their neurotoxicity and their potential link with cancers. FAO also encouraged the withdrawal of highly toxic pesticides. Articles on the mercury section call for a global mercury ban. The water articles deal with exposure to manganese and fluoride through tap water. Waste, specially e-waste is a special environmental concern for health, often exported to developing areas. Several articles highlight the health threat that climate change represents for the world and one includes a comparative risk assessment of the burden of disease from climate change. Also solutions as to what we can do are offered.

From a regional perspective, in the Americas, Canada, Nicaragua, and Ecuador struggle with pesticide exposure issues. Health Canada warns North Americans about high lead levels in necklaces and key chains. In Asia, Indonesia is swamped by flood waters, Baghdad sewage systems collapses and in China there is a growing number of "cancer villages". Air pollution worries Nepalese and Iranian populations. In Africa, poverty affects one in two Mozambican children, Kenya's nomads are plagued by floods and 2006 was a terrible year for African children. Dr. M. Chan, Director of WHO, promises an impact on the health of women and people in Africa as a measure of success. In Europe, controversy surrounds the newly approved EU legislation on chemicals, REACH.

Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**
- (2) CHEMICALS: (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury**
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) GLOBAL CHANGE**

(5) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General (b) Reproductive Health (c) Americas (d) Asia (e) Africa (f) Europe

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

For more information on HECA's latest developments, please visit the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance website: <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>
International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage: http://www.who.int/household_water/en/

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

The CEHI Newsletter has been set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). It aims to provide up-to-date information on relevant global, regional and national indicator activities.

To sign up to the newsletter, to contribute information or to find out more, please visit the website [WHO | Children's environmental health indicators newsletter \(CEHI\)](#) or contact: cehindicators@who.int

(3) WHO's photo and video contest, "Images of Health and Disability"

WHO's photo and video contest, "Images of Health and Disability" is co-organized by WHO's Department on Public Health and Environment (PHE) and its 2007 theme will focus on Health and Environment. The contest is open as of now until 9 March 2007.

This is an invitation to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring healthier environments (incl. for children and adolescents) through powerful images, illustrations, stories and video clips. Powerful images can form the basis of an excellent lesson, generate intense and thoughtful discussion and "be as effective as a thousand words". For those with a special interest in Children's Environmental Health, this contest may provide a good opportunity for illustrating the situations in which they are most interested, concerned or pleased about - as when children thrive in safe and healthy environments. The aim is to obtain a creative collection of high quality images to promote a better understanding of the positive and negative aspects of health and environment - and their relevance to some specially vulnerable population groups - and promote excellence through competitive spirit.

Please see the details under PHE's web site www.who.int/phe . The winners of last year's contest can be found at <http://www3.who.int/icf/>

(4) 24th Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP

The 24th session of [UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum](#) was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5 to 9 February 2007, focusing on emerging policy issues of globalization and the environment, as well as UN reform. Chemicals management was also on the Council/Forum's agenda, including a review of scientific information on lead and cadmium, which was intended to inform discussions on the need for global action in relation to these chemicals. In 2003, at its twenty-second session, UNEP's Governing Council adopted decision calling upon Governments to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline and to act urgently on the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to phase out lead in lead-based paint and other sources of human exposure, to prevent exposure to lead, in particular children's exposure to lead, and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance as well as the treatment of lead poisoning.

The review of scientific information shows that the challenges posed by lead and cadmium have a significant international dimension. Local emissions may result in significant exposure in developing countries, where local sources are likely to be subject to less stringent controls. For lead, the most significant health effects are neuro-developmental, with children and pregnant women being the populations of greatest concern. Cadmium exposure can have effects on the kidneys, and inhalation has associated carcinogenic effects. Global efforts are needed to address these challenges efficiently, especially in developing countries. This need was highlighted during discussions at the fifth session of the [Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety \(IFCS\)](#), held in Budapest from 25 to 29 September 2006. In the Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium, the Forum called for further global, regional, national and local actions as appropriate. It invited UNEP's Governing Council to initiate and strengthen voluntary actions, including partnerships and other activities, and to give high priority to considering measures, as appropriate, on lead and cadmium.

UNEP's Governing Council also considered the issue of mercury. On the basis of a report on progress prepared by UNEP, as well as the statement issued by IFCS regarding mercury, lead and cadmium, the Council/Forum addressed the need for further action on mercury, considering

a full range of options, including the possibility of a legally binding instrument, partnerships and other actions.

(5) Global Environmental Outlook Yearbook 2007. UNEP

The [GEO Year Book 2007](#) is the fourth annual report on the changing environment produced by the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with many world environment experts. It was launched at UNEP's 24th Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The 2007 Year Book includes global and regional overviews of significant developments over the past year. It highlights linkages among ecosystem health, human well-being, and economic development; examines new thinking on the value of ecosystem services and the threat from ecosystem degradation; and describes recent research findings and policy decisions that affect our awareness and response to global change.

A special feature focus analyzes the intersection between environment and globalization where ecosystem services and the human well-being that depends on those services are affected by natural resource exploitation in response to global demands. The chapter also explores some of the innovative policy mechanisms that link global supplies of goods and services with sustainable development objectives.

The emerging scientific and policy challenges of nanotechnology are examined from an environmental perspective. Nanotechnology will bring environmental benefits but it is vital that we adopt appropriate assessment and legislative processes to address the unique challenges presented by nanomaterials and their life cycles.

(6) Humanitarian Action Report 2007. UNICEF

The [Humanitarian Action Report 2007](#) outlines UNICEF's appeal for children and women in 33 emergencies around the world. Emergencies, in the form of natural disasters and new or protracted conflict, continued to exact a toll on the lives of children and women around the world. Massive flooding in the Horn of Africa and multiple typhoons in South Asia were typical of the ever more frequent occurrence of natural disasters that have affected thousands of families in 2006. In Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the occupied Palestinian territory, Sri Lanka and the Sudan, women and children continue to be impacted by the reverberating crossfire of conflict.

(7) UNICEF report: The state of the world's children, 2007: Women and children, the double dividend of gender equity

[The State of the World's Children 2007](#) examines the discrimination and disempowerment women face throughout their lives – and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. It looks at the status of women today, discusses how gender equality will move all the Millennium Development Goals forward, and shows how investment in women's rights will ultimately produce a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children.

(8) WHO Training in Reproductive Environmental Health. Geneva, Switzerland. 26 February 2007 to 28 March 2007

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. Next training will take place in Geneva from 26 February 2007 to 28 March 2007. There will be a special session on the environmental influences on pregnancy and perinatal health.

For more information on the training, please visit the webpage of the GFMER at www.gfmer.ch

(9) Stockholm Convention COP-3. Dakar, Senegal. 30 April to 4 May 2007

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention will be held from 30 April to 4 May 2007 at the Le Méridien President Hotel, Dakar, Senegal. The working languages will be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. For more information, please go to http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_3/default.htm

(10) 4th International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. Vienna, Austria. 10 to 12 June 2007

4th International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. Vienna, Austria. 10 to 12 June 2007. For more information, please go to <http://www.inchesnetwork.net> or send an email to inches@umit.at

(11) Tunza International Youth Conference 2007. Leverkusen, Germany. 8 to 12 September 2007

Tunza International Youth Conference in Leverkusen, Germany. 8 to 12 September 2007. For more information on the Conference and to submit a nomination from your organization please visit our website at <http://www.unep.org/tunza/youthconference>

(12) 14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 to 14 October 2007

Organized by the Mediterranean Scientific Association of Environmental Protection (MESAEP), this year's symposium will focus on the interconnections between the quality of the environment and human health in the Mediterranean region attempting to provide a comprehensive picture of the relative environmental burden and to elucidate the mechanisms through which environmental conditions affects the state of human health. Particular attention will be paid to exposure and health effects of vulnerable population groups, such as children and women in child-bearing age. For more information, please go to <http://www.mesaep.net/symp2007/first.html>

(13) Graduate Certificate in Children's Environmental Health. 2007

Graduate certificate in Children's Environmental Health, WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Children's Environmental Health, Perth, Western Australia, March 2007. For more information contact Professor Peter D. Sly at peters@icmr.uwa.edu.au ; visit the website www.icmr.uwa.edu.au or refer to HECANET Newsletter of August-September 2006.

(14) 2nd Seminar on Children's Health and Environment. Nicosia, Cyprus. 8 December 2006.

Convened and organized by the National Committee on Children's Environmental Health of the Ministry of Health of Cyprus, it was held at the Hotel Kleopatra in Nicosia, Cyprus. The local organizer was Dr S. Michaelidou and participants were health professionals from different sectors, including the Ministry of Health, the national paediatric association, environment and school-health officers, as well as private practitioners. The meeting was opened by His Excellency M. Ch. Charalambous, Minister of Health, who highlighted the importance his new administration gives to environmental matters and said he would welcome proposals from the Seminar. Modules from the WHO Training Package for the Health Sector were used. Two short films were prepared by the National Committee, one on Tobacco Smoke and the other one on POPs.

(15) NIEHS Children's Environmental Health Research Workshop. NC, US. 22 to 23 January, 2007

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) sponsored a [workshop on research approaches for addressing children's environmental health](#). This meeting was open to NIEHS staff and the public. It took place at Rodbell Auditorium, Rall Building, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The goal of this workshop was to develop new strategies for research, exposure and effects monitoring, intervention and prevention in children's environmental health. Specific objectives were to maximize the effectiveness of scientific research - basic science, exposure monitoring/biomonitoring, epidemiology, toxicology, clinical medicine and multidisciplinary studies - and to enhance the translation of research to the bedside, to the community and to public policy.

(16) Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility, San Francisco, U.S. 28 to 30 January 2007

The 2007 [University of California San Francisco \(UCSF\) Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility](#) took place in UCSF Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco, U.S. on 28 to 30 January 2007. This conference continued the efforts of researchers, health professionals, policymakers and community health leaders to understand and mitigate the reproductive and developmental health impacts of exposures to environmental contaminants - including the periconceptual and fetal origins of adult disorders.

(17) 7th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment: Integrating Environment and Human Health. Washington, U.S. 1 and 2 February 2007

The [NCSE's 7th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment: Integrating Environment and Human Health](#) took place in Washington, D.C. on February 1 and 2 2007. Over 120 experts spoke in plenary sessions, symposia, and topical breakout sessions. The conference addressed the many essential roles the environment plays on our well-being today, as well as the multi-dimensional relationships between human health and environmental components, which may have far-reaching consequences for society.

(18) EPA's TEACH: new chemical summaries on Formaldehyde and on Permethrin and Resmethrin.

EPA's Toxicity and Exposure Assessment for Children's Health (TEACH) project has added a chemical summary on Formaldehyde and a chemical summary on Permethrin and Resmethrin. They can be found at the TEACH website, www.epa.gov/teach. You can also provide feedback about TEACH at <http://www.epa.gov/teach/teachsurvey.html>

The TEACH Web site contains a searchable database of scientific literature relevant to children's environmental health. The TEACH database currently includes 18 chemicals of concern. In addition, the TEACH website is developing chemical summaries for these chemicals which provide a survey of the scientific literature and U.S. federal regulations relevant to children's environmental health.

The goal of the TEACH project is to complement existing children's health resources. TEACH does not provide an evaluation or critique the validity of the relevant scientific studies; nor does TEACH derive toxicity values. Instead, the goal of TEACH is to summarize, compile, and organize information obtained from numerous resources into one online resource. TEACH is designed to support numerous efforts throughout the country that target the protection of children's health. The objective of the TEACH project is to Improve the information base on children's environmental health risks in order to streamline and facilitate the search for current children's health information in the scientific literature; support existing children's health efforts; identify data and information gaps in the literature on children's environmental health.

The addition of the Formaldehyde Chemical Summary and the Permethrin/Resmethrin Chemical Summary to the TEACH website brings the number of completed [Chemical Summaries](#) to 11, including : 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid (2,4-D); Arsenic (As); Atrazine; Benzene; Benzo(a)pyrene (BaP); Diethyltoluamide (DEET); Formaldehyde; Nitrates/Nitrites; Permethrin and Resmethrin (Pyrethroids); Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Vinyl Chloride.

(19) IFCS Forum V Executive Summary and Final report

The Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) Forum V Executive Summary and Final report are now available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish at <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum5/report/en/index.html>

(20) 2007-2008 World Cancer Campaign – “Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s World” and related activities in Spain

Sunday, 4 February 2007 was World Cancer Day. It is an amazing statistic: 43 percent of all cancer cases can be prevented. The 2007-2008 World Cancer Campaign – “Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s World” – aims to spread information and share knowledge about actions and technologies from lifestyle behaviours to and a groundbreaking vaccine for cervical cancer to underscore prevention in fighting cancer. Targeting parents, healthcare professionals and policy decision-makers, the global campaign features messages sharing a common theme: prevent cancer in adults by focusing on behaviour and appropriate vaccination during childhood.

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) – a Geneva-based NGO – and its cancer-fighting member organizations in over 80 countries launched the campaign on World Cancer Day (Sunday 4 February 2007). Emphasis focused on four main cancer-causing factors: tobacco use, unhealthy diet and obesity, infections that may cause cancer, and overexposure to damaging sunlight. With the fight against cancer at a turning point, UICC member organizations around the world joined together in putting forth a simple lifesaving message: actions now for today’s children can shape a healthier tomorrow’s world. For more information, please go to <http://www.uicc.org/>

In Spain, the Spanish Association Against Cancer (Asociación Española Contra el Cáncer (AECC)) started a campaign on the subject directed to children, adolescents, parents and decision-makers about the need to change behaviours starting in childhood, as an effective tool for prevention. The campaign was launched on 1 February 2007. An Internet chat "Preventing Cancer Now" also took place on the same day. For more information, please go to <http://www.todocancer.org/encuentrodigital/>

A course on "Primary Prevention of cancer: Cancer is a preventable disease" will start on 8 March 2007 at the Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca. For more information (in Spanish), please go to http://www.ffis.es/formacion/cursos_isciiii.php?id=7

(21) The New EU Chemicals Legislation – REACH

On 29 October 2003, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new EU regulatory framework for chemicals. Under the proposed new system called REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals), enterprises that manufacture or import more than one tonne of a chemical substance per year would be required to register it in a central database. The aims of the proposed new regulation are to improve the protection of human health and the environment while maintaining the competitiveness and enhancing the innovative capability of the EU chemicals industry. Political agreement on REACH was reached in December 2006. For more information, please go to http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/overview_en.htm

(22) Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury: "Halting the Child Brain Drain Report"

At a well-attended event in the European Parliament on 10 January 2007, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Health Care Without Harm launched their "Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury" campaign report, entitled "Halting the Child Brain Drain Report". The report presents the results of a hair sample testing survey of 250 women in 21 countries across Europe and in Asia, Africa and South America. The results reaffirm figures published in the EU’s 2005

extended impact assessment. The findings are worrying because scientific reports have shown conclusively that low-level exposure to mercury in the womb can cause brain damage in children. The report and a series of fact sheets on mercury can be found at the Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury campaign web page <http://www.env-health.org/r/145>

(23) Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. IPCC.

The Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) adopted the Summary for Policymakers of the first volume of “Climate Change 2007”, also known as the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). “Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis”, assesses the current scientific knowledge of the natural and human drivers of climate change, observed changes in climate, the ability of science to attribute changes to different causes, and projections for future climate change.

The report was produced by some 600 authors from 40 countries. Over 620 expert reviewers and a large number of government reviewers also participated. Representatives from 113 governments reviewed and revised the Summary line-by-line during the course of this week before adopting it and accepting the underlying report.

The Summary can be downloaded in English from www.ipcc.ch and <http://ipcc-wg1.ucar.edu>

(24) Pesticide use reduction for better health: scientific evidence and best practices for a European approach. Brussels, Belgium. 7 March 2007

The Health & Environment Alliance and Pesticides Action Network Europe are co-organizing this event in the European Parliament (Brussels) on 7 March (14h00 – 18h00) in Brussels, European Parliament 60, Rue Wiertz, Paul-Henry Spaak building (PHS), Room PHS1C51. The event is hosted by MEP Hiltrud Breyer and co-hosted by MEPs Erna Hennicot Schoepges, Dorette Corbey and Roberto Musacchio. For more information, please contact Sofia Parente at sofia-paneurope@pan-uk.org

(25) NewGeneris Project: Newborns and Genotoxic exposure risks

[NewGeneris](#) is an Integrated Project conducted within the European Union's 6th Framework Programme, priority area Food Quality and Safety. Its objective is to investigate the role of prenatal and early-life exposure to genotoxic chemicals present in food and the environment in the development of childhood cancer and immune disorders.

There may be biological and etiological links between the onset of childhood cancer and immunological disorders. Among such possible links is exposure to genotoxic-carcinogens (i.e. carcinogenic chemicals capable of causing damage to the genetic material of cells) with associated immunotoxic properties, present in the environment, including food. NewGeneris is examining the possible role of exposure to such chemicals during pregnancy in the induction of increased risk of cancer and immune disorders in childhood. The relevance, for such risks, of analogous exposures of the fathers at the time of conception, as well as of the children themselves during their very early lifetime, is also being investigated.

The main research tool used is biomarkers, i.e. chemical or cellular components of human fluids or tissues, which reflect exposure to, early effects of, or susceptibility to toxic chemicals. In NewGeneris, biomarkers are measured mostly in samples of maternal and umbilical cord blood collected from groups of mother-child pairs (birth cohorts) and stored in large collections (biobanks). Information regarding the dietary exposures of the mothers, the fathers and the children themselves during early life, is extracted from validated questionnaires. The combined analysis of data on exposure, biomarkers and information on the health status of the children as they grow older will be used to evaluate the role of early-life exposures in the causation of disease, to identify genetic traits which lead to increased individual susceptibility to disease and to evaluate their public health implications of such findings. The biological samples available to NewGeneris come from already existing biobanks in 5 different European regions, while 3 new biobanks will also be created. Between them, these biobanks represent a total of around 300,000 mother-child pairs, constituting in effect a virtual European birth mega-cohort with subjects coming from regions with a wide diversity of environmental conditions and dietary and lifestyle habits. This makes NewGeneris one of the largest studies of its kind ever conducted and provides it with a unique potential to discern the role of food-borne chemicals in the etiology of childhood cancer and immune disease.

With its emphasis on health risks for newborn children associated with *in utero* exposure to chemicals as a consequence of their dietary intake by the mother, NewGeneris provides a novel perspective on the issue of food safety. From the project/s results, policy measures may be derived to improve food quality by appropriate selection of raw materials and use of appropriate food production methods. The ultimate aim is to contribute to the protection of child health through the formulation of improved health policies, more effective food regulations specially targeted at children and better food quality. NewGeneris also serves the objective of the EU Sixth Environment Action Programme to achieve a quality of the environment where the levels of man-made contaminants do not give rise to significant impacts on or risks to human health, by contributing to the research effort to develop science-based risk assessment into a tool for improved chemical and food safety.

The NewGeneris 1st Annual Consortium meeting and General Assembly took place in Barcelona, Spain from 5 to 7 February 2007.

(26) Revision of GS-37, environmental standard for institutional and industrial cleaning products

Green Seal, a national non-profit organization, announces the beginning of a comprehensive review and revision of GS-37, its environmental standard for institutional and industrial cleaning products, and invites all interested stakeholders to actively participate. The revision is expected to take about a year and will include a formal public review of the proposed revisions about half-way through the process. Since GS-37 was first developed in 2000, technology has improved and new information has arisen about issues such as emissions, endocrine disruptors and asthmagens. Since major entities such as New York State have adopted GS-37 for schools, issues have been raised about its adequacy in protecting the health of sensitive and vulnerable populations such as school-age children and custodial workers.

All stakeholders or interested parties who want to be more actively involved in the review process of GS-37 should send an e-mail to Green Seal with their full contact information, including their organization or occupation at GS37@utk.edu

(27) Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning

Over the past 3 months the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning petitioned partners and advocates to go online and join the 2,010 Signatures for 2010 Campaign. As of January 1, nearly 700 Marylanders had signed on to show their support for ending childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010. Over the past decade Maryland has seen dramatic declines in the number of children exposed to lead. You can sign on by going to www.lead-safe.org and clicking on the blue button "Sign On for 2010"

(28) Beyond Pesticides

Beyond Pesticides (formerly National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) works with allies in protecting public health and the environment to lead the transition to a world free of toxic pesticides. Beyond Pesticides provides useful information on pesticides and alternatives to their use, for instance the [Safety Source for Pest Management](#) and their newly released [Gateway on Pesticide Hazards and Safe Pest Management](#)

(29) Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits

A new [report](#) released by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has found that implementing green building techniques in schools has benefits beyond the environment. Test scores and student health have also been shown to increase. "The report includes a detailed analysis of 30 green schools built in 10 states between 2001 and 2006, and demonstrates that the total financial benefits of green schools are 20 times greater than the initial cost, and include energy and water savings, and improved student health and test scores."

"This study underscores the enormous cost of poor design and the critical impact that good design and operation has on the quality of our children's education," said AIA President Kate Schwennsen. "The findings indicate that there are tremendous benefits from energy-efficient school design, not only from an economic standpoint, but from increased student test scores and far healthier environments through improved indoor air quality." "If all new school construction and school renovations were designed to be environmentally conscious starting today, energy savings alone would total \$20 billion over the next 10 years."

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

In Venice, Italy on 19 May 2007 will take place the III Videoconference on Climate Change and its Consequences in the XXI century. Organized by the International Academy of Environment Sciences of the University of Venice with the scientific collaboration of ISDE. ISDE also collaborated in a the workshop "Strengthening Climate Adaptation Research – Mobilizing

Capacities and Enabling International Research Partnerships.” This meeting was held in Ottawa, Canada. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the options and the means to have Canadian scientists, in cooperation with developing country scientists, make a greater contribution to climate change adaptation research. For more information on ISDE activities please go to www.isde.org

The latest issue of the newsletter of AAMMA highlights several training activities in children's environmental health that they are helping develop. A postgraduate course "Health and Environment - Environmental changes and their impact on health", organized by the Institute for Human Development and Health and the Buenos Aires City Doctors Association (Asociación de Médicos Municipales de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires) will begin on 30 March 2007 in Buenos Aires and will last for a year. The course will also include field trips and case studies. For more information on training events and projects currently developed by AAMMA, please go to <http://www.aamma.org>

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Women are main victims of indoor pollution](#) Women and young girls coughing and choking as they cook food over traditional stoves that burn wood, leaves or dung is a common sight in poor homes across Asia, Africa and Latin America. No one notices the deleterious effects. Over 1.5 million females die prematurely every year by inhaling fumes T.V. Padma. Dawn News Service. 4 January 2007.

[Unwelcome Guest Airborne Staph in Homes](#) The prevalence of drug-resistant *S. aureus* infections continues to rise, and not being confined only to hospitals, such infections are increasing in children. These new findings suggest that residential exposure to aerosolized *S. aureus* and a possible link to community-acquired *S. aureus* infections deserve further study. C. Potera. EHP. December 2006.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[U.S. environment scientists urge tougher smog rules](#) Scientists at USEPA recommended tougher standards for ground-level ozone, the main component of smog, but no action will be taken until next year. Dropping the level of ozone allowed in the air would offer health benefits for asthmatic children and others with lung disease, as well as for healthy children and adults. Reuters. 31 January 2007.

[Freeways' tainted air harms children's lungs, experts say](#) In the largest and longest study of its kind, it was found that children living near busy highways have significant impairments in the development of their lungs that can lead to respiratory problems. When new schools and new housing developments are planned, this should be taken into account. T. Maugh II. LA Times. 26 January 2007.

[Asian Leaders Call for Pollution Fight](#) Asia's rapid economic expansion has turned its skies into some of world's most polluted and the region must do more to fight a scourge that is blamed for more than 500,000 premature deaths annually, delegates told a clean air conference. There are hundreds of millions of children and adults suffering from air pollution. M. Casey. CBS News. 13 December 2006.

[Emissions Major Threat to Asian Cities](#) New report says vehicle emissions is a major challenge for many Asian cities. Air quality has improved in some Asian cities, but pollution remains a threat to health and quality of life in others. One particular challenge is that while vehicle emissions are being reduced, the volume of vehicles is rising rapidly. UNEP News Centre. 12 December 2006.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Exposures to Environmental Toxicants and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in U.S. Children](#) Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders, with a prevalence ranging from 3 to 8%- The purpose of the study was to examine the association of exposures to tobacco smoke and environmental lead with ADHD. J. Braun. EHP. December 2006.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[Indulge Your Paranoia](#) Are there any PBDEs to be found in your house? What about phthalates? One parent takes the Park Slope Purity Test. Is our children's low-level, daily exposure to any number of chemicals perfectly fine, or causing subtle neurological damage? And if these things aren't good for us, what are they doing to our overtaxed planet? S. Burton. New York Guides. 19 January 2007.

[Killer cocktails](#) The number of cases of cancer and physiological disorders have increased in tandem with the increase in use of chemicals in everything from food wrapping to make-up, so be aware. The average woman uses 12 toiletries every day. Your skin absorbs up to 60% of what is put on it and children's skins are five times thinner than adults. Sarah Ewing. Sunday Herald. 10 January 2007.

[Bisphenol A May Trigger Human Breast Cancer](#) Study in rats provides strongest case yet against common environmental chemical. A new study led by Ana M. Soto finds the strongest evidence yet for the hypothesis that widespread environmental exposure to bisphenol A during fetal life causes breast cancer in adult women. B. Hileman. Chemical and Engineering News. 6 December 2006.

[What's Toxic In Toyland](#) At issue are contaminants in plastics used to make the toys. Environmentalists have long argued that some of these chemicals can leach out and harm children, pointing to animal studies that link the substances to birth defects, cancer and developmental abnormalities. The controversy centers on phthalates used to make shatterproof plastic. M. Roosevelt. Time. 3 December 2006.

[Picking Up on Preservatives New Biomarkers for Gauging Paraben Exposure](#) Urinary parabens and their conjugates could be valid biomarkers of exposure to these chemicals. The detection and measurement methods used by CDC scientists could help investigators to characterize potential health risks associated with exposure to individual paraben compounds. E. Hood. EHP. December 2006.

(b) Lead

[Debate over lead in air](#) Are lead levels in the air so low that the contaminant should no longer be a criteria pollutant? The new leaders of committees that oversee EPA's activities denounced the delisting option and cited lead's well-known effects on the brain development of young children. EPA advisers had concluded that no safe human level for lead exposure exists. ES&T online. 31 January 2007.

[Testing finds lead in vitamins, other problems](#) Among 21 multivitamin products for adults and children independently selected and tested by ConsumerLab.com, problems were found with more than half including high levels of lead, and too much or too little of a particular ingredient. Multivitamins are often taken against nutritional deficiencies. M. Rauscher. Reuters. Yahoo News. 23 January 2007.

[EPA: Leaded gas may return, along with lower standards](#) The Bush administration is considering doing away with health standards that cut lead from gasoline, widely regarded as one of the nation's biggest clean-air accomplishments. Lead is highly toxic and can cause severe nerve damage, especially in children. Battery makers, lead smelters, refiners lobbied the administration. CNN News. 7 December 2006.

(c) Pesticides

[Eating poison with vegetables and fruits](#) People in this city of around ten million are virtually ingesting poison under the labels of organic edibles! According to a study by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (Bari), toxic chemicals are being widely used to enhance the production of vegetables. Chemicals destroy the nutritional substances inside the produce R. Laskar. The Daily Star. 17 January 2007.

[Effect of Community of Residence on Neurobehavioral Development in Infants and Young Children in a Flower-Growing Region of Ecuador](#) Residence in communities with high potential for exposure to OP and carbamate pesticides was associated with poorer neurobehavioral development of the child even after controlling for major determinants of delayed development. A.J. Handal. EHP. January 2007.

[Household Pesticides and the Risk of Wilms Tumor](#) This study is the largest case–control study of Wilms tumor to date. A slightly increased risk of Wilms tumor was found among children of mothers who used insecticide. An increased risk for Wilms tumor could not be confirmed among those exposed to residential pesticides during pregnancy through early childhood. M. Cooney. EHP. January 2007.

[FAO encourages early withdrawal of highly toxic pesticides](#) Danish chemicals company Cheminova has submitted plans for phasing out highly toxic forms of pesticides in developing countries to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in line with the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. FAO Newsroom. 20 December 2006.

[Pesticides are what is killing our kids](#) Rural PEI is a hotbed of rare cancers. A doctor's mission is to raise awareness about the potential health hazard posed by pesticides used on the potato farms. It's a controversial viewpoint but it has spurred the province to launch a probe. Currently, only pesticide exposures in drinking water and food are regulated. M. Mittelstaedt. Globe and Mail. 6 December 2006.

(d) Mercury

[Campaigners call for global mercury ban](#) The Zero Mercury Coalition, which include veteran lobbyists from the European Environmental Bureau and South African grassroots network groundwork, are using UNEP meeting in Nairobi to argue the case for a global ban. Mercury poisons the brain and threatens all of us and future generations at both high and low levels. S. Bond. Edie. UK. 1 February 2007.

[Maternal Fish Consumption, Mercury Levels, and Risk of Preterm Delivery](#) Pregnant women receive mixed messages about fish consumption in pregnancy. This is the first large, community-based study to examine risk of very preterm birth in relation to mercury levels among women with low to moderate exposure. Additional studies are needed to see replicability of findings. F. Xue. EHP. January 2007.

[Response Inhibition During Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates \(DRL\) Schedules May Be Sensitive to Low-Level Polychlorinated Biphenyl, Methylmercury, and Lead Exposure in Children](#) 167 children were tested. The results, taken with animal literature, argue the high sensitivity of DRL performance to low-level PCB, MeHg, and Pb exposure. P. Stewart. EHP. December 2006.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[‘Extreme marathon’ runners cross two thirds of Sahara in UN bid to focus on water needs](#) Running the equivalent of two marathons a day in some of the harshest conditions on Earth, three young athletes have pounded approximately two thirds of their way across the Sahara Desert in a United Nations-backed bid to raise awareness of the burgeoning global water crisis. UN News Centre. 15 January 2007

[Hair Manganese and Hyperactive Behaviors: Pilot Study of School-Age Children Exposed through Tap Water](#) Neurotoxic effects occur with inhalation of manganese particulates but few data are available on exposure to Mn in water. Findings of this pilot study are sufficiently compelling to warrant more investigations into the risks of Mn exposure in drinking water. M. Bouchard. EHP. January 2007.

[American Dental Association: No Fluoride for Bottle-Fed Infants](#) U.S. leading fluoride advocate, The American Dental Association, alerted parents to avoid fluoridated water when reconstituting infant formula, warning that infants less than one year old may be getting too much fluoride if their powdered or liquid infant formula is mixed with water containing fluoride. Infokwik. U.S. 29 November 2006.

(4) GLOBAL CHANGE

[The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting Ends With Concrete Proposals to Tackle Global Issues](#) The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos wrapped up with climate change firmly at the centre stage of debate. In 17 sessions related to global warming, the Forum advanced discussions and explored practical opportunities for progress through partnership. WEC. 28 January 2007

[Experts use weather to predict disease](#) Doctors hoping to predict disease outbreaks may want to tune into more weather forecasts. Weather patterns can often be a key factor in finding out when an epidemic is imminent because they determine the conditions for germs and carriers to breed. Waterborne diseases are particularly susceptible to weather changes. M. Cheng. Boston.com. 23 January 2007.

[CDC: Climate change a health threat](#) "Climate change is perhaps the largest looming public health challenge we face, certainly in the environmental health field," Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, said. Frumkin also worries about mental health, particularly of children. C. Dell'Amore. United Press International. 4 December 2006.

[Comparative Risk Assessment of the Burden of Disease from Climate Change](#) WHO has developed standardized comparative risk assessment methods for estimating aggregate disease burdens attributable to different risk factors. These were applied to existing and new models in order to estimate the effect of global climate change on current disease burdens. D. Campbell-Lendrum. EHP. December 2006.

[Global Environmental Change: What Can Health Care Providers and the Environmental Health Community Do About It Now?](#) Health care providers should inform themselves and be agents of change in communities. Clinicians should educate patients on regressive policies, unsustainable behaviours, global environmental changes, and threats to health and security. B. Schwartz. EHP. December 2006.

(5) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[Pilot Study of Urinary Biomarkers of Phytoestrogens, Phthalates, and Phenols in Girls](#) A wide spectrum of hormonally active exposure biomarkers were detectable and variable among young girls, with high maximal concentrations (> 1,000 µg/L) found for several analytes. They varied by characteristics that may be relevant to development. M.S. Wolff. EHP. January 2007.

[Pediatricians fight to keep study alive](#) Cash crunch imperils major tracking project In private conversations across the country, pediatricians are buttonholing their congressmen and making a heartfelt plea: Save the National Children's Study. This is the latest attempt to rescue the most important study of children's health and the environment in the U.S. J.Graham. Chicago Tribune. 25 December 2006.

[UNICEF celebrates 60 years of helping children with plaudits and calls to do more](#) UNICEF's advocacy and programming efforts have saved the lives of millions of children over the past 60 years. Too many children still die of preventable diseases, go hungry, are denied their right to an education or are forced into early marriage or hazardous work. UN News Centre. 8 December 2006.

['Malaria atlas' project launched](#) Malaria is transmitted by a mosquito bite. Researchers in Kenya and Britain say they are creating a global map to pinpoint locations where malaria is most likely to strike. The map should be complete within 18 months, the researchers say. Some 40% of the world's population, mostly in poor tropical nations, are at risk of malaria. BBC News. 5 December 2006.

[Dog Ownership Enhances Symptomatic Responses to Air Pollution in Children with Asthma](#) Studied if the association of exposure to air pollution with annual prevalence of chronic cough, phlegm production, or bronchitis was modified by dog and cat ownership (indicators of allergen and endotoxin exposure). 475 Southern California children were studied. R. Mc Connell. EHP. December 2006.

[Early Environmental Exposures and Intracellular Th1/Th2 Cytokine Profiles in 24-Month-Old Children Living in an Agricultural Area](#) Asthma and wheeze outcomes in 2-year-old children are associated with elevated Th2 status in children at early age. Early exposures to an agricultural environment, breast-feeding, pets, and gas stoves affect children's immune response. P. Duramad. EHP. December 2006.

[An Effective Nonchemical Treatment for Head Lice: A Lot of Hot Air](#) A method of treating lice infestations might overcome the rising rate of lice resistance to chemical treatments. This study was devised after in vitro studies by other authors demonstrated that hot air could kill body lice. The authors tested multiple methods of delivering hot air to the scalp. BM Goates. Pediatrics. 2006

[Local Stakeholders' Perspectives on Improving the Urban Environment to Reduce Child Pedestrian Injury: Implementing Effective Public Health Interventions at the Local Level](#) It is important to reframe child pedestrian injury risk as a livability issue and to increase awareness about the potential impact of environmental changes to improve public safety. Frattaroli. Journal of Public Health Policy. 2006.

(b) Reproductive health

[Replace bisphenol A or a child's health?](#) Sex hormones are vital signals the body uses to guide how a fetus develops. The wrong amount of hormone, or hormone-like chemical, at the wrong time can have a disastrous impact on a developing fetus or child. The last 10 years of research has provided evidence that this is true for bisphenol A. J. Peterson Myers. San Francisco Chronicle. 23 January 2007

[Emerging Research on Endocrine Disruptors](#). The evaluation of genistein, which included many NIEHS studies on early developmental exposures, concluded that it produces reproductive and developmental toxicity, which has prompted recognition and further research on the potential health effects of environmental estrogens. D.A. Schwartz. EHP. January 2007.

[Impact of Prenatal Chlorpyrifos Exposure on Neurodevelopment in the First 3 Years of Life Among Inner-City Children](#) The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of prenatal exposure to chlorpyrifos on 3-year neurodevelopment and behaviour in inner-city minority children. Neurotoxicity was evaluated in 254 children through the first 3 years of life. V. Rauh. Pediatrics. 6 December 2006.

[Inquiry Turns To Humans On Pollutant, Hormone Tie](#) Researchers have linked chemicals to troubling changes in animals, including reproductive defects, immune-system alterations and obesity. Activists caution avoiding plastic baby bottles, which could contain bisphenol A, and reducing consumption of animal fat, where pollutants can concentrate. D. Fahrenthold. Washington Post. 4 December 2006.

[In Utero Exposure to DDT May Affect Cognitive Functioning in Preschoolers](#) Prenatal exposure to low-level, background concentrations of DDT is associated with a decrease in cognitive functioning among preschoolers according to the November issue of the Am. Journal of Epidem. Organochlorine compounds are persistent environmental contaminants. N. Ribas. Am. J. Epid. 28 November 2006.

(c) Waste

[Global computer upgrade will see surge in e-waste](#) The gains of the electronics industry translate into serious environmental costs externalized to the poor. In countries as China, India or Nigeria, women and children 'cook' lead-tin soldered circuit boards over small fires, soak chips in dangerous acid baths along rivers, smash lead and phosphor laden cathode ray tubes. S. Bond. Edie. UK. 31 January 2007.

[Made in Britain, dumped in China How our waste causes death and disease 6,000 miles from home](#) Sandwich boxes carrying the labels of British supermarket chains poke through the dumps; crumpled pizza wrappers and plastic bags blanket the streets. Working in the middle of it all are children, some as young as 4, sifting through the waste with bare hands. C. Coonan. Independent. 26 January 2007.

(d) Cancer

[Cohort Profile: The International Childhood Cancer Cohort Consortium \(I4C\)](#) Globally, a number of large child prospective studies have been launched to examine environmental and genetic determinants of common diseases of children, such as asthma, developmental delay and behaviour abnormalities, as well as the consequences of early exposure for adult diseases. R. Brown. Int J Epidemiol. 2007

[Risk Factors for Acute Leukemia in Children: A Review](#) The environmental risk factors discussed include ionizing radiation, nonionizing radiation, hydrocarbons, pesticides, alcohol use, cigarette smoking, and illicit drug use. Knowledge of these particular risk factors can be used to support measures to reduce potentially harmful exposures and decrease the risk of disease. M. Belson. EHP. January 2007.

(e) Americas

[Pesticides pose risk, study says](#) Heavy pesticide use in parts of rural Manitoba (Canada) could be putting all residents, not only farmers, at increased risk of serious medical problems, a recent university study found. Rural residents stand greater chance of bearing children with physical abnormalities or severe birth defects in areas of heavy pesticide spraying. J. Paraskevas. NBEN. 17 January 2007.

[Ecuador Finds the Courage to “Just Say No”](#) Anger grows as Bogotá resumes counter-narcotic aerial spraying programs along its border with Ecuador in spite of protests from Quito. The risk of pain and adversity is sadly compounded by the pernicious effects to human health that many specialists attribute to the questionable defoliation programs. Scoop. New Zealand. 17 January 2007

[Study shows children at risk for cancer near Houston Ship Channel](#) The city of Houston is now promising more action after a disturbing study shows just how at risk children who live beside the ship channel are to developing cancer. The study show that children living within a 2 mile radius of the channel are more likely to develop a certain form of leukaemia. Digital Journal. 19 January 2007.

[Health Canada advises Canadians of high lead levels in children's pendant necklaces and key chains](#) Certain children's metal pendant necklaces and key chains sold in retail outlets across Canada are being recalled due to high lead levels. The four items, sold between February 2006 and December 2006, pose a risk of lead poisoning to children if chewed, sucked or swallowed. Health Canada. 3 January 2007

[Children with asthma](#) Death rate falls but asthma in children at all-time high The death rate for childhood asthma is declining in the U.S. but not among black youngsters, who are six times as likely as white children to die from the disease, the CDC reported recently. The prevalence of childhood asthma cases for all races is at historically high levels in the U.S. B. Hendrick. Reflector.com. 28 December 2006

[Peru: Company Offers Bandaid Solutions to a Polluted Town](#) In Peru's Andean highlands, there is a shelter, but not for the victims of a war. The only bombardment escaped by the young children taken there every day comes from toxic emissions. The shelter, a day-care programme, is run by the company responsible for the lead dust and toxic fumes. M. Salazar. [IPS News](#). 14 December 2006.

[Nicaragua fights for 'Death's Dew' compensation](#) Tens of thousands of residents of Latin America, Africa and the Philippines blame their health problems on Nemagon, a U.S.-made pesticide banned in 1979. A doctor has charted high rates of sterility, kidney and uterine cancer and skin disease in those exposed as well as birth defects in their children. L. Tayler. [Newsday.com](#). 2 December 2006.

[Assessment of Human Health Vulnerability to Climate Variability and Change in Cuba](#) Results suggest that some diseases not previously thought to be climate sensitive (VH, chicken pox, bacterial and viral meningitis, and others) vary with the identified climatic indices. The disease risks vary by geographic region, as described by the indices. P.L. Ortíz Bultó. [EHP](#). December 2006.

(f) Asia

[Warning: don't drop that thermometer, mercury can kill](#) The glass thermometer that we have been putting in our mouths for so many years contains the most lethal of ingredients, causing serious health problems if accidentally spilt. India is the second largest user of mercury, importing 200 tonnes every year. Mercury is a neurotoxin, it attacks the nervous system and brain. [Indiaenews](#). 5 February 2007.

[Healthy environment means healthy generations](#) Although children under 15 comprise 46 % of Yemen's 21 million population, no scientific study links environment and spread of diseases, particularly in children. However, doctors and reports point to the relationship between children and the difficult environmental circumstances in which they live. A. Al-Ariqi . [Yemen Times](#). 5 February 2007.

[Kathmandu's air pollution posing severe health risks](#) A study by Child Workers in Nepal on kids working as auto-rickshaw conductors found they were suffering from chest pains, coughs, eye problems and headaches. A survey by CEN discovered that a high percentage of children living near brick kilns were suffering from respiratory problems. B. Thapaliya. [The Rising Nepal](#). 5 February 2007.

[Jakarta swamped by floodwaters](#) Flooding in the Indonesian capital Jakarta has affected about 75 percent of the city, with swirling muddy waters affecting slum areas, upmarket housing estates and shopping centres. At least 25 people have been killed, with some 340,000 others forced from their homes, most staying in mosques, schools or with friends. [SBS World News Australia](#). 5 February 2007.

[Millions of Bangladeshis to benefit from countrywide UNICEF-backed water programme](#) Thirty million people across impoverished Bangladesh, a country where 100 children die each die from

diarrhoea, are set to benefit from a five-year multi-million dollar water and sanitation scheme, funded jointly by the British and Bangladeshi Governments and UNICEF. [UN News Centre](#). 24 January 2007.

[Disease alert after Baghdad sewage system collapses](#) Residents of Baghdad, are at risk of contracting a range of waterborne diseases as the city's sewage system has collapsed after four days of heavy rain. There should be new drainage systems, especially in the rundown neighbourhoods where children run barefoot through sewage on unpaved roads. B. Wardam. [Arab Environment Monitor](#). 19 January 2007

[China's 'cancer villages' pay price](#) Shangba has become one of the country's growing number of what have been called "cancer villages". In the past the villagers relied on the river for drinking water, and to irrigate their crops. What they did not know was that mines further upstream were dumping their waste into it. There is a thick red residue at the water's edge. D. Griffiths. [BBC News](#). 17 January 2007.

[Air Pollution Blamed for Killing Thousands of Iranians](#). About 10,000 people were killed last year by illnesses related to air pollution in Iran's smog-choked capital. Indicators showed that air quality had worsened and pollution played a major role in 3,600 deaths in October. Officials asked the elderly, children and people with heart or chest ailments to stay at home. [Planet Ark](#). 10 January 2007.

(g) Africa

[Dr Margaret Chan takes office as Director-General of the WHO Impact on health of women and people in Africa to be measure of success](#) "Dr Chan said she wants her leadership to be judged by the impact of work on the health of women and of Africa. "WHO has a long history of commitment to those in greatest need, including the most vulnerable groups." [WHO Media Centre](#). 4 January 2007.

[2006: A Terrible Year for Africa's Children](#) Africa has the highest infant and under-five child-mortality rate in the world and the lowest life expectancy at birth. The statistics paint a grim picture of what it means to be a child in Africa. The past year has seen children caught in conflict, children killed, abused and exploited. But some bright spots of hope emerge. L. Schlein. [Medilinks](#). 22 December 2006

[First drought, now floods plague Kenya's nomads](#) Nomads in Kenya's arid northeast are grappling with devastating floods, which have killed over 100 people and displaced more than one million. In the district hospital, the paediatric ward is already straining with an influx of children suffering from diarrhoea and malaria. The suffering is compounded by malnutrition. [Reuters Alertnet](#). 20 December 2006

[Tanzania: New drive for the environment in Zanzibar](#) Zanzibar's environment is fragile. There are a few septic tanks in Unguja, but none in Pemba and all the waste is deposited in the ocean. Hundreds of people, mainly children, who go swimming in the ocean, are at risk of lung

infections, cancer and shortened life expectancy because they swim in polluted waters. [IRIN News](#). 18 December 2006.

[Almost one in two Mozambican children remain mired in extreme poverty – UN report](#) Although Mozambique has posted impressive economic gains since the end of a brutal civil war in the early 1990s, nearly half of its children still live in extreme poverty, deprived of basic nutrition, health care, education or shelter, according to the United Nations. [UN News Centre](#). 15 December 2006.

(h) Europe

[New EU chemical law alive, but not kicking](#) The European Union has approved a new chemical law to replace regulation that is over 40 years old. But the new EU chemicals legislation (REACH) is in critical condition, according to health, environment, and consumer groups. Children's Disney clothes were tested and toxic chemicals were found. J. Riss. [Greenpeace International](#). 13 December 2006

[The orphans of Sumqayit](#) With some of the biggest oil reserves in the world, Azerbaijan is fast becoming an energy giant. Exact figures are hard to find but numerous reports link the town with high levels of deformities in new-born children. The number of girls and boys here with Downs syndrome, cerebral palsy and spina bifida is way above average. N. Green. [BBC News](#). 9 December 2006.

[Prioritizing Environmental Issues around the World: Opinions from an International Central and Eastern European Environmental Health Conference](#) In this commentary, the views of young investigators from nine different countries are presented as well as their concerns. Ideas are given on how to handle the environmental health challenges that face the world today. E. Craft. [EHP](#). December 2006.

[National Assessment of Human Health Effects of Climate Change in Portugal: Approach and Key Findings](#) Malaria and schistosomiasis, which are currently not endemic in Portugal, are more sensitive to the introduction of infected vectors than to temperature changes. Higher temperatures may increase the transmission risk of zoonoses currently endemic to Portugal. E. Casimiro. [EHP](#). December 2006.

[Saving 20% by 2020: European Commission unveils its Action Plan on Energy Efficiency](#) As a major step toward meeting the unprecedented energy challenges facing the EU, the European Commission presented its Energy Efficiency Action Plan. The Plan contains a package of priority measures covering a wide range of cost-effective energy efficiency initiatives. [EU Press Room](#). 19 October 2006.
