Recommendations from the
Fourth Annual Meeting of the School Health Component
of the
WHO Mega Country Health Promotion Network
Paris, France July 16-18, 2001

1. Multi-Risk Information Surveillance Systems

The Department of NCD Prevention and Health Promotion (WHO/NPH) should invite UNICEF, UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, FAO, WFP, UNDCP, Education International and other international agencies with relevant expertise to work with Mega Countries and other selected countries to jointly develop and implement a School-based Multi-Risk Information Surveillance System that provides comparable data about risk behaviour among students around the globe.

2. Declaration of Support and Effort for School Health by Mega-Countries

The Mega Countries developed a Declaration of Support and Effort which was provided to UNESCO to be delivered to the Ministers of Education of the E-9 countries at their August meeting. Health is recognized within the EFA Framework for Action and should be addressed in national action plans to achieve the goals of Education for All. FRESH is identified as a flagship programme by EFA planners and serves as a means of improving health through schools. Mega-Country support was essential in the effort to include school health in EFA and this Declaration will help to reinforce the focus on health that is needed to improve learning, schooling and the educational environment.

3. Tobacco Policy

WHO/NPH should provide technical support to 2 - 3 countries to pilot test guidelines for creating and enforcing school tobacco use policies and to pilot test a draft of the WHO Model School Tobacco Control Intervention. Each assisted country should consider setting up an advisory group, including representatives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, teacher unions, and other relevant organizations interested in the health and welfare of students and teachers. The advisory groups should select 5-10 schools where school personnel and students are prepared to make a commitment to co-develop interventions with WHO and its technical partners. The countries should report the results of these efforts at the next meeting of the School Health Component of the Mega Country Network. Mega Country representatives from Indonesia, Mexico and Pakistan volunteered to work in support of this effort.

4. Funding

The Mega Country representatives commend the World Bank for making the commitment to ensure that no feasible national action plan to achieve EFA will go unfunded. They also support FRESH, the joint WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank Initiative that calls for focusing resources on effective school health programmes. The Mega Country representatives recommend that World Bank and FRESH partners help countries integrate funding and coordinate efforts from various sources for school health and HIV/AIDS prevention, especially in countries eligible for debt relief. The Mega Country representatives also recommend that the language about funding for EFA and FRESH include the word ‘grants’ as well as loans.

5. Mega Country Website

The Mega Country representatives recommend that the following items be updated or added to the Mega Country section of the website:

- Mega-Country accomplishments and challenges (countries which have not yet provided information to EDC should do so as soon as possible)
- Contact information about Mega Country representatives and partner organizations
- Links to resources and new documents that are developed and submitted Mega-Countries on an ongoing basis
- Ongoing guidance on the development of EFA workplans with documents from UNESCO,
- Information about multi-risk factor surveillance
• A “Submit/Post” button on the first page of the Mega Country section of the website so countries can submit information.

In addition, the representatives recommended that WHO/NPH and its partners investigate how the site can be used as an assessment tool and identify ways of making materials and documents available in the member country’s languages, in addition to English, Spanish and French.

6. Inviting additional UN agencies to participate as partners
The Mega Country representatives recommend that additional UN Agencies be asked to participate in the School Health Component of the WHO Mega-Country School Health Promotion Network, such as UNAIDS, UNFDP, WFP, UNDCP, UNFPA, FAO and that WHO continue to convene and facilitate the meetings and related consultations. WHO should also continue to consult with other partners, such as Education International and solicit additional partners. At future meetings, it may be useful for the UN Agencies and other partners to meet on the day prior to the Mega Country meeting to agree on activities and collaborations.

7. Sharing of concrete country experiences at the next Mega-Country meeting
The Mega Country representatives recommend that the next meeting include the opportunity for 1-2 countries to make an in-depth presentation of their school health efforts. They also recommended that the next meeting of the School Health Component of the Mega Country Network be held in a Mega Country and that the host country make a presentation on school health in their country. The host country could bring in children, teachers, representatives of other partners, and representatives from the Ministries of Education and Health. India extended an offer to host the next Mega Country meeting in New Delhi.

8. Consideration of Multi languages in Mega-Country meetings
Mega Country representatives recommend that WHO and other UN Agencies explore the possibility of providing translated material at the Mega-Country meetings, concurrent translations of presentations, and translated proceedings.

9. Meetings with country and regional level representatives of UN Agencies
It was recommended that representatives of the School Health Component of the Mega Country Network contact regional and country offices of UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, WHO and other relevant international organizations to obtain up-to-date information on topics such as EFA, national AIDS plans, Health-Promoting Schools, Child Friendly Schools, etc. Many regional and national offices have websites. As much as possible, the offices should also be briefed on school health issues underway in the Mega-Countries.

10. Resource List
Mega Country representatives recommend that WHO coordinate development of a current and up-to-date resource list. The list would include names and contact information of all individuals involved in the School Health Component of Mega Country Health Promotion Network, including all UN agencies, international agency partners, the Mega Country representatives, and other relevant individuals or groups. The listing might identify specific topics about which the organization is ready to provide information or consultation, such as for questions about where and how to submit national EFA plans of action, processes for their evaluation and procedures for requesting related funding.

11. EFA Action Plans
Each Mega Country should plan to bring copies of their country’s most recent draft of the EFA Action Plan, to the next meeting of the School Health Component of the Mega Country Network.