

Ministerial Regional Forum on Environment and Health



in Southeast and East Asian Countries

8-9 August, 2007

Bangkok, Thailand

BACKGROUND

Every year, an estimated 6.6 million deaths in Asia are attributable to various environmental health risks. This amounts to a quarter of all deaths, worldwide. Despite this significant magnitude, the capacities of developing countries in the region to deal with environmental health problems are limited. Better inter-sectoral coordination, especially between the health and environment sectors, is needed to develop and implement effective environmental health programmes. As some environmental risks to health are trans-boundary in nature where harmonized policy responses need to be formulated. Consequently, there is the need for an integrated management of health and environmental issues in the region.

These needs prompted the convening of a high-level meeting on Environment and Health in Southeast and East Asian Countries in Manila in November 2004. Officials from the environment and health agencies of the Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam), and East Asian countries (China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea) attended this meeting. The meeting recommended the organising of a Ministerial Regional Forum, convening of national forums and developing national environmental health action plans.

In December 2005, a Scientific Conference on Asia-Pacific Environmental Health was held the scientific inputs for the process. The conference was followed by the 2nd high-Level meeting which discussed the Charter of the Regional Forum, and produced a draft Charter. Plans were made to conduct the first Ministerial Regional Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, where the Ministers from both environment and health agencies of the participating countries would endorse the charter and agree on priority areas and devise work plans.

This meeting is a significant milestone in this consultative process and hopes to further the objectives of this unique initiative. The Regional Initiative is the first of its kind in the developing world and in the Asia-Pacific region. Its impacts would be widespread, addressing four out of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the implementation of the plan of actions laid out in Agenda 21 would gather momentum in the region, through this initiative.

PARTICIPANTS

The meetings will be attended by the Ministers of Health and Environment and high-level government officials from the Ministries in charge of environment and health issues in the 14 countries, representatives from relevant UN agencies, Asian Development Bank, World Bank and other international partners, government officials of other Asian countries and members from academia, professional associations and non-governmental organisations.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 8th AUGUST, HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS' MEETING

0830 - 0900	Registration
0900 - 0930	Introductory statements and welcome address
0930 - 1000	Group photograph and tea/coffee break
1000 - 1230	Updates on national actions since the 2 nd high-level meeting
1230 - 1400	Lunch break
1400 - 1530	Review of progress on work plans of the thematic working groups
1530 - 1600	Coffee/tea break
1600 - 1700	Summing up of high-level officials discussions

THURSDAY, 9th AUGUST

OPENING SESSION

0800 - 0830	Registration
0830 - 0900	Opening ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inauguration by Professor Dr. HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol- Opening remarks by WHO, UNEP and the Government of Thailand
0900 - 1100	Keynote speeches / round table (Chair: Professor Dr. HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol)
1100 - 1120	Tea/coffee Break

MINISTERIAL MEETING (Participation by invitation only)

1120 - 1140	Introduction to the meeting and overview of the draft Charter of the Regional Forum and the composition of thematic working groups by WHO and UNEP
1140 - 1200	Report of the high-level official meeting
1200 - 1330	Lunch break
1330 - 1530	Statement by the Ministers of Environment and Health
1530 - 1540	Tea/coffee break
1540 - 1640	Statement by the Ministers of Environment and Health (cont.)
1640 - 1700	Adoption of the Charter of the Regional Forum
1700 - 1730	Closing of the Forum: Remarks by WHO, UNEP and Government of Thailand
1730 - 1800	Press conference

SECRETARIAT



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MEETING WEBSITE

http://www.wpro.who.int/sites/rf_hse/home.htm
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VENUE

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