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This guide is intended to support you in developing materials and in planning and conducting events to mark World Health Day 2008.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Climate change will affect, in profoundly adverse ways, some of the most fundamental determinants of health: food, air, water. In the face of this challenge, we need champions throughout the world who will work to put protecting human health at the centre of the climate change agenda.

World Health Day, celebrated on 7 April every year, is a unique opportunity to draw worldwide attention to a subject of major importance to global health. This year, World Health Day focuses on the need to protect health from the adverse effects of climate change. Apart from demonstrating your personal commitment to organizing events around World Health Day, it is going to be vital to make 2008 a remarkable year in ensuring that everyone is aware of the health issues and the urgency of the goals to be achieved. Every event and every voice on every occasion is needed to give new energy and commitment to making the fundamental changes that will both stabilize the climate and prevent human suffering.

We know what an unstable and changing climate means for health. Heatwaves, storms, floods and droughts kill tens of thousands each year. Climate-sensitive diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and protein–energy malnutrition already cause more than 3 million deaths globally. Even these numbers do not reflect the devastating indirect health impacts anticipated from the effect that climate change will have on food crops and the availability of fresh water in large areas of the world. All populations are vulnerable, but the poor are the first and the hardest hit. Climate change threatens to reverse our progress in fighting diseases of poverty, and to widen the gaps in health outcomes between the richest and the poorest. This is unfair – and it is unacceptable.

What can be done? We need to make clear that in a rapidly changing environment, it is not only the animals and plants, but humans, that need protection. We need governments to put human health and wellbeing at the heart of climate change policy, and renew efforts to protect health through achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We need ministries of health to strengthen public health policy and practice to meet the challenges of climate change and protect their populations. And, most importantly, we need individuals to make personal choices that will both enhance health and reduce climate change.

World Health Day 2008 provides the occasion not just to highlight the magnitude of the problem, but also to bring all stakeholders together to apply solutions that work. Climate change will only respond to nations, and to people, acting in concert. Whatever kind of events you decide to organize and however modest your budget, we hope this toolkit will help you to achieve the maximum impact for your activities.

The verdict is in. Climate change is real. Human activities are a prime cause. Human activities can also be the solution. We must act now, together, to find ways to protect human health and the people on this planet. All your efforts will contribute. Let us make World Health Day 2008 “Protecting Health from Climate Change” a landmark event that sets the stage for truly global action!

Dr Margaret Chan
Director-General of the World Health Organization
The material in this guide is intended to assist in the planning process to mark World Health Day 2008 on the theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change”. It provides information on how different sectors – including individuals, institutions, organizations, or government agencies involved in public health from the local to international level – can play a role in the celebrations. Although specific events should be tailored according to the cultural, social and economic conditions in each country, we believe the ideas shown in this toolkit will stimulate a truly global celebration and will anchor health at the heart of the climate change agenda.

The theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change” puts health at centre stage: it was selected in recognition that climate change is posing ever growing threats to global public health security. Through increased collaboration, the global community will be better prepared to cope with climate-related health challenges worldwide and in regions, countries and communities. Examples of such actions are strengthening surveillance and control of infectious diseases, ensuring safer use of diminishing water supplies, and coordinating health action in emergencies.

The theme can be interpreted relatively easily in different contexts, countries, cultures and languages. It can be understood in many different ways, based on regional and national priorities and contexts. In its broad interpretation, the theme allows for the establishment of linkages between climate change and health that would otherwise remain unexplored, touching on areas such as health and security, health and environment, health and energy, health and food, health and transport, health and the built environment – in addition to health and climate change.

This year’s theme is a call to reach a broad spectrum of actors in the community – and to link with worldwide efforts of international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, governments and the community at large. It is an opportunity to capitalize on the energy and commitment of people, and to achieve a common goal: to attract global and local attention and to galvanize action, so that every person on the planet is less vulnerable to climate change, its threats and its health impacts.
World Health Day 2008 is a unique opportunity to focus attention and to create momentum that compels governments, the international community, civil society and individuals to take action. On the Day (7 April 2008), we hope that your organization will add its unique voice to the others around the world hosting events on the theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change”. A range of activities in every country will stimulate a change from passive indifference to active, long-term involvement. The solutions to the climate change crisis will be found in the diversity of human imagination and experience. All of us are needed to meet this global threat.

World Health Day offers an opportunity to revitalize political commitment to address climate change, and provides a unique event to launch a worldwide advocacy effort to catalyse greater public participation in the global campaign to protect health from the adverse effects of climate change.

Key points in support of such a global effort are listed below.

- Health is among the sectors most affected by climate change.
- Health impacts of climate change and variability are happening now. Excess heat-related mortality, changes in vector-borne disease ranges and changes in the anticipated pollen season in the high and middle latitudes of the northern hemisphere are early evidence of health impacts of the changing climate.¹
- Changing patterns of natural disasters, and the numbers of people affected, are another early consequence of climate change. Climate change alone accounts for more than 60 000 deaths from climate-related natural disasters every year, the majority of which occur in the developing world.
- Health hazards from climate change are diverse, global and difficult to reverse over human time scales. They range from increased risks of extreme weather events to increase of mosquito population density from changing temperatures and water availability, and changes in infectious disease dynamics.
- Many of the most important global killers are highly sensitive to climatic conditions. Malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition cause more than 3 million deaths each year, and the incidence and spread of these diseases and conditions can all be expected to be affected by changing weather patterns and water availability.

Health impacts will be disproportionately greater in vulnerable populations. Globally, people at greatest risk include the very young, the elderly and the medically infirm. Low-income countries and areas where undernutrition is widespread, education is poor and infrastructures are weak will have most difficulty adapting to climate change and related health hazards. Vulnerability is also determined by geography and is higher in areas with a high endemicity of climate-sensitive diseases, water stress, low food production and isolated populations. The populations considered to be at greatest risk are those living in small-island developing states, mountainous regions, water-stressed areas, megacities and coastal areas in developing countries (particularly the large urban agglomerations in delta regions in Asia), and also poor people and those unprotected by health services. A major concern is the fact that some African countries have a high burden of climate-sensitive diseases and poor public health capability to respond; the effects of climate change on socioeconomic development will seriously undermine the health and well-being of people in such countries.

- Health effects are likely to increase over time as temperatures continue to rise, affecting all populations across the world.
- Risks related to climate change are inequitably distributed. The greenhouse gases that cause climate change originate so far mainly from industrialized countries, but the health risks in the short to medium term are concentrated in the poorest developing nations that have contributed least to the problem.
- Climate change further jeopardizes our chances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals – the international targets for poverty reduction and social development which the international community has agreed upon. Again, climate change will affect the poor and socially disadvantaged – or the ability of these people to improve their life chances – the most.
- There is a stronger understanding of the timing and magnitude of health impacts from climate change; some future impacts are now predicted with high (80%) or very high (90%) confidence.
The public health response to climate change needs to be tailored to local and regional conditions and threats because health is likely to be differently affected depending on geography, population dynamics, level of development and public health infrastructure. These differences are illustrated in the points below drawn from the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Summary to Policy-Makers.

- Africa: exacerbation of malnutrition in some countries due to as great as a 50% reduction in yields from rain-fed agriculture by 2020.
- Asia: rise in endemic morbidity and mortality due to diarrhoeal disease primarily associated with floods and droughts in East, South and South-East Asia caused by projected changes in the hydrological cycle.
- Europe: increase of the health risks due to heatwaves and increased frequency of wildfires.
- Latin America: increase in the number of people at risk of hunger due to the decrease in productivity of some important crops and livestock.
- North America: increase in the number, intensity and duration of heatwaves, with potential for adverse health impacts.

What we do globally to mitigate and adapt over the next decade will greatly affect the magnitude of health impacts worldwide.

Many of the projected impacts on health are avoidable or controllable through well-known and tested public health interventions, as well as through measures of mitigation (reduction of exposure) and adaptation (reduction of effects) in health-related sectors such as vector control, energy, transport, land use, and water management.

Many of the strategies needed to stabilize climate change have positive health benefits. For example, increased use of active transport in industrialized countries will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from individual automobiles, at the same time it improves air quality leading to better respiratory health and fewer premature deaths, and increases physical activity leading to less obesity and fewer obesity-related illnesses.

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GOALS

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2008
“PROTECTING HEALTH FROM CLIMATE CHANGE”

The goals

- Raise awareness and public understanding of the global and locally relevant health consequences of climate change.

- Advocate for interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships from the local to international level that seek to improve health through rapid deployment of mitigation strategies to stabilize climate change and development of proactive adaptation programmes to minimize health impacts.

- Generate effective actions by local communities, organizations, health systems and governments to reduce the impact of climate change on health through urgent application of mitigation techniques (reduction of exposure) and adaptation techniques (reduction of effects).

- Demonstrate the health community's role in facing the challenges globally and in regions, countries and communities.

- Spark commitment and action among governments, international organizations, donors, civil society, businesses and communities (especially among young people) to anchor health at the heart of the climate change agenda.
KEY MESSAGES

Health is one of the areas most affected by climate change – and it is being affected now
The science is clear. The earth is warming, the warming is accelerating, and human actions are responsible. If current warming trends remain uncontrolled, humanity will face more injury, disease and death related to natural disasters and heatwaves, higher rates of foodborne, waterborne and vector-borne illness, and more premature deaths and disease related to air pollution. Moreover, in many parts of the world, large populations will be displaced by sea level rise and affected by drought and famine. As glaciers melt, the hydrological cycle shifts and the productivity of arable land changes. We are beginning to be able to measure some of these effects on health even now.

The health impacts of climate change will hit the poor hardest
The physical effects of climate change will vary in different geographical locations. The human health impacts from climate change are further modified by such conditions as level of development, poverty and education, public health infrastructure, land use practices and political structure. Initially, developing countries will be hardest hit. Countries with high levels of poverty and malnutrition, weak health infrastructures and/or political unrest will be the least able to cope. Moreover, if we fail to address climate change and its effects on health, we risk jeopardizing even further our ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Traditional public health tools are important components of effective response to climate change
Clean water and sanitation, safe and adequate food, immunization, disease surveillance and response, safe and effective disease vector control, and disaster preparedness are all critical components of public health practices that are also adaptations to climate change. These programmes need to be strengthened globally with special concentration of effort in high-risk locations and populations in order to prevent climate-related injury, disease and death.

Cross-sector, interdisciplinary partnerships are necessary to meet this global health threat
Climate change is wide ranging, and effective adaptation will require the building of partnerships to leverage the expertise of government agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, industry and professional groups and local communities. Decisions affecting urban planning, transport, energy supply, food production, land use and water resources affect both climate and health. Collaboration across all these sectors is needed to find the innovative and effective solutions that will stabilize climate and protect health.

Action must begin now to protect health by applying both adaptation and mitigation
Scientific uncertainty persists about the possibility and timing of abrupt and catastrophic climate change if temperatures continue to rise. This makes it urgent for action to begin now to stabilize the climate through strong and effective mitigation undertaken simultaneously with adaptation activities to prevent increases in foreseeable climate-related illnesses. Full participation of the health sector in national and international processes for mitigation and adaptation to climate change is essential.
GETTING STARTED

Key steps in the process of planning your activities for World Health Day 2008:

1. Collect information (local, national, global)
2. Develop and package the key messages
3. Mobilize other sectors
4. Plan events for the day – and beyond!

In order to be able to keep the momentum going beyond World Health Day, you will need to think right from the start of ways in which the activities can be continued and built on throughout the year. We suggest you read this toolkit all the way through before you start planning.

Remember, your campaign is a newsworthy media event, so work with media professionals throughout planning and staging of the event, and enlist their help to assess its impact.

Join us now in organizing a successful Day.

COLLECT INFORMATION

Learn the basics about climate change and health. Identify the climate-related health problems most likely to be issues in your area. Consider which segments of the population might be most vulnerable to these outcomes and see if there are any local data or statistics concerning them (e.g. elderly people, medical conditions, educational levels, poverty, housing or employment). Look for local experts in government, public health or universities who can help you develop a health message that is relevant to your location and organization. Transform your local and national statistics into key messages and stories for your target audience(s). If no local data are available, use the global information provided in this toolkit (see the key messages on page 11 and the sound bites on the next pages) and, if possible, adapt it to the local circumstances. The messages and stories should support successes, identify information and programme gaps, and set out the next steps in your World Health Day follow-up activities.

Facts based on solid research are crucial to any advocacy campaign. Although many global statistics exist, local data will be most persuasive to local politicians and media.
DEVELOP AND PACKAGE THE MESSAGE

It will be useful to keep the following points in mind when developing the message.

- Describe the level of local information on climate change and health available in your region or country. What are the largest and most likely climate-related health problems for your region or country? How much baseline information do you already gather? What are the current public health protections/programmes in place to address these health issues?

- Identify gaps (problems) in local information and current programmes for protecting health from climate change, as well as the steps you can take to raise awareness and stimulate action.

- Publicize and promote the work done or programmes proposed by your organization to improve the situation.

- Empower individuals and organizations at the local level to get involved by identifying practical, locally relevant approaches both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare for their future health impacts.

- Highlight success stories.

Your planning will involve working with the media at all stages. Various ways of using communication channels are discussed in this guide.

Once you have collected and analysed data, transform the results into something everyone can relate to. Short, catchy phrases – called “sound bites” – are best for this purpose. Remember that the message may need to be adapted to fit the target audience you are aiming to reach. The following are a few examples of sound bites on the theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change” that could be used under different conditions.
Sound bite 1:  
**Climate change threatens health**
There is sound evidence that global warming is now unequivocal. Without urgent, immediate action through changes in lifestyle and attitude, the effects on the global climate system could be abrupt or irreversible, sparing no country, causing more frequent and more intense heatwaves, rainstorms, tropical cyclones and surges in sea level this very century. These occurrences threaten human health security and cost lives. As early as 2020, according to a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 75–250 million people in Africa will suffer water shortages, while residents of Asia's megacities will be at great risk of river and coastal flooding.

Sound bite 2:  
**Climate change will burden health services**
Health professionals are on the front line in dealing with the health impacts of climate change. All populations are likely to experience some impacts, but the most vulnerable populations are those who live in poor countries where the health system already struggles to detect, control and treat infectious diseases and health conditions, including malaria, dengue haemorrhagic fever, protein–energy malnutrition and diarrhoea. Climate change will exacerbate these weaknesses by bringing new pressures on health services, with greater frequency.

Sound bite 3:  
**Protection of health from climate change calls for a preventive public health approach**
To preserve health in a changing climate, we need to strengthen and reform the systems we have rather than invent new, separate structures. To protect health from climate change we must tackle the issue on all fronts: reducing and responding to the effects of climate change is a shared international responsibility.
Sound bite 4:
Invest in health systems, be prepared for climate change
International collaboration among transition economies and developed and developing countries, with increased focus on strengthening public health systems, is crucial to protecting health in a changing climate. Preparing health systems for climate change includes strengthening surveillance and control of infectious diseases, ensuring safer use of diminishing water supplies, and coordinating health action in emergencies.

Sound bite 5:
WHO is responding to the climate change challenge
WHO is bringing the global community together to address the growing threat of climate change to public health security, by: supporting global policy efforts on climate change; strongly advocating for national, group and individual action to promote human health; helping Member States prepare their health systems for emerging challenges brought about by climate change; and providing guidance on how development decisions in other sectors can enhance health at the same time as they cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Take account of regional differences
Health is likely to be differently affected in different parts of the world. The IPCC has described some of the different health consequences in various regions of the world (see page 9), and some countries have begun evaluating climate-related health issues on a national scale. Your message will be most effective if it is based on data and likely health impacts within the populations or locations you serve.
MOBILIZE OTHERS AND PLAN EVENTS
Approach local partners with an outline of activities and events for World Health Day 2008 and ask for their involvement and support. Explain how their participation shows enlightened self-interest: as well as supporting a good cause, it will increase their visibility and enhance their profile in the community.

Discussions, forums, seminars and courses are useful for exchanging information with the public, nongovernmental organizations, policy-makers and decision-makers, and associations of health-care providers and teachers.

Policy-makers and decision-makers
- Make national and international commitments to reduce exposures to and effects of climate change.
- Identify the relevant health and environment policies and legislation, and the individuals in government responsible for them.
- Assess information on climate change and health and ensure that the priority issues receive the necessary high-level attention.
- Ensure that government budgets for environment, health and other sectors are adequate to support improvement programmes.
- Promote linkages between health and environment policies.
- Raise awareness among all sectors (energy, transport, urban planning, agriculture, economics, industry) of the health impact of climate change.

Health sector: doctors, nurses and other practitioners, administrators, public health personnel
- Promote recognition of the main health threats from climate change.
- Find the win-win actions that promote health as they reduce climate change – e.g. more active transport in automobile-dependent cultures will improve air quality, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and combat obesity.
- Stress the health sector’s direct responsibility to respond to the threats to health that climate change is posing to the population.
- Provide an example of how the health sector can demonstrate carbon neutral practice.
- Point out that many of the most effective interventions in protecting health from climate change are basic public health interventions.
- Include issues of climate-related health threats in general health training and continuing education modules.

The boxes below provide checklists of some of the points for discussion and actions you might choose to take, according to the people and organizations you could involve. In discussion with local partners, you will find many additional options for action and cooperation.
Local authorities, mayors, nongovernmental organizations, communities and individuals

- Encourage maximum energy efficiency and conservation through simple individual actions.
- Put pressure on authorities to engage in mitigation actions that move towards carbon-neutral, sustainable operations and future endeavours.
- Encourage planning and funding to address health consequences of the unavoidable climate change guaranteed by previous emissions.
- Build community awareness about placing health at the heart of the climate change agenda.
- Influence local and national policies, and hold authorities accountable for their actions and for the services they provide.

Education: teachers, students and children

- Provide teachers with accessible materials to educate children on the impacts of climate change on health.
- Provide accessible materials to illustrate that children can become leaders to stimulate behaviour change in adults that can mitigate climate change and protect their future.
- Disseminate information on solutions that already exist and those that are under development to stimulate academic interest and foster a group of new scientists, engineers, health professionals and political leaders.

Private sector

- Involve the private sector in preparedness and in vulnerability reduction by forming public–private partnerships.
- Create institutional and management arrangements to ensure that the private sector will be involved in reducing and responding to climate change.
- Find the win-win situations that stimulate the economy, create climate-safe jobs and mitigate further climate change.
SIXTY WAYS TO CELEBRATE WORLD HEALTH DAY

2008 is the 60th Anniversary of the World Health Organization, so we offer 60 suggestions to get you started on planning your marking of World Health Day 2008 “Protecting Health from Climate Change”.

In schools
1. Arrange a school assembly on World Health Day 2008 with a guest speaker on climate change and health.
2. Make student assignments on climate change and health (essays, research and book reports).
3. Sponsor a climate and health contest (posters, writing, photo, essay, and art).
4. Form a youth theatre group to perform plays addressing climate change and health issues.
5. Form student groups to calculate and make plans to reduce personal/household carbon footprints.
6. Start a climate and health club.
7. Invite a doctor, nurse or community health worker to come and talk to students.
8. Create a special learning unit using essays, poems, books and research reports about the responsibility we all share in facing up to health issues and climate change.
9. Have students locate statistics and articles about climate-related health problems from different regions of the world.
10. Design a board game or quiz on global climate and health facts.
11. Write a letter or article for the school newspaper on protecting health from climate change.
12. Have older children mentor younger children in writing a letter to their parents about actions at home to protect health from climate change.
13. Reward children who take the bus, walk or cycle to school with earlier dismissal after class.

In the workplace
14. Distribute educational materials to workers and management on climate change and health.
15. Invite a guest speaker who can link workplace issues to climate change and health.
17. Place tips in the newsletter on win-win actions to promote health and conserve energy.
18. Create an award for most climate friendly employee/department/manager.
20. Sponsor a walk-to-work or cycle-to-work day.
21. Reward car poolers with the best parking spots.
22. Develop a climate and health committee to recommend and monitor changes in the workplace.

In health facilities
23. Distribute educational materials to patients, clients and staff.
24. Develop poster messages on climate change and health.
25. Develop patient handouts on co-benefits of carbon mitigation and health.
26. Do risk reduction appraisals and diagnostic screenings on climate-related health conditions.
27. Hold “open house” tours of sustainable facilities and green buildings.
28. Sponsor a roundtable on climate and health friendly lifestyles among health workers and leaders.
29. Calculate the carbon footprint of your health clinic and make an action plan to reduce it.
30. Start a climate and health committee.
31. Incorporate climate change in health fairs.
32. Work with local planners and community leaders to promote a climate and health friendly community.
33. Be a good role model for colleagues and clients.

**Among the general public**
34. Sponsor a fun run to draw attention to climate and health.
36. Sponsor a conference, workshop or symposium with local experts on climate change and health.
37. Organize a panel of local leaders to discuss actions on the theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change”.
38. Use plays, musical performances and films to raise funds for climate and health awareness.
39. Sponsor a T-shirt, button or pencil sale, a walk or a run to benefit an awareness programme in your area.
40. Start a letter-writing campaign to government officials about carbon mitigation and adaptation to promote health.
41. Arrange special service projects on climate and health by universities, civic and religious groups and social clubs.
42. Hold a film festival featuring educational films about climate change and health.
43. Work with retail merchants on promotional items highlighting the link between climate and health.
44. Arrange for climate and health messages at professional sports pre-game ceremonies and scoreboard salutes.
45. Create signs for public places promoting healthy, carbon-neutral lifestyle choices.
46. Ask for pledges to reduce personal carbon footprints by 10% by next World Health Day.
47. Phone or visit a local official to discuss the links between health and climate.
48. Start neighbourhood climate and health committees to work on local solutions.
49. Hold an open house for local organizations to network on climate change and health issues.
50. Develop a climate change and health report card for grading local groups and officials on progress.

**In the media**
51. Write Letters to the Editor or op-eds (see page 24) about carbon mitigation and adaptations that promote health.
52. Produce a public service announcement for TV or radio.
53. Submit a news release on your event.
54. Produce a documentary.
55. Gain endorsements and participation by athletes, celebrities and government officials.
56. Use billboards, bus sides and other public locations to post health and climate messages.
57. Be a guest on a radio talk show.
58. Challenge elected officials to develop an action plan to protect health from climate change.
59. Submit an article to a local magazine.
60. Start a climate and health blog or listserv.
KEEPING THE MOMENTUM THROUGHOUT 2008

HOW TO INTEREST THE MEDIA IN WORLD HEALTH DAY
This section gives you some technical information on reaching and using the three primary channels of mass media – television, radio and print. The discussion that follows sets out appropriate goals for your media outreach efforts. It provides information on how to understand and work directly with the media and suggests resources for reaching specialized media markets.

Organize events
Parades, competitions, street events and quizzes using the World Health Day 2008 theme “Protecting Health from Climate Change” all create media attention and get the message out to large numbers of people in an entertaining and stimulating way. This is a good way to reach people who might not be attracted to more traditional events, such as seminars or meetings.

Involv celebritie
It is a good idea to involve celebrities as spokespersons. Remember it takes time and preparation to ensure the effective collaboration of celebrities, as they and their agents or managers must be made thoroughly aware of the causes and consequences of the subject matter and you must explain how you want them to contribute to the event.

Celebrities
- Choose individuals who are well known and respected within the country or community and who can draw positive attention to World Health Day.
- Invite personalities in music, film, sports and politics to talk about the issues.
- Engage a well-known person or politician who lives nearby or is from your area – they may provide “local support” for your event.
- Make sure the celebrities are briefed in advance.

Involve celebrities
- Make sure the celebrities are briefed in advance.
Communicate effectively
Media relations, also referred to as public relations, are most effective ways of reaching target audiences. For example, you can use the news and public affairs programming in your area to highlight health issues. Before coordinating your media relations efforts, review and set down what you want to accomplish. Doing this will help you to develop appropriate media activities and messages consistent with the goals outlined above.

When reviewing your communications programme, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is your target audience?
- What messages should you use to influence your target audience?
- What types of media outreach would be efficient and cost effective for this purpose?

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA
Members of the media are also members of the community. They will be interested in your messages in their capacity as private citizens and also as professionals. Two things are needed, however, to increase media coverage: (1) understanding what the media want in a story and (2) making sure that the information is provided to them in a clear and timely manner.

Having effective media relations is simple as long as you keep these points in mind.

In addition, all reporters and producers seek similar story elements. They look for audience appeal, issues that stimulate debate, stories that generate increased readership, and sustained public interest through fresh perspectives on an issue. The media will avoid stories that are inaccurate or incomplete, as well as organizations that are overly persistent after a story has been rejected.
News releases
News releases should be one page, but no more than two pages in length, and it is important to include the five Ws: who is involved; what is happening; when it is happening; where it is happening; and why or how it is happening.

In one or two sentences, the lead paragraph should answer these five Ws. Most reporters decide whether or not to read further depending on the first paragraph, and print editors tend to cut the press release from the bottom up. The second or third paragraph should include a quote reporters can use in their article.

Feature news proposals can be three to four pages in length and should capture and build on a story you want to pitch. Attention-grabbing headings are also important. Some suggestions for stories include:

- A profile of an active health community leader – what he or she has done and why.
- The barriers that exist to improving community health and why.
- Personal stories of people’s experience of overcoming health-related problems.
- Targeted prevention programmes, perhaps for immunization or clean water supplies.
- Launch of a partnership with a local business to combat a health problem.
- A local angle on international issues.

Media kits
A media kit provides information prepared specially for the media and released on the day of the event. Often organizations have a standard media kit, which includes material introducing the organization. For major news events, the standard kit should be supplemented with current information relating to the event. Examples of materials that might be included in a media kit are:

- Statistics on the prevalence of a particular climate-related disease in your area.
- Information on your organization and its prevention programmes.
- Information on national, state or local hotlines or resources.
- Business card for the media to contact you or your organization.
- Brief biographies of key officials and spokespersons in your organization.
CREATING AND SUSTAINING MEDIA INTEREST

There are a number of different ways to create and sustain media interest in your event. Having a radio or TV station cosponsor your World Health Day event will highlight its commitment to health as well as generate the potential for free publicity. You can use prepared World Health Day material to attract both media and public attention. Use it in all publicity-related materials, from invitations to media kits, buttons and banners. If in doubt, “Protecting Health from Climate Change” conveys a powerful message.

When preparing your event, allow plenty of time for planning, and choose carefully the date and time. Select a time when your most important audiences will be available and there are no conflicting events.

Supply plenty of photographs (most newspapers prefer black and white) and camera-ready graphics such as charts. Some camera-ready material can be obtained from WHO Information Officers (see the contact list on pages 28–30). Supplements for the basic media kit for a special event may include:

- News release(s) on the event.
- Biographies of people (speakers, panel members, etc.) relevant to the event in which you are trying to interest the reporter.
- Copies of relevant written materials, such as statements to be given at a news conference, speeches, etc.

Monitor your media relations

Track your media contacts by asking all your colleagues to record summary information about their telephone conversations on a simple form giving name, organization, date, time, and topics discussed. Examining the media contact forms can provide information such as how many media enquiries were received over a period of time, on which subjects, and whether enquiries are increasing or decreasing.
INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

NEWSPAPER CONTRIBUTIONS
Two tools for outsiders to express their views in newspapers are Letters to the Editor and short pieces that appear opposite the editorial page (known as “op-eds” in newspaper parlance). Most newspapers will usually consider up to two op-eds a year. The piece should be quite short (ideally 300–400 words), well thought out, well written and persuasive; it should be sent by the head of your organization or someone of similar status.

Be selective about your Letters to the Editor: if you write too often they will not get printed. Your letter is more likely to be published if it contains fewer than 400 words. You should develop your main idea within the first two paragraphs. If you are responding to a specific article, put its title, author, and the date when it appeared in the first sentence.

OTHER ACTIONS
Contact reporters on the staff of local papers and persuade them to publicize your event. In addition, arrange to have the event listed in local newspaper calendars and announced on television and radio stations.

Deliver invitations two weeks in advance of the event, by hand or by mail. Two to three days in advance, call editors and reporters and ask if they plan to attend. The day before the event, call the selected media again and politely remind them about the event.

During the event, set up a media sign-in table and hand out media kits. Try to set up interviews with participants and introduce the media representatives to the appropriate spokespeople. A good idea is to issue everyone with name badges (with names big and bold!). Have someone from your organization take photographs to illustrate future articles on the event; they will also be useful for your own files.
USING THE MEDIA

Utilizing the media to the best effect requires a collaborative effort. In a community, there are often several groups working to promote their particular event. If open communication does not exist between them, competition for media coverage may occur, thus causing tension between the groups and confusion among the media. The best way to avoid this is to encourage collaboration between local organizations, if possible forming an intermediary group that will coordinate the names, places, dates, etc. of each organization’s events to be covered.

Although you may sometimes call on a reporter to put a local angle on a national story, much of the time you will need to create newsworthy material on your own. The three most important elements in a good story, from the media’s point of view, are action, people and substance. Match the needs of the media with your message.

There may be other opportunities throughout 2008 to build on the momentum you set in motion by the World Health Day celebrations. You may like to consider setting up a calendar of events, activities and programmes that are important to the community, which you could use to sustain your relationship with the media. Because the news media thrive on novelty, however, you can only realistically expect to achieve significant coverage two or three times a year.

Immediately after the event, send a news release to any reporters who were unable to attend and send follow-up letters to the editors of local newspapers. You can also write a follow-up article for inclusion in appropriate community publications, illustrated with photographs. Remember to thank the community and participants, and inform them of the success of the event.

Coverage of your World Health Day event can be expanded by planning in advance a system for measuring the success of the event. Record information such as how many people attended, how many volunteers were recruited, and how much media coverage was received. Not only is this information useful for internal evaluation, but it can provide focus for post-event news releases.
ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST

- Identify community resources. Refer to the section on pages 14–16 to identify individuals and organizations in your community who might be interested in helping you to plan a World Health Day event.

- Create a World Health Day planning committee. Invite the people identified above to attend a planning meeting. Form subcommittees and assign specific duties.

- Choose an activity or activities. Use the suggestions for World Health Day activities on pages 16–19 to help you decide how best to celebrate the event in your community. Remember, it is better to begin modestly and succeed in reaching that goal than to plan a large project and fail.

- Select an activity format. Decide whether to have one centralized event or many small ones. Will there be audience participation, refreshments, entertainment, etc.?

- Set a date for your event. You can plan activities throughout the week or even the whole year!

- Set up an action timetable. Schedule dates and deadlines for your planning activities from the first meeting through to the day of your event.

- Choose a location for your observance. Make certain there is enough space with adequate lighting, heating/air, acoustics, accessibility, parking, film facilities and refreshments and lunch facilities.
Keep the activities of the World Health Day theme going throughout the year. **World Health Day should not be the only advocacy effort of the year!** It should be a catalyst for bringing together new partners, generating media interest and mobilizing resources. The contacts made and the results achieved can be built on throughout the year, to keep the essential elements at the forefront of public opinion and to enable the issues to gather momentum. Keep the heat on!

- Identify possible financial sponsors. Many World Health Day activities can be part of existing or planned activities and will require little or no funding. If not, decide what your financial and material needs will be early on and look for support from within your community.

- Decide who will participate in your event. Determine approximately how many people you want to attend. Discuss ways of getting a cross-section of your community involved.

- Identify speakers, celebrities and entertainers. Look for sources of talent and expertise in your community. Make sure you give everyone plenty of time to prepare for the event.

- Make hospitality arrangements. Prepare invitations, acknowledgements, welcoming committees and name tags – and send thank-you notes afterwards to speakers and others who assisted in the event.

- Publicity. Submit news releases to newspapers and to television and radio stations; produce and distribute posters and flyers; announce your event at other meetings.
USEFUL CONTACTS

WHO HEADQUARTERS

International organizations should contact WHO headquarters:

Dr Maria Neira
Director
Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE)
World Health Organization
Geneva
Fax: +41 22 791 4127
Email: whd2008@who.int

Ms Nada Osseiran
World Health Day 2008 Coordinator
Communications and Advocacy Officer
Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE)
WHO headquarters (Geneva)
Fax: +41 22 791 4127
Email: whd2008@who.int

Regional organizations should contact the respective WHO regional offices. Country based organizations should contact the WHO country offices. National and local organizations should contact the respective WHO country office.

This information is provided on the main WHO web site at: www.who.int/country/en

In countries where there is no WHO country office, the relevant WHO regional office should be contacted.
WHO REGIONAL OFFICES

AFRICA
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Fax: + 45 39 17 18 80
E-mail: LNE@euro.who.int
**Internet links**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)


**WHO web sites**

WHO headquarters: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

World Health Day 2008: [www.who.int/world-health-day](http://www.who.int/world-health-day)

Department of Public Health and Environment: [www.who.int/phe](http://www.who.int/phe)


Health Security and Environment: [www.who.int/infectious-disease-news](http://www.who.int/infectious-disease-news)


Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response: [www.who.int/csr/en](http://www.who.int/csr/en)

Polio: [www.who.int/topics/poliomyelitis/en](http://www.who.int/topics/poliomyelitis/en)


Health Action in Crises: [www.who.int/hac/about/en](http://www.who.int/hac/about/en)

HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria (HTM)
[www.who.int/hiv/en](http://www.who.int/hiv/en)
[www.who.int/tb/en](http://www.who.int/tb/en)
[www.who.int/malaria](http://www.who.int/malaria)

Evidence and Information for Policy: [www.who.int/evidence/en](http://www.who.int/evidence/en)

Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health: [www.who.int/nmh/en](http://www.who.int/nmh/en)
REQUEST FORM TO BE LISTED ON THE WORLD HEALTH DAY 2008 WEB SITE

Please list our World Health Day 2008 event on the WHO web site.

Organization name:

Title of event:

Location: Date of event:

Web site link for further details on the event:

The following information will not be printed on the web site but may be needed to determine if the event is in compliance with WHO policy. In case of any doubt, the event will not be mentioned on the WHO web site.

Name of person in charge: Telephone:

Description of event:

Submit this form to:
Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE)
World Health Organization (WHO)

By fax: +4122 791 4127
By e-mail: whd2008@who.int
Through web site: www.who.int/world-health-day
EVENTS FORM: OUTCOME OF WORLD HEALTH DAY ACTIVITIES

Kindly complete this form to report to WHO on the event/outcome of your activities to mark World Health Day 2008.

Organization name:  

Contact name:  

Address:  

Town: Postal code: Country:  

Telephone: Fax:  

E-mail address:  

Short description of the event:  
Please include the subject addressed, type of activity, specific audience for which it was organized, and the attendance rate.  

The activity received the following press coverage in our area:  
You may attach press clippings for our reference.  

This activity/event led to the following concrete actions in our community/region:  

We plan a follow-up activity:  ☐ No ☐ Yes  
If yes, please describe the type of activity and expected outcome:  

