INTERSECTORAL PLANNING FOR HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The process of the development of indicators has technical as well as social and political dimensions. Indicators for policy and planning should be developed as an integral part of the overall planning process at local and national levels. In this chapter, a brief account is given of intersectoral planning processes for health and sustainable development, including national health and environmental action plans and local “healthy cities” initiatives. Objectives of planning initiatives and partnership structures are also discussed.

5.1 INTERSECTORAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Agenda 21 laid much emphasis on the role of governments in fostering sustainability. While governments often bear the main responsibility for ensuring healthy living environments, they can do so only by working in collaboration and partnership with other stakeholders. Indeed, Agenda 21 called on governments to enter into dialogue with citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and to adopt Agenda 21 plans of action. The traditional service roles of government, the private sector, community organizations and trade unions have changed rapidly in recent years as a result of fiscal constraints, constitutional and legal reforms, scarcity of resources, globalization of economies and liberalization of markets (18). Governments have thus understood the need to adopt a partnership approach to service provision and planning.

While pressures of globalization continue to increase, a counteracting force of “localization” is emerging (58). New participatory approaches and strategies take account of the fundamental importance and central role of local communities in bringing about change. A global trend has emerged towards decentralized government services and greater emphasis on health and environmental actions by non-governmental organizations and by the community itself.

The involvement of all sectors of the community is regarded as fundamental for ensuring that programmes reflect local priorities, enjoy widespread support and are sustainable. Holistic, intersectoral approaches and a harmonization of strategies at all levels are needed to address the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development and to engage all relevant partners in cooperative planning (see Section 1.4). Of course, the problems to be addressed, the way in which services are delivered and the ways in which governments are organized differ considerably throughout the world. In most countries, a range of agencies and sectors are responsible
for aspects of environment and health at different levels of government. A precise delineation of sectoral responsibilities at various tiers of government is needed, based on integrated, intersectoral policies and plans.

5.2 NATIONAL INITIATIVES

After the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), numerous countries developed national and local plans for sustainable development, many of which addressed the development of indicators in planning their action within Agenda 21 and their reporting on the state of the environment. As mentioned in Chapter 1, many initiatives have been started which aim to incorporate health issues in sustainable development planning. One example is the development of national environment and health action plans, which have served as a blueprint for setting priorities for action in some countries. Perhaps even more important is the intersectoral collaboration that has been encouraged by the national environment and health action plans. Alliances and linkages have been formed with many different sectors, including planning, environment, transport, agriculture, water and energy. This has led to better understanding of the importance of development issues in ministries of health and of health issues in other ministries.

It is now increasingly recognized that the health sector has a key role to play in ensuring that the policies and strategies of all sectors and organizations contribute to health protection and promotion (see Section 1.4 for a brief discussion). The first regionally coordinated action for national planning for health and the environment was taken in the European Region, at a meeting of ministries of health and the environment held in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1989. The meeting adopted the “European Charter on Health and Environment” (4) and decided that a review of the key threats to health and the environment in Europe should serve as the foundation for future national and regional preventive action. The review was produced in 1995 and included a detailed analysis of the environment and health problems facing Europe in the coming years.

A follow-up meeting of the same ministries was held in Helsinki, Finland, in 1994, where it was decided that WHO Member States in Europe should prepare national environment and health action plans. A declaration on “Action for Environment and Health” in Europe was adopted. The third European Conference on Environment and Health was organized in London, United Kingdom, in 1999 to follow up the national and international activities initiated by the Helsinki Declaration (59). This resulted in adoption of the “London Declaration on Environment and Health”. A number of national environment and health action plans have now been formally approved by governments, and many more are in various stages of development.

In 1995, the Pan-American Conference on Health and Environment in Sustainable Development was held in Washington DC, USA, which resulted in the Pan-American Charter on Health and Environment in Sustainable Human Development (60). A regional plan of action was developed to serve as a guide to implementation of the Charter in
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particular national situations. The Charter and plan of action formed the basis for the development of national plans and policies on health and the environment. A number of governments adopted formal political commitments and formulated national action plans on health, the environment and human development. For example, the Central American countries drafted a declaration on ecology and health, signaling their interest in reaching a consensus among the various national sectors with regard to health, the environment and development.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, following a conference on health, environment and development held in 1995, the “Beirut Declaration on Action for a Healthy Environment” was signed by the ministers of health and of the environment of the Member States of this Region (61). A regional strategy for health and the environment was adopted, and a number of countries are adopting national environment and health action plans. In South-East Asia, too, a regional strategic plan for health and the environment was prepared to promote the development of national plans of action. Health and environment initiatives have been introduced in all the countries of the Region (1).

In the Western Pacific Region, the approach has been to develop national health plans incorporating health and environment aspects, rather than to draw up separate national environment and health action plans. In Africa, a successful conference on health and the environment, held in 1997, led to the “Pretoria Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa”, which will serve as a basis for the development of integrated national planning initiatives. Work has already been started in a number of African countries.

In 1993, WHO in cooperation with UNDP undertook a global initiative whereby governments were encouraged to incorporate health and environment considerations in their national planning (62). Part of this work consisted of an evaluation of existing interministerial coordination and development options for establishing formal relationships between ministries and agencies, ensuring that health and environment sectors are represented on inter-ministerial committees for sustainable development. Raising awareness of the importance of health and environment in the various sectors was an important component of this work, as was the promotion of intersectoral action and strengthening the role of the health sector in planning for sustainable development (62).

WHO/UNDP GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON NATIONAL PLANNING FOR HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In Jordan, an intersectoral working group was set up by the Ministry of Health, and a national action plan for health and the environment was prepared. As part of this effort, the health and environmental implications of planned developments were assessed, measures to mitigate negative impacts were recommended and capacity-
building initiatives for health and environment planning and implementation were developed.

In Guatemala, a working team was established with representation from the Ministry of Health and the planning and environment sectors, and a national plan for environmental health and sustainable development was produced, accompanied by an institutional analysis of national sectors associated with health and the environment.

In Guinea-Bissau, a national interministerial committee on health and the environment was established in order to foster a national process of coordination among agencies, government and civil society that would be conducive to the integration of health and environment concerns in overall national sustainable development planning. A national plan of action on health and the environment for sustainable development was produced.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a draft strategy document on health and the environment was developed for subsequent incorporation in a national strategy on sustainable development. The draft strategy included a situation analysis and proposals for structural and institutional reform.

In Nepal, a health perspective was added to the draft environmental policy and action plan, which originally had not included a public health component. Through the Nepal Environmental Health Initiative, a comprehensive strategy for health and the environment was developed and most of the recommendations were incorporated into the final environmental policy and action plan.

In the Philippines, collaboration was strengthened between health agencies and the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which oversees implementation of the commitments to sustainable development made at the Earth Summit. An inter-agency committee on environmental health organized by the Ministry of Health joined with the Council in sponsoring a detailed analysis, with case studies, of integration of health and environmental issues into the development and implementation of national plans for sustainable development.

Source: WHO (62)
In drawing up the plan, the views of a wide range of people were taken into account. A draft plan was published in 1995, and nearly 250 people and organizations responded to the invitation to comment on it. The replies offered many constructive criticisms, which were taken into account in the plan. The format set out five areas:

- Institutional framework
- Environmental health management tools
- Specific environmental hazards
- Living and working environments
- Economic sectors

The objectives, bases for action and actions were set out for each of the areas covered by the plan. The actions were divided into three types according to their urgency, namely basic requirements, prevention and control of medium- and long-term hazards and promotion of well-being and mental health.

All in all, the plan gave both an overview of the provision of environmental health and a detailed analysis of the main factors contributing to it. It showed how the existing provisions could bring about a steady improvement in environmental health or how they should be modified to do so, setting out a range of specific actions which may be needed. In this way, the means of achieving the objectives of the action plan are established.

Source: Department of the Environment, United Kingdom (63)

### 5.3 LOCAL INITIATIVES

In addition to intersectoral planning initiatives at the national level, much work has been done at the local level. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 states that “... because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. As the level of government closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development”. While it may not be fully understood how or if sustainable development can be achieved, it is generally agreed that it must be achieved at a local level if it is to be achieved at a global level (18).
Since 1992, thousands of local authorities throughout the world have responded to the local Agenda 21 mandate by developing their own action plans, many of which feature health and health-related objectives and activities. A number of international, regional and local initiatives and networks to improve conditions in cities have emerged, involving WHO as well as other United Nations agencies such as UNCHS, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. Previous examples include the WHO Healthy Cities Project (65, 66, 67), the LIFE programme of UNDP, the UNDP/World Bank/UNCHS urban management programme, the Sustainable Cities programme of UNCHS/UNEP, the CITYNET/Asia Pacific 2000 programme of ESCAP/UNDP, the Megacities programme, the Model Communities programme of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and many others. In Europe in 1994, the “European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign” was set up to help local governments introduce local Agenda 21 processes in their cities.

An attempt to bring these various movements together is reflected in increasing numbers of international meetings to address such issues as healthy and sustainable cities, environmentally sound and healthy cities and so forth, to improve the integration of environment, social, economic, health and land-use planning at the local level.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH LA21 STRATEGIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Background

An LA21 strategy is a local action plan for sustainable development. Most LA21 processes are led by the local authority with broad involvement by the local community. Strategies should inform all other local plans, policies and programmes.

Relevance

Action at a local level is essential. Local authorities have a vital role in delivering a better quality of life, particularly through the development of sustainable communities.
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Targets and goals
The Prime Minister has set a target for all local communities in the UK to have LA21 strategies in place by the end of 2000.

Trends
The number of local authorities known to be committed to producing strategies has increased from 41% in 1994 to 67% in 1998. Many authorities are developing indicators to complement their strategies. A recent survey for the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) showed about a half of all local authorities in the UK to be developing sustainability indicators.

Sustainable Cities
The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat) has been directing a Sustainable Cities programme since 1989, in collaboration with UNEP. The main goal of this project is implementation of Agenda 21 at the local level, and it is currently working with local governments in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. The ultimate aims are to develop participatory environmental management and planning practices, to encourage sound natural resource management and to reduce environmental hazards that threaten the sustainability of urban growth and development.

The first global meeting on implementing the urban environmental agenda took place on the eve of the Habitat II Conference and defined a common agenda for development and international support for the future. The meeting reflected the impressive range of initiatives and accomplishments in urban environmental management world-wide.
and the resources and expertise, local and international, that has been mobilized and effectively used. Strategies were recommended to improve environmental information and technical expertise, implementation of policies and strategies, institutional and participatory capacity and use of scarce resources for bringing about change. The meeting resulted in the adoption of the Istanbul Manifesto, which will help cities and programmes to follow-up and implement the global and national plans of action. It is also seen as an important step in the global support activities which will define local efforts and international cooperation concerning the urban environment (68, 69).

**Model Communities**

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives created a local Agenda 21 initiative which included a research programme in selected cities aimed at developing tools and models for sustainable development training, and a larger network of local governments and their partners that have undertaken planning for sustainable development. A local Agenda 21 planning guide developed in 1996 describes a number of health-related issues that should be taken into account in analysing community-based issues (18).

**Healthy Cities**

The concept of addressing local issues in partnership with interested parties is also reflected in the Healthy Cities movement initiated by WHO over a decade ago (6, 65, 66, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73). Healthy cities projects are diverse, some addressing city-wide community development initiatives with a planning emphasis and others addressing implementation of specific community-based projects. The project is deliberately political and process-orientated, promoting political commitment and advocating fundamental change in local government and its relationship with communities (73). The approach is particularly relevant in countries where health is not a local government function. Indeed initiatives for healthy communities and healthy cities have been especially successful in Canada and the United Kingdom, where public health functions were placed with regional authorities.

Networks of cities have been formed in all regions of the world (72). City “twinning” initiatives have become common and are based on relationships between cities with particular ties of language, culture, level of development or political history. An approach used in Europe has been to develop Multi-city Action Plans, in which networks of cities simultaneously address a particular issue such as tobacco or a condition such as asthma. The Healthy Cities concept has also been applied to a number of rural areas as Healthy Villages projects (74).
5.4 OBJECTIVES OF INTERSECTORAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

In some national health and environmental action plans, Agenda 21 initiatives and other intersectoral planning initiatives, a rational and comprehensive process will have been set in motion, while in others planning may have been done in a more incremental way. Nevertheless, the common elements are a partnership approach and the following of certain steps, not necessarily in a linear order. Indeed, the process is often circular: for example, the initial definition of the problems may be altered as a result of participants’ perceptions, which may change with time.

The objectives of the planning initiative might include creation of a shared vision of the future, identification and ranking of key issues, development of action plans, mobilization of resources and ways of increasing public support (18).

Since planning is valuable only if it leads to action, it is vitally important to identify the subject of concern, the geographical parameters of the planning initiative, the relevant jurisdictions, the time frame and the availability of resources (18). These factors will determine the scope of the planning initiative. Initiatives often fail because those responsible make them too comprehensive, not fully realizing the type or amount of resources needed to implement plans. The setting determines the problems to be addressed, the type of information that is relevant, the formality of the consultative process, the nature of public participation and so forth. A neighbourhood effort will differ from a city-wide effort, which in turn will differ from a national or regional effort, or an effort tailored to a setting such as a school. It is often useful to draw up a formal statement of what is hoped to be achieved.

In the United Kingdom, the Local Government Management Board has developed 13 themes for sustainable development in order to provide a better understanding of the concept.

THEMES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A VISION

A sustainable community is one in which:

• Resources are used efficiently, waste is minimized and materials are recycled
• Pollution is limited to levels that do not cause damage to natural ecosystems
• The diversity of nature is valued and protected
• Local needs are met locally where possible
• Everyone has access to adequate food, water, shelter and fuel at a reasonable cost
• Everyone has the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy; the value of unpaid work is recognized and payment for work is both fair and fairly distributed

(cont'd)
Health in Sustainable Development Planning: The Role of Indicators

- Health is protected by the creation of safe, clean and pleasant environments and of services which emphasize prevention of illness as well as care for the sick
- Access to facilities, services, goods and other people is not achieved at the expense of the environment or limited to those with cars
- People live without fear of crime or of persecution on account of their race, sex, sexuality or beliefs
- Everyone has access to the skills, knowledge and information that they need to play a full part in society
- All sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision-making
- Opportunities to participate in culture, leisure and recreation activities are readily available to all
- Buildings, open spaces and artefacts combine meaning with beauty and utility, settlements are “human” in scale and form, and diversity and distinctive local features are valued and protected.

Source: Local Government Management Board, United Kingdom (55)

A similar exercise was undertaken by the Healthy Cities project in Europe.

VISION OF A HEALTHY CITY

A city should strive to provide:
- A clean, safe physical environment of high quality (including housing quality)
- An ecosystem that is stable now and sustainable in the long term
- A strong, mutually supportive, non-exploiting community
- A high degree of participation and control by the public over decisions affecting their lives, health and well-being
- The basic needs (for food, water, shelter, income, safety and work) of all the city’s people
- Access to a wide variety of experiences and resources, with chances for a wide variety of contacts, interactions and communication
- A diverse, vital and innovative city economy
- Encouragement of connections with the past, with the city-dwellers’ cultural and biological heritage and with other groups and individuals
- A form that is compatible with and enhances the above characteristics
- An optimal level of appropriate public health and care services accessible to all, and
- A high health status (high levels of positive health and low levels of disease).

Source: WHO (73)

The city of Kuching, Malaysia, provides an example of such a vision statement.
5.5 PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

A wide variety of partners are becoming involved in all stages of policy-making and implementation, from the initial definition and prioritizing of issues to the collection and analysis of information and the development and implementation of plans. To ensure that long-standing commitments are met, it is important that partners be properly involved in the definition and solution of problems. The concerns, needs and preferences of all relevant, interested and affected parties, including the service users, must be articulated. Local partners contribute their knowledge, expertise and perceptions of problems and can often benefit by gaining a better understanding of the technical and financial constraints that might have a bearing on plans to be developed in the future. In order to formulate plans and to construct indicators for environment, health and development concerns in the process, experience has shown that it is necessary to set up a structure within which partnership arrangements may operate.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES

“The city of Cebu initiated major changes in city governance to work with poor urban communities and to provide them with services. An enabling partnership among city government departments, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector was established in 1988. The strength of this partnership allowed the Government to address several areas of concern to poor urban communities, including improvements in health, education and social services, expanded training programmes and extension of credit to the informal sector and poor urban groups. In addition, employment and apprenticeship were increased in collaboration with the private sector; and there was a marked improvement in land

(cont'd)
The nature of any partnership depends on the scope of the planning initiative, its goals and objectives. The initiating institution (for example the local municipality), in consultation with potential partners, might form a preliminary stakeholder group which could be broadened after a more formal consultation, which might proceed through a series of workshops with identified target groups (18). It is important that the membership be broad-based in order to facilitate the involvement of as many relevant sectors as possible. It is also essential to have a clear mandate and authorization from the government body concerned, in order to establish democratic accountability and a link with the government’s planning activities.

The structure of the partnership has been found to be critical in terms of providing political links and direction and the form for facilitating intersectoral coordination and community participation. Adapting committee structures to facilitate links with existing political and community structures has been found to be important. Stakeholder groups can range from roundtables and fora with relatively short-term mandates to more formal statutory committees and councils with long-term mandates. They can be formed either within or outside an existing government structure.

Examples of such stakeholder groups include the Lancashire Environment Forum in the county of Lancashire, United Kingdom, the Inter-institutional Consensus-building Committee of Cajamarca, Peru, the Popular Citizen Councils of Santos, Brazil, the Consultative Committees of Johnstone Shire, Australia, and the many Healthy Cities partnership structures that have been set up (18).

The formation of an intersectoral committee nevertheless does not by itself guarantee success, as was experienced in Liverpool, United Kingdom, where such a committee was formed from 10 partner agencies and was supported by a highly proficient technical committee (77). One of the problems encountered was the absence of any distinction between executive and representational functions on the committee; these were organizationally separated later, and community and voluntary sector representatives were asked to contribute instead to topic forums, which in turn elected representatives to the intersectoral committee.

Once the formal stakeholder group has been formed, it has been found useful to establish more specialized working groups to deal with particular issues, which could be structured along district or neighbourhood boundaries or be divided according to responsibility for various elements of the planning process, such as issue identification, action planning or evaluation. This is often an important component of the intersectoral effort, since it is difficult to sustain the interest and involvement of groups with such diverse interests and backgrounds. Specialized working groups can help to focus the interests and energies of disparate groups. At the national and local levels, many countries have established intersectoral committees to follow up
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Agenda 21. Through these forums, including the task forces and working groups set up to address specific issues, the health sector has been able to exert a significant influence.

Identification of Partners

Identification of the right partners is a crucial step, as it determines the legitimacy of the initiative and the ability to develop new insights, ideas and approaches and to establish consensus. A general principle to be followed is that service users and providers should be represented, as well as other interested and affected parties and parties with particular knowledge and expertise. Partners should have a vested interest in the problems and should be interdependent in reaching solutions.

Potential Partners include:

- Business and industry
- Local, national and regional government
- Trade unions

Figure 17
A GENERAL PARTNERSHIP MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Source: International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (18)
Health in Sustainable Development Planning: The Role of Indicators

- Community groups and residents
- Women’s groups
- Youth groups
- Media

The many issues to be considered if such partnerships are to succeed are highlighted below.

**Box 10**

**INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS OF PARTNERSHIPS**

- The contributions of all partners should be understood and valued, and each partner should benefit by them
- The core interests of individual organizations should be protected
- Partners should be able to gain resources and/or legitimacy
- There should be opportunities for action and the capacity for action
- There should be a clear mandate and authorization from the government body concerned, in order to ensure democratic accountability
- There should be a link with the government’s planning activities
- Agreements must be reached on how the results will be incorporated into the planning effort
- There should be a clearly defined decision-making process.

Source: various, in von Schirnding (9)

### 5.6 IMPLEMENTATION IMPLICATIONS

While the intersectoral plans have varied in scope, content and quality, the process has nevertheless been successful in promoting collaboration between sectors such as health and the environment and in developing mechanisms for the formation of partnerships. In many instances, however, the strategies have proved inadequate to involve planning and finance ministries or non-governmental organizations, despite a greater awareness of the problems of health and the environment in government, non-governmental bodies and communities. There is also wider recognition of the need for greater focus on prevention, and broader approaches are being used to address environment, health and development problems.

It may be necessary to reorganize and strengthen institutional mechanisms and to develop mechanisms for inter-jurisdictional cooperation in implementing policies and plans. Decentralization of structures may be needed to facilitate community and sectoral involvement and better coordination within and between government structures and other bodies. Substantial reform of services may be needed to facilitate the implementation of intersectoral plans.
Capacity development should be oriented to many different allied professions that can contribute to planning, policy formulation and implementation, as multiple skills are needed to address the multifactoral nature of environment and health problems. Local in-service training is particularly important in view of the world-wide trend to decentralization, in which powers and functions have been transferred to the local level but sufficient capacity to implement activities is often lacking.

There is also a need for integrated systems of information on health and environment, in order to link sectors and provide the results of scientific monitoring to support policy development and implementation. To keep decision-makers and the public informed about health and environment trends, including the preventable component of the disease burden, epidemiological surveillance and monitoring of the environment is vitally important. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that such information, once obtained, is transmitted to the various sectors for action. A framework for the collection of this information is given in Chapter 7.
Health in Sustainable Development Planning: The Role of Indicators