

## WHO announces the launch of its global "Go Green for Health" movement

World leaders will gather at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP-15) in December 2009 to hammer out and hopefully adopt a strong and equitable climate change agreement that utilizes health impacts as a key factor in prioritizing action. The World Health Organization (WHO) and partner agencies including national governments, nongovernmental organizations and professional associations have been engaged in major campaigns to advocate for such an agreement. WHO will build on this momentum and create a platform for continued action through and beyond Copenhagen on all levels. To this end WHO will launch a global "Go Green for Health" movement in Copenhagen. This movement will advocate for health sector leadership in implementing the COP-15 agreements and ensuring comprehensive and continuing linkages between health and climate change campaigns, policy actions and developmental proposals. Click on the [first announcement and invitation](#) and circulate as widely as possible.

## Diarrhoea: Why children are still dying and what can be done

Despite the existence of inexpensive and efficient means of treatment, diarrhoea kills more children than AIDS, malaria and measles combined, according to the joint WHO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report [Diarrhoea: Why children are still dying and what can be done](#). Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, said, "We know where children are dying of diarrhoea. We know what must be done to prevent those deaths. We must work with governments and partners to put this seven-point plan into action." Access to clean water and good hygiene practices are extremely effective in preventing childhood diarrhoea. Hand washing with soap has been shown to reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by over 40%, making it one of the most cost-effective interventions for reducing child deaths caused by this neglected disease. The report lays out a seven-point plan that includes a treatment package to reduce childhood diarrhoea deaths and a prevention strategy to ensure long-term results.

## Protecting workers health in a climate of change – from policy to action

The [Eighth Meeting of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres in Occupational Health](#) (CC Network) was held in Geneva (19-23 October 2009) to advance the implementation of the WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health. Among other issues, the meeting discussed progress and needs of the 2009–2012 Global Workplan; roles of all parties in achieving the Workplan objectives by 2012; collaboration with CC Network partners; implementing projects in the Workplan; and clearly defined deliverables/products to be produced by 2012. As part of the programme, a high-level round table addressed opportunities for protecting and promoting the health of workers arising from the United Nations Joint Crisis Initiatives. Representatives of WHO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), national governments, employers and trade unions shared their views about the occupational health and safety response to the unfolding global financial crisis.

## Children's environmental health roadmap

The Third WHO International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment [conference report](#) provides a summary of the latest research in the area of environmental threats to children's health, as well as recent advances and successes at local, national and international levels. The report summarizes the presentations and discussions that took place over four days from 7-10 June 2009, and provides a roadmap for the future of children's environmental health through the translation of science into policy. Despite achieving global recognition of the threats the environment poses to children, we are faced by a bigger challenge: how to translate political will into action? The answer relies on implementing successful prevention and education models, building strategic partnerships for action, promoting collaborative research, but most importantly, on the development and implementation of effective policies. A *Global Action Plan* will be launched before the end of the year.

Worldwide, 13 million deaths could be prevented every year by making our environments healthier.

## WHO honoured with Prince of Asturias Award

WHO has been honoured with the Prince of Asturias Award for International Cooperation. The annual award ceremony (Premios Príncipe de Asturias) recognizes individuals, entities and organizations around the world that make significant contributions in the sciences, humanities or public affairs.

Dr Margaret Chan received this award on behalf of the organization from His Royal Highness Filipe de Borbón, Prince of Asturias, heir to the throne of Spain, and Honorary President of the Asturias Foundation.

At the ceremony Dr Chan addressed the assembled guests saying, "In granting this prestigious award to the World Health Organization, the Prince of Asturias Foundation is honouring two principles that have consistently guided the work of WHO: the intrinsic value of health for all people, and the importance of international cooperation in realizing health gains".

[\(Read Dr Chan's speech in full\)](#)

[Read about the Prince of Asturias Foundation](#)

The ceremony was held on 23 October 2009, in Spain.

## Upcoming events

**2–6 November**  
COP15 preparatory meeting, Barcelona, Spain (final pre-Copenhagen climate talks)

**7–18 December**  
COP15, Copenhagen, Denmark

## Regular features

- Links to specific news and recent publications
- Links to our Public Health and Environment Regional Offices

## Facts and figures

### Social impact of financial crisis

80% of the global population have no form of social protection

1.3 billion poor people cannot afford essential health services

85% of workers with no occupational health services

239 million unemployed

More underemployment, outsourcing and contractual work, labour migration

**Source:** UN Joint Crisis Initiatives, Committee of the Executive Heads of UN agencies.

## WHO hosts meeting for negotiators at climate change talks

At the climate talks held in Bangkok, Thailand from 28 September to 9 October, 2009, WHO organized a meeting to explore possible strategies to ensure that health concerns are fully taken into account in the negotiating text for COP15 and subsequently into the decision-making, resource allocation and outreach activities. The meeting allowed WHO to provide negotiators and members of delegations with the most up-to-date information on health and climate change in order to significantly enhance efforts to raise public and policy-maker awareness of the need for urgent action to protect health from climate change. In addition, WHO also reported on its [action pledge](#) on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Nairobi work programme – a commitment by WHO to address the effects of climate change on health.

## Mass lead intoxication from battery recycling in Senegal

In June 2008, WHO was a key partner in the investigation and public health response to a mass lead intoxication of an estimated 950 individuals in Dakar, Senegal. The incident occurred as a result of the informal and unsafe recycling of used lead acid batteries over many years. Lead is a toxic metal and its widespread use has caused extensive environmental contamination and health problems in many parts of the world. An [article](#) describing the results of the investigation in Dakar, and an accompanying [editorial](#) have just been published in the October issue of the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* (EHP).

## Selected health topics from WHO's public health and environment web sites:

[Quantifying environmental health impacts](#)

[Ultraviolet radiation](#)

[Indoor air pollution](#)

[Outdoor air pollution](#)

[Electromagnetic fields](#)

[Environmental health in emergencies](#)

[Ionizing radiation](#)

[Health and environment linkages](#)

[Occupational health](#)

[Click here for all WHO's environmental health topics](#)

## Regional public health and environment links

WHO African Region: [www.afro.who.int/des/phe/index.html](http://www.afro.who.int/des/phe/index.html)

WHO South-East Asia Region: [www.searo.who.int/en/Section23.htm](http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section23.htm)

WHO Western Pacific Region: [www.wpro.who.int/environmental\\_health/](http://www.wpro.who.int/environmental_health/)

WHO Region of the Americas: [www.paho.org/Selection.asp?](http://www.paho.org/Selection.asp?)

WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: [www.emro.who.int/ceha/](http://www.emro.who.int/ceha/)

WHO European Region: [www.euro.who.int/envhealth](http://www.euro.who.int/envhealth)

## Publications

[Third International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment – From knowledge and research to policy and action – Conference report](#)

[Vision 2030: the resilience of water supply and sanitation in the face of climate change](#)

[Global Health Risks report: A response to the need for comprehensive, consistent and comparable information on health risks at global and regional level. Press release](#)

[Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards for schools in Low-cost settings](#)

[Natural Ventilation for Infection Control in Health-Care Settings](#)

## Expand the network

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