

Shape the Future of Life



REPORT

Healthy Environments for Children

World Health Organization



WORLD HEALTH DAY 2003



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Foreword



World Health Day 2003 – Shape the Future of Life: Healthy Environments for Children – was a call to individuals, communities, public and private organizations, and municipal, regional and national governments around the world to do more to protect three of our greatest assets: health, the environment and our children. Ensuring Healthy Environments for Children is vital to our efforts to help shape the future of life.

On 7 April, from India to Ireland, and Chile to China, hundreds of communities, teachers, local governments, civil society groups, medical professionals and children participated in events to support solutions to minimize environmental risks. The number of World Health Day events was impressive. But it was just the beginning.

Much more needs to be done to reduce the millions of childhood deaths resulting from unhealthy environments. Children are paying

heavily for this neglect. Every year more than five million children between the ages of 0 and 14 die from diseases and conditions caused by the environments in which they live, learn and play. The main killers are diarrhoea, respiratory conditions, malaria and other illnesses carried by insects. Many child deaths result from unintentional injuries, including road accidents and drownings.

These deaths are preventable. WHO and its partners in the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) have formulated many simple and cost-effective strategies that can protect children from the risk of diseases related to the environment. Simple measures such as ensuring that children and adults wash their hands with soap or ash before eating and after defecating would lower the incidence of diarrhoea – the world's second biggest child-killer – even when safe water is in short supply. We must enable those responsible for

the health and well-being of children, as well as children themselves, to put this knowledge into practice.

The events highlighted in this report underscore the will to move forward, and to do better. This global movement, the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance, set in motion only in September 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, is growing quickly. By working together on many fronts, by building on existing programmes, and by adapting concrete actions to local needs, we can make a real difference. Together, we are better able to address the many health and environment issues faced by communities, countries and regions around the world, and improve children's lives. Let us remember our World Health Day pledge, and maintain the momentum to help shape the future of life.

Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland
Director-General
World Health Organization

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I – The challenge

Healthy Environments for Children (HEC) was chosen as the theme for World Health Day 2003 (WHD) when newly-compiled statistics revealed the shocking extent of child deaths and injuries due to environmental risk factors. More than 5 million children, ages 0-14, die each year from environment-related diseases and conditions such as diarrhoea, respiratory illnesses, malaria and unintentional injuries. Millions more children are debilitated by environment-related diseases or live with chronic conditions linked to their environment ranging from allergies to mental and physical disability. Forty per cent of the global burden of disease associated with environmental risk factors fall on children under the age of five.

Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards because their immune, reproductive, digestive and central nervous systems are still developing; they consume

more food, air and water than adults do (in proportion to their weight), and they spend more time closer to the ground where dust and chemicals accumulate.

Facts and figures

- Many of the diseases prevented through use of water in hygiene are the same as those that can be transmitted by water when contaminated. The most important of these is diarrhoea, which is estimated to cause 1.3 million child deaths per year – about 12% of total deaths of children under the age of five in developing countries. Other infectious diseases with similar patterns of transmission include hepatitis A and E, dysentery, cholera and typhoid fever.
- The safe disposal of human faeces – including those of children – is a prerequisite to protecting health. In the absence of basic



sanitation, a number of major diseases are transmitted through faecal pollution of the household and community environment. Globally, 2.4 billion people, most of them living in peri-urban or rural areas in developing countries, do not have access to any type of improved sanitation facilities.

- Air pollution is a major environment-related health threat to children and a risk factor for both acute and chronic respiratory disease as well as other



diseases. Around 2 million children under five die every year from acute respiratory infections. Many are aggravated by environmental hazards. Indoor air pollution is a major factor associated with acute respiratory infections in both rural and urban areas of developing countries.



- The most common, and most serious, vector-borne diseases are transmitted by mosquitoes that breed in water close to, or within, the home.

- Malaria kills approximately one million children per year, many of them under five and most of them in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Dengue haemorrhagic fever kills an estimated 10 000 children per year, while Japanese encephalitis kills an estimated 8 000 children per year (90% of whom are under five).

aged 0-14 years old, die every year as a result of unintentional poisoning.

- Unintentional injuries include road traffic injuries, poisonings, falls, burns and drowning. In 2001, an estimated 685 000 children under the age of 15 were killed by such unintentional injuries. Approximately 20% of all deaths from unintentional injuries world-wide occur in children under 15 years old and they are among the ten leading causes of death for this age group.

Priority risks to children

Six major risks need to be tackled as a priority:

- Household water security.
- Hygiene and sanitation.
- Air pollution (including indoor air pollution and environmental tobacco smoke).
- Vector-borne diseases.



- Chemical hazards (for example, lead and the unsafe use of pesticides).
- Unintentional injuries or accidents.

Most environment-related diseases and deaths can be prevented using effective, low cost and sustainable tools and strategies.

Creating healthy settings

Children are often exposed to several risks to their health in the same setting at the same time. The problems are therefore best tackled in an integrated way in the places where children live, learn and play.

- In homes: Safe and adequate water supply, sanitation and food preparation facilities; good domestic hygiene; safe household fuels and cooking stoves; safe use and storage of chemicals; safe siting, structure and furnishings.

- In schools: Clean running water; separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls; well-constructed and maintained buildings; protection from violence, noise, traffic and industry; safe play areas.
- In communities: Clean air and water resources; smoke-free public places; adequate waste water drainage and waste management; safe recreational areas and road traffic safety.

Responding to the challenge

Launched in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) is a worldwide alliance to intensify global action on environmental risks to children's health, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources and catalyzing action. The Alliance is made up of governments, civil society, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),



research and academic institutions, professional associations, UN organizations, development agencies, banks and foundations, private entities, and the media – across all relevant sectors including health, education, energy, housing, water, planning and transport.

HECA aims to:

- Ensure effective advocacy and awareness-raising to create healthy environments for children – to galvanize the political will to tackle the threats to children's health;
- Provide knowledge and expertise for policies and action, and acting as an information clearing-house – to create a solid foundation of scientific knowledge;
- Support communities in creating and maintaining healthy environments for children – to facilitate action by countries and communities to improve the environments in which their children live;
- Monitor and evaluate progress – to develop guidelines and a core set of indicators for measuring healthy environments for children.



II – World Health Day 2003



April 7 – World Health Day – marks the day in 1948 in which WHO came into being. In 2003, WHD was used as a springboard to encourage HECA and all other parties with an interest in improving children’s health to bring attention to the grave threats posed to children by unhealthy environments, and to incite communities and countries to implement measures to ensure that our children grow up safe, healthy and happy.

The objectives of World Health Day 2003 were to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of healthy environments for children issues amongst diverse target audiences, especially governments, the general public and interest groups;
- Move forward healthy environments for children issues higher up the world’s political/development agenda;
- Enhance understanding of healthy environments for children within WHO priorities;
- Promote awareness of World Health Day by providing information to assist celebrations world-wide;
- Provide resources to support local celebrations and media outreach.



Target audiences

Shape the Future of Life: Healthy Environments for Children advocacy materials were directed at key policy and decision-makers both inside as well as outside the health sector (e.g. in sectors concerned with housing, water and sanitation, planning, environment, education, etc. – at the local and national level), as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs); the private sector; academia/research institutions; and schools.

Materials developed by WHO headquarters

WHO headquarters prepared a comprehensive set of materials in English, French and Spanish to communicate the World Health Day message. WHO Regional Offices and country offices used the materials to adapt them to the needs of their regions.

- A WHD logo – to be used in colour or in black and white, and to reinforce the branding of all World Health Day products and messages around the world.
- A WHD slogan – “Shape the Future of Life” – was featured on materials in conjunction with World Health Day 2003 activities. It was also made available in the six official WHO languages and translated in 24 other languages.

I have received the information kits on World Health Day 2003. I want to thank you; the materials are great. My little project was a success, partially because of this. I think it's great that an organisation like WHO is that easy to make contact with, and also that you care about little projects. – Email from Event Coordinator, Nijmegen University – The Netherlands



- A WHD brochure depicting the key problems in the home, school and community; the priority areas; and solutions to ensuring healthy places for children.
- A tool kit for organizers drawing attention to the unique opportunity to bring attention to the dangers children face in their environment and to galvanize people into bringing about positive change.
- A colourful child's measuring tape and poster depicting positive and negative messages in

the home, school and community to be used as both an educational and information tool.

- A WHD sticker to reinforce the slogan and logo use by all WHD event coordinators and participants.
- Numerous posters portraying powerful images of children.
- A WHD 2003 Web site was created on the WHO headquarters Internet domain to provide access to information materials, with the aim of supporting World Health Day event coordinators around the world, providing resources for the media, and educating the public on the importance of healthy environ-

ments for children. Interactive interfaces enabled event coordinators, journalists and the public to send in event descriptions, request materials, translate the WHD 2003 slogan, request HEC photos, and submit inquiries. Each Regional Office had its own Web site promoting World Health Day 2003.

- A Healthy Environments for Children web-feature story on the headquarters WHO home page was posted for one month leading up to WHD.
- Backgrounder providing information to journalists, to incite and support media coverage of the HEC issue and of WHD 2003 events around the globe.
- A press release disseminated to over 4000 journalists around the world, as well as to environmental journalists' networks and WHO regional and country offices.



- Facts and figures highlighting key messages on healthy environments for children.
- Two media advisories alerting journalists worldwide to WHD and its importance.
- Two WHD announcements sent via email to Healthy Environments for Children listservs targeting over 2000 organizations, WHO Regional offices and WHD event coordinators.
- Radio page featuring interviews by key spokespersons and consisting of one radio feature and three radio public service announcements. The page was produced to equip radio journalists with information and materials for coverage of World Health Day 2003.
- An eight-minute video news release focusing on the risks to children's health in the home, school and community was produced. This was distributed



through Television for the Environment (TVE), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and Regional Offices.

- Three 30-second TV spots (public service announcements) highlighting the importance of the home, school and community were produced and distributed through TVE to major broadcasters and through the EBU.
- Promotional materials – WHO produced a number of promotional items to reinforce the WHD 2003 message and slogan. These included T-shirts, flags, tray mats, stickers, banners and badge necklaces.
- A children's poster exhibition featuring 25 drawings on the six priority areas of Healthy Environments for Children. The exhibition took place from 1–10 April at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

WHO Regional Offices and Country Offices conducted extensive promotional, educational, and outreach activities for World Health Day 2003. These included hundreds of press conferences, seminars, lectures, workshops and other events on 7 April; the creation of dynamic promotional materials such as HEC cartoons, backpacks, clocks, among others; and numerous activities involving thousands of children (e.g. poster competitions, parades).



III – Event highlights

On 7 April, hundreds of different events all around our globe marked this year's World Health Day and the start of a campaign by the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance to promote healthier environments for children everywhere. Commitments and declarations from political leaders were made. Journalists wrote about environmental and health issues. Most importantly, children described how they saw their environments through drawing competitions, poems, drama, role plays and statements. The objective was to mobilize worldwide action to create healthy homes, healthy schools and healthy communities and to shape the future of children's lives.



Spotlight – event attended by WHO Director-General, New Delhi, India

On 7 April, an estimated 5 000 school children and their teachers participated in the WHD 2003 event in New Delhi, in the presence of the Director-General of WHO, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland; Chief Minister of New Delhi, Sheila Dikshit; Cabinet Minister for Health and Welfare, Government of India, Sushma Swaraj; and WHO's Regional Director for South-East Asia, Dr Uton Muchtar Rafei.

Dr Brundtland provided the global perspective on the need for healthy environments for children, while Chief Minister Dikshit praised projects already undertaken by the children of New Delhi to create healthy environments. Two initiatives were specifically highlighted in the Chief Minister's speech: 1) a drive by the children of New Delhi not to use fire crackers during the

Diwali festival in an effort to reduce unintentional injuries and accidents and reduce smoke pollution; and 2) an initiative in which children say no to plastic bags, and yes to cloth and/or paper bags, in an effort to reduce environmental contamination from plastic. Health Minister Swaraj, in her speech, delivered practical tips on how children can live a healthier and safer life. Two youth representatives also made speeches at the event.

Educational materials on healthy environments for children, including board games on the subject, presented by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO). Subsequently, Dr Brundtland inaugurated a World Health Day 2003 exhibit, where children had created artwork depicting solutions to environmental health challenges.



A World Health Day 2003 reception, attended by Indian dignitaries, the UN and diplomatic community, featured the artistic work of Mr MF Hussain, a famous Indian painter, and Ms Geetha Chandra, an Indian classical dancer. Mr Hussain, in 12 minutes, painted a mother and child for the occasion. Ms Chandra incorporated healthy environments for children themes into a dance performance. This artistic display was accompanied by a film, facilitated by SEARO on Indian rag-pickers, as well as a demonstration on a water purification project.

Dr Brundtland was interviewed by various media, including major Indian dailies, the BBC, Science magazine, the Associated Press and Reuters. The Director-General briefed media on World Health Day 2003 and the global need to create healthy environments for children. Dr Brundtland also spoke on polio and SARS. Dr Sattar Yoosuf, Director-General, Sustainable Development and Healthy Environments, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), provided the media with information on environmental hazards to children's health in South-East Asia.

In Geneva, Switzerland, WHO headquarters welcomed over 150 children and students from five Geneva-area schools, and children of WHO staff members, diplomats, representatives of Swiss and Geneva authorities, and representatives from WHO, UNEP and UNICEF for songs, poems, role-

play drama performances, video projections, statements and solemn reflection on the WHD 2003 theme: "Shape the Future of Life: Healthy Environments for Children".

The Geneva event was kicked off by children's voices raised in song interpreting "Les Pouvoirs des Fleurs" by Laurent Voulzy. This was followed by an international welcome by students from local schools who recited the theme and slogan for World Health Day in eight languages.

Dr Brundtland spoke to the Geneva gathering via a video message in which she emphasized the need for our commitment to protecting three of our greatest assets: health, the environment and children.

The planned guest of honour at the Geneva event, Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol, was unable to attend; however, Her Excellency Mrs. Laxanchantorn



Laophan, Ambassador of Thailand, gave opening remarks, and made available the statement from Her Royal Highness.

Dignitaries from the local and federal Swiss authorities highlighted the importance of Healthy Environments for Children.

Professor Pierre François Unger highlighted the efforts made in Geneva to improve the environment for children. He also pointed out that, although Geneva may be proud of its success locally, they never forget the millions of children who are denied healthy environments in which to live, learn and play.

Dr Gaudenz Silberschmidt, Head of the Division of International Affairs



in the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, highlighted the importance of sustainable development and the links with efforts to create healthy environments for children.

Ms Sibylle Vermont, Senior Scientific Advisor, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, spoke about sustainable development as the way to shape the future of life, and water as a key element of sustainable development. **All statements can be found at www.who.int/world-health-day/2003.**

Children shared their visions of healthy environments for children through poems, role plays and statements.

A lively panel discussion was held with children role playing as representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). They joined high-level representa-

tives from the three organizations, allowing for dialogue and a sharing of visions on how environment can be made healthier for all children through integrated actions by all agencies and actors at all levels.

The morning closed with all participants joining in with the song "Les Pouvoirs des Fleurs" (sung a second time) and by donning World Health Day T-shirts in support of Healthy Environments for Children: Shaping the Future of Life. Participants watched a live video feed of Dr Brundtland and others celebrating World Health Day in India. Finally, the children in Geneva were invited to create and portray their drawing of Healthy Environments for Children.

Spotlight – events at WHO Regional Offices

In Cairo, Egypt, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) headquarters, a World Health Day team was established by the EMRO

EXCERPTS – World Health Day Poem

Our world is in a very bad state
But that doesn't mean we can't change its fate
Burning fuel is killing by the hour
So why not change to solar power?
If that doesn't work we could all use a bike
And those who don't have one can go for a hike.

Let's give it to the children to Shape the future of life.

The air is polluted
From factories that smoke
From cars that belch

From forests that burn
In homes, in cities
Children are exposed
To pollution from coal
Used for cooking and heating.

The children of the world
Are at dangerous risks
From disease and

From sickness
Children cry
For healthy air

So every person should try
To care.

Regional Director to conduct World Health Day 2003 activities.

- EMRO invited students in all Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region to participate in a drawing and painting competition on healthy environments for children.
- A package containing a World Health Day 2003 kit in English and Arabic was disseminated to all countries and some non-governmental organizations in the region.
- On the occasion of World Health Day 2003, a message by the EMRO Regional Director was recorded in Arabic, English, Farsi and French. This message, as well as the WHD 2003 message of Director-General Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, was sent to all Member States in the region.
- Due to the prevailing international situation on 7 April, World Health Day 2003, WHO/EMRO postponed regional office events



marking the occasion. Member States were encouraged to either carry out or postpone activities as they deemed appropriate. A national conference on healthy environments for children, to be inaugurated by Her Royal Highness Queen Rania, was postponed until further notice.

- A WHD 2003 Web site was established to provide informational and graphic resources for event coordinators, as well as highlight the World Health Day 2003 activities in the region.

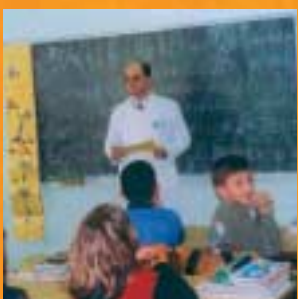


In Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO)

produced a World Health Day 2003 video, which included an interview with the Regional Director and highlighted the theme of healthy environments for children. The video was produced in French, English and Portuguese and sent to all countries of the region. A showing of the video was organized for all of the AFRO community.



A T-shirt promoting World Health Day 2003 was designed, produced and disseminated among all countries of the region.



WHO/AFRO, in conjunction with the WHO Republic of the Congo Country Office and national authorities, declared four schools in underserved communities as pilot "Healthy Schools". Induction activities included carrying out detailed needs analyses and the preparation of implementation plans, funding

proposals and awareness-raising strategies. At the Mayanga Primary School, the following healthy environments for children measures were implemented: the reconstruction of a latrine, the construction of a low-cost rainwater harvesting tank, the installation of hand-washing facilities, and the placement of covered pots for drinking water in each classroom. These activities served demonstration purposes and reinforced hygiene education. Dr Alain Moka, Minister of Health, and Mrs Rosaline Kama Niamayona, Minister of Primary Education, attended a ceremony inaugurating the new facilities.

The food safety component of World Health Day 2003 was emphasized via the distribution of copies to schoolchildren of the publication "Five Keys to Safer Food and Basic Principles for Preparation of Safe Food for Infants and Young Children". A play entitled "Food Safety – Your Choice" was written and acted out

at many World Health Day 2003 gatherings. The play educated audience members on the consequences of consuming contaminated food.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, the WHO European Regional Office (EURO) launched preparations for the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, 2004), the theme of which is "The Future for Our Children". Press conferences were held in Brussels, Rome, Bonn, Moscow, Oslo and Stockholm. Other activities included: an interview on BBC World Radio and UN Radio-New York with the WHO/EURO Regional Director; the publication of a multi-lingual press kit, which included a press release, a fax sheet, and a monograph of the WHO/EURO publication "Children's Health and Environment: A review of evidence"; the production of a Russian version of the WHD brochure; the publication of the

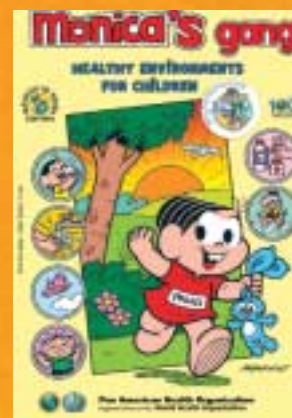
“Tackling Environment Threats” brochure, in conjunction with European Public Health Alliance; a World Health Day 2003 briefing for European Ambassadors in Copenhagen on 7 April.

In Manila, the Philippines, the WHO’s Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) headquarters created a video with a message from the WPRO Regional Director, Dr Shigeru Omi. In addition, WPRO issued a press release, an Op-ed by the Regional Director, and a fact sheet for World Health Day 2003. The press release, the Op-ed and the fact sheet were translated into Chinese, French, Khmer, Mongolian, Vietnamese and the languages of some Pacific Island countries.

In New Delhi, India, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO) headquarters produced a Healthy Environments for Children 2003 calendar and distributed it to all Member States of the South-East Asia Region.

A WHD 2003 Web site, a CD of HEC drawings, and a one-minute video clip on healthy environments for children were released by the Regional Office.

In Washington, D.C., the WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) headquarters organized a series of events starting with a Kick-off Ceremony at PAHO HQ was held on 7 April. Participants included Dr Mirta Roses Periago, Director, Pan American Health Organization; Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services of the U.S.; Daniel Swartz, Keynote Speaker, Executive Director, Children’s Environmental Health Network; Mrs. Ximena Bohorquez, First Lady of Ecuador; Mr. Paul Spencer of the Organization of American States; and Joanne Rodman, Director of the Office of Children’s Health Protection of the Environmental Protection Agency.



Brazilian cartoonist Mauricio de Sousa, creator of Mónica, received an award from PAHO appointing him Champion of Health in the Americas for his support and collaboration for health information programs, using the widely known cartoon character “Monica”. Mauricio de Sousa Productions and the Pan American Health Organization launched the special comic book “Monica-Healthy Environments for Children”, designed to call attention to environmental risks and dangers in homes, schools, and playgrounds



and solutions to create healthy living environments for children.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency held a children’s health fair in the Great Hall of the Humphrey Building on 8 April. The focus was environmental health for children and diet, nutrition, diabetes, obesity, etc. There were booths, games and activities for children. Participants included, among others: Director of PAHO, Dr Mirta Roses; U.S. Surgeon General, Dr Richard Carmona; and dignitaries from USAID, the State Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and others.

The PAHO programmes for Communicable Diseases and Sustainable Development and Environmental Health, in collaboration with the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the American Mosquito Control Association, organized a children's workshop at PAHO HQ on 8 April. The objective was to teach young people about mosquitoes, their life cycles and habitats, the diseases they carry, and safe ways to keep them out of the house.

PAHO's Human Resources programme launched the Virtual Public Health Campus. The event took place at PAHO HQ on 9 April. The programme was Web cast and the PAHO country offices' staff and invited guests were able to participate through video conferencing via satellite. Dr Mirta Roses, two ministers of health, and two deans of schools of public health participated.

Health Promotion and Health Education in the School Setting hosted a debate on integrated school health programmes and the importance of the Health-Promoting School Regional Initiative. A panel of students, teachers, parents and school administrators discussed their concepts of integrated school health programmes during this event at PAHO HQ on 11 April.

The 7th Annual Walk for Health was open to all PAHO staff, their families, friends, neighbours and anyone interested in celebrating World Health Day 2003 on 7 April. The walk began at Centennial Plaza.

The Organization of American States (OAS) held a special conference on "Children, Health, and the Environment". Speakers at the conference included: Dr Mirta Roses, Director of PAHO; Lic. Alejandro Bonasso, Director of the Inter-American Children's Institute;

and Dr Richard Meganck, Director of the Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment (USDE) at the OAS.

Spotlight around the world

Hundreds of events around the world, ranging from pledges of high-level political commitment to public awareness campaigns,

school activities, poems, drawing competitions and much more, were noted. Overall, more than 300 events from over 100 countries have been uploaded or linked to the World Health Day 2003 Web site.

Some examples of WHD activities:

The examples listed on the pages that follow indicate no preference by WHO. They are based on first event descriptions and the feedback forms. WHO takes no responsibility for incomplete or erroneous information. All events or references to activities are not endorsed by WHO.





AFRO

South Africa:

In partnership with organizations such as the Medical Research Council and the WHO country office, the South African National Department of Health organized two key events to mark the World Health Day 2003. The first of the two national events was held on 7 April in Cofimvaba, Eastern Cape. The focus was on rural environmental concerns, such as poor access to water and sanitation, and exposure to indoor air pollution. The South African Minister of Health, Hon. Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, delivered the keynote address, and was accompanied by numerous political leaders and dignitaries, including: Deputy Minister of Health, Deputy Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Deputy Minister of Housing, Professor Richard Feacham of the Global Fund, and Dr Welile Shasha of the WHO South African Office.



On 8 April 2003, the settlement of Bloekombos in Cape Town became the focus of continued World Health Day activities in South Africa. The Minister of Health drew attention in particular to threats to children's safety in the home environment, environmental lead exposure, and the respiratory consequences of exposure to indoor air pollution amongst peri-urban wood- and kerosene-using communities. Hon. Dr Tshabalala-Msimang announced a pending national campaign to raise awareness of the risks of lead exposure amongst children. Political leaders and dignitaries, including members of Cape Town's Junior Council, read and signed the Pledge of Commitment to Healthy Environments for Children in South Africa.



Tanzania:

The Health Education Unit, School Health Programme, of the Ministry of Health (Tanzania Mainland) planned World Health Day 2003 activities in synergy with the Ministry of Education, WHO, UNICEF, Plan International, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and The Right to Play – Canada (Olympic Aid). The main activity was an event at the Malulu Stadium of the Lindi region, featuring, as Guest of Honour, Hon. Dr Ali Mohamed Shein (Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania).

The Ministry of Health (Zanzibar), in collaboration with the ministries of education, communication, and community development, WHO and the NGO Cluster, planned a week of World Health Day 2003

activities. These included: a press conference, a journalists' seminar, dissemination of materials and a main event at Chwaka Village, Central District in South Unga.

AMRO/PAHO

Chile:

"Esos son los planes que estamos haciendo para la limpieza del medio ambiente. (...) Si somos capaces de aprobar la reforma de salud, no me cabe duda que estos niños van a tener un futuro mejor."

President Ricardo Lagos, Chile

"These are our plans for cleaning up our environment. (...) If we are capable of adopting the health reform, then there is no doubt in my mind that these (our) children will have a better future."

President Ricardo Lago, Chile



In the presence of President Ricardo Lagos, World Health Day 2003 was commemorated at the Cerro Santa Lucía in Santiago, Chile. Dr Pedro García (Minister of Health), Dr Christian Darrás (PAHO/AMRO), Pedro Aguirre Cerda (Mayor of Santiago), Juan Saavedra (Red Municipal de Atención Primaria Ambiental), representatives from CONAMA, SENAME, UNICEF, UNESCO, the Public Health School of the University of Chile, and 300 chil-

dren from schools and environmental clubs were present. On this occasion, the authorities of the participating institutions and the children, in a symbolic act, signed a commitment to the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance.

Nicaragua:

The PAHO office in Nicaragua, in collaboration with UNICEF; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports; the Municipality of Managua; the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and others, celebrated healthy environments for children through various activities planned for the week of 28 March – 7 April. These included: a forum on the HEC theme, consisting of speeches and a call for a national alliance to guarantee healthy environments for children; a walk-a-thon, in which 2000 people participated, including dignitaries from the ministries and municipal gov-

ernment; a press conference; a school fair for children, which included an exhibition by children on how they envision their ideal environment and future. Dr José Antonio Alvarado, Minister of Health, was involved in the commemoration of World Health Day 2003 in Nicaragua.

EMRO

Afghanistan:

President Hamid Karzai delivered a speech at the Ministry of Health in Kabul, on the occasion of World Health Day 2003.

Jordan:

A national committee was established to prepare and carry out WHD 2003 activities, which included: a colloquium on the WHD theme; a song for children; projects with local communities to develop healthy environment for children activities; a large radio, TV, and newspaper media campaign; participation in the art competition

organized by WHO; a TV programme in which His Excellency Minister of Health delivered the “Message of Jordan on World Health Day 2003”, followed by a documentary film; production of two TV information programmes for mothers and children on healthy environments.

Saudi Arabia:

Hosted by the Ministry of Health – General Directorate of Preventive Health, a national seminar brought together representatives of professional, national and international organizations (WHO, FAO, King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology, Saudi Paediatric Association); community workers; policy-makers; and local and national authorities dealing with health, environment, and education. The purpose of the seminar was to direct efforts to celebrate WHD 2003 and to support the global Healthy Environments for Children Alliance.



EURO

Germany:

At an event hosted by the Federal Association for Health in Bonn, speeches were given by the Minister of Health, a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and other experts. Two workshops were held for experts on the following themes: the influence of environmental factors on child health and practical implementation; international and inter-ministerial collaboration on environment and health issues.



Turkey:

The Ministry of Health, Turkey, implemented the following activities in commemoration of World Health Day 2003: controls of the safety of water and food in schools; teaching of traffic safety rules to students by traffic officials; slide shows, conferences, and HEC seminars in primary schools of the Social Services Provincial Directorates; poster, slogan, poem, essay-writing, and speech competitions on healthy environments for children; recommended incorporation of HEC issues into curriculum in schools on 7 April; tree planting with youth to create "Healthy Forests"; visitation of handicapped youth in their homes; public announcements and training; and media outreach.

SEARO

India:

More than 65 World Health Day 2003 events were registered on the Headquarter's Web site from event coordinators in India, in



addition to the high-level event attended by the WHO Director-General. The following types of organizations/entities coordinated events: ministries, district or municipal governments, medical colleges and universities, research centres, professional associations, NGOs, armed forces, hospitals and clinics, community centres, elementary and secondary schools, private sector entities, ladies social clubs, and railway stations, among others.

Sri Lanka:

A seminar for media personnel representing both print and electronic media was held on 20 March 2003 to make them aware of the theme "Healthy Environments for Children – Shape their Future". The seminar was inaugurated by the Honourable Minister of Health, Nutrition & Welfare, and 62 media personnel participated.



WPRO

Mongolia:

The month of April was dedicated to healthy environments for children. This initiative was spearheaded by the Ministry of Health (MOH). Minister for Health, Professor P. Nymadawa, presented tobacco-free legislation in Parliament to raise awareness among law makers on this public health priority. In a televised broadcast on 7 April, the Prime Minister of Mongolia and representatives of WHO and UNICEF presented the WHD 2003 theme.

The Ministry of Health, with the support of WHO, translated, printed and distributed WHD 2003 materials and created billboards with the WHD 2003 logo.

In collaboration with the media, the following activities took place: a press conference; radio transmission on HEC with leading national specialists; the publication of a series of articles, as well as the WHD 2003 messages from Mr Kofi Annan, Dr Brundtland and Dr Omi in national newspapers; broadcasting of a television spot for two weeks featuring a well-known national singer; and an open interview with the public on healthy environments for children.

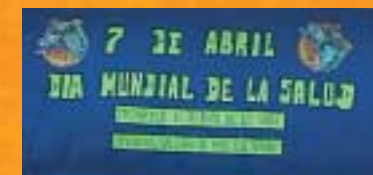
The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the City Education Agency, organized a school competition aimed at creating healthy environments in the schools.

Niue Island:

World Health Day 2003 was celebrated on Niue Island with a Healthy Environments for Children March from the town centre to the National Medical Centre, Lord Liverpool Hospital. Invitations were distributed to all media, members of parliament, government departments, NGOs, the New Zealand High Commission, and staff and students from local schools. Announcements were also broadcast on radio, inviting the general public to the march. The Health Department, Health Promotion Unit, produced pamphlets emphasizing the HEC message, as well as

signs and banners to accompany the supporters that attended the WHD 2003 march. As people marched, rubbish was collected and songs were sung. On arrival at the hospital, speeches were delivered by Dr Harry Paka, Director of Health; Honourable Sandra Lee, New Zealand High Commissioner; and Honourable Fisa Pihigia, Minister of Health.

A listing of all World Health Day 2003 events can be found at www.who.int/world-health-day/2003.



IV – Media Outreach

Why advocacy?

The global effect that unhealthy environments have on children is still not widely appreciated. Therefore, HECA is making advocacy on behalf of children and their environment a priority for the burgeoning Alliance. HECA needs to get the word out to decision makers, thought leaders, community associations, children themselves, and to a wide range of other organizations that unhealthy environments are dangerous to our children and that, equally, we have the means – often low-cost and easy to implement – to prevent a large portion of the environmental risks that threaten our children. Often, the media are the most important and effective tool in communicating these messages and WHO used all the channels at its disposal to communicate WHD and its importance to print and broadcast media.

Media impact

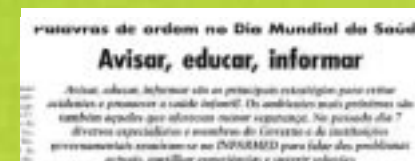
As a result, hundreds of brochures and articles were produced and disseminated, and dozens of promotional videos, contests, seminars were produced and aired through national and local TV channels.

At least 80 media outlets filed stories on World Health Day including globally-known organizations such as the BBC, Africa News, El Pais, Agence France Presse (AFP), Deutsche Presse Agentur, Gulf News, The Hindu, The Financial Times, Associated Press, Reuters, Xinhua General News Agency and Voice of America (VOA).

WHO also received indications from around the world that WHD gained substantial coverage in local and national media, and although it was not possible for WHO headquarters to collect all media coverage which occurred, it appeared that media pick-up was particularly good in those countries that had



organized strong and visible WHD events. Social mobilization and media coverage combined to spread the word about healthy environments for children. A summary of media coverage can be found at www.who.int/world-health-day/2003.



V – Shaping the future for healthy environments for children – supportive policy environments

The momentum generated by World Health Day 2003 will continue to grow and be built upon through many other events and activities in all regions of the world which focus on issues around healthy environments for children. The spotlight will be on policy in the health sector in May 2003 when the ministerial round table segment of the 56th World Health Assembly (19-28 May 2003) is devoted to “Healthy Environments for Children”. First introduced at the 52nd World Health Assembly, ministerial round tables serve to enhance the involvement of ministers and heads of delegations in policy debate.

Ministers of health are invited to use the round table discussions to make output-oriented recommendations for policy and action in ensuring healthy environments for children. Ministers and heads of delegation will share best practices

in healthy environments for children, identify major constraints and obstacles to achieving success/implementation, examine the role of the health sector and other sectors in addressing children’s environmental health issues, as well as the role of national versus local government, share experiences of successful advocacy and communications approaches in creating healthy environments for children, and examine the role that WHO has to play in facilitating action to ensure healthy environments for children.

It is expected that these ministerial round tables will enhance further the advocacy efforts for healthy environments for children, as well as both policy measures and action strategies to address environmental risks to children’s health at regional, national and global levels.

Another major milestone in policy to support healthy environments for children is the Fourth

Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, which will bring ministers of environment from across Europe together in Budapest, Hungary, from 23-28 June 2004. The theme is “The Future of Our Children”. The Children’s Environment and Health Action plan for Europe (CEHAPE) is being developed to put children’s health at the top of the political agenda for environment and health.

These, and many other events and activities, in all sectors and at global, regional, national and local levels will be the building blocks that will shape the future and ensure healthy environments for all children everywhere.



VI – List of countries that registered WHD events*

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Afghanistan | 29. Djibouti | 57. Mexico | 85. Slovakia |
| 2. Albania | 30. Dominican Republic | 58. Mongolia | 86. Slovenia |
| 3. Algeria | 31. Ecuador | 59. Morocco | 87. Solomon Islands |
| 4. Argentina | 32. Egypt | 60. Myanmar | 88. South Africa |
| 5. Armenia | 33. El Salvador | 61. Namibia | 89. Spain |
| 6. Aruba (The Netherlands) | 34. Estonia | 62. Nepal | 90. Sri Lanka |
| 7. Bangladesh | 35. Fiji | 63. Netherlands Antilles | 91. Surinam |
| 8. Belgium | 36. France | 64. New Zealand | 92. Switzerland |
| 9. Belize | 37. Gabon | 65. Nicaragua | 93. Thailand |
| 10. Benin | 38. Georgia | 66. Niger | 94. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| 11. Bhutan | 39. Germany | 67. Nigeria | 95. Timor Leste** |
| 12. Bosnia and Herzegovina | 40. Greece | 68. Niue | 96. Tonga |
| 13. Brazil | 41. Hungary | 69. Norway | 97. Tunisia |
| 14. Cambodia | 42. India | 70. Pakistan | 98. Turkey |
| 15. Cameroon | 43. Indonesia | 71. Palau | 99. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| 16. Canada | 44. Iran (Islamic Republic of) | 72. Panama | 100. United Republic of Tanzania |
| 17. Cape Verde | 45. Jamaica | 73. Papua New Guinea | 101. United States of America |
| 18. Central African Republic | 46. Jordan | 74. Peru | 102. Uzbekistan |
| 19. Chad | 47. Kyrgyzstan | 75. Philippines | 103. Venezuela |
| 20. Chile | 48. Ireland | 76. Poland | 104. Vanuatu |
| 21. China | 49. Italy | 77. Portugal | 105. Viet Nam |
| 22. Colombia | 50. Lao People's Democratic Republic | 78. Qatar | |
| 23. Cook Island | 51. Latvia | 79. Republic of Moldova | |
| 24. Costa Rica | 52. Lebanon | 80. Romania | |
| 25. Croatia | 53. Lithuania | 81. Russian Federation | |
| 26. Czech Republic | 54. Madagascar | 82. Samoa | |
| 27. Democratic People's Republic of Korea | 55. Malaysia | 83. Saudi Arabia | |
| 28. Democratic Republic of Congo | 56. Mauritius | 84. Serbia and Montenegro | |

* Events registered on the WHD HQ Web site as of 5 May 2003.

** Membership of Timor Leste in the South-East Asia Region is to be confirmed at the 56th General World Health Assembly.



More than 300 events in over 100 countries marked World Health Day 2003. Events involved tens of thousands of children, their parents and teachers, their medical professionals and community leaders, their regional governments and national ministries. Through media coverage, the message that children are the centre of sustainable development, and that their health needs to be protected from environmental hazards, spread to millions more.

“Every year, over 5 million children ages 0 to 14 die from diseases directly related to their environments. They die of diarrhoea, respiratory illnesses, malaria and other vector-borne diseases, injuries, and other environmental threats in and around their homes. The deaths and overall ill-health can be prevented. We know what to do. We have developed strategies to combat these environmental risks to children’s health. They need to be implemented on a global and national scale, and at the household and community level.”



Excerpts from the speech of the Director-General of the World Health Organization,
Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, on 7 April (World Health Day 2003)

“Their future is in your hands.”

World Health Day 2003 Event Coordinator

