

Bangkok Declaration on Environment and Health

Having met at the First Ministerial Regional Forum on Environment and Health in South-East and East Asian countries jointly organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Offices for the Western Pacific and South-East Asia, and hosted by the Government of Thailand and the Chulabhorn Research Institute (CRI) on 9 August, 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand,

Recognizing that the environment in which we live greatly affects our health,

Acknowledging the importance of ensuring the protection of human health and the environment,

Understanding that children, women, the elderly and the poor are among the most vulnerable to and suffer most from environmental deterioration,

Conscious that improving environmental quality and health and ensuring sustainable economic growth are key components of poverty reduction,

Realizing that the maintenance of health and well-being depend on environmental quality and sustainable development;

Underlining the importance and cost-effectiveness of giving priority to preventive action,

Conscious of the urgency to take immediate coordinated action involving all relevant government agencies, organizations from the private sector, civil society including Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), academia and media,

Aware that solutions require inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral interventions with experts from physical and natural sciences, health and social sciences, development, finance and other fields,

Realizing the specific characteristics, cultural diversity and needs of the region, notably its unprecedented economic development, rapid urbanization and population growth and widespread poverty,

Mindful that many environmental and health issues are transboundary in nature and that globalization has highlighted the interdependence of nations, communities and individuals,

Keeping in mind existing international agreements on the protection of the ozone layer, climate change, biodiversity conservation, the management of chemicals and wastes and other initiatives related to environment and health,

Mindful of the precautionary approach and guided by the polluter pays principle and the norms of good governance including civic engagement and participation, efficiency, equity, transparency and accountability,

Taking note of the various efforts being undertaken by various countries at the national and regional levels, and

Noting that the capacity building through education and training should be our major focus,

We, the Ministers of Health and Environment and government representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam adopt the Charter of the Regional Forum on Environment and Health,

Establish the Regional Forum on Environment and Health as described by the Charter,

Agree to cooperate to improve inter-agency, multi-sectoral, regional and international cooperation, coordination and planning, to facilitate capacity building, the exchange of information, technology, and resources and the tackling of trans-boundary and common issues.

Urge government departments, private sector, civil society including NGOs, academia, labour, and media to be actively involved in this process, building ownership and commitment,

Approve the composition and work plans of Thematic Working Groups on health impacts and implications of (1) air quality, (2) water supply, hygiene and sanitation, (3) solid and hazardous waste, (4) toxic chemicals and hazardous substances, (5) climate change, ozone depletion and ecosystem change, and (6) contingency planning, preparedness and response in environmental health emergencies,

Request the regional Thematic Working Groups on the 6 priorities to implement their work plans as agreed, taking into account the availability of resources,

Request research and training institutions such as CRI and others to play key role in providing human resource development for the region,

Request UNEP and WHO to serve as the joint Secretariat to support the operations of the Regional Forum and its subsidiary bodies,

Call upon international partners to support the implementation of the Charter of the Regional Forum on Environment and Health,

Continue to develop and implement National Environment and Health Action Plans (NEHAPs) or equivalent plans to address specific priority environmental health risks prevailing in our countries, and

Agree to meet again 3 years from now in the Republic of Korea to review the progress made in the implementation of NEHAPs or equivalent plans and the work plans of the Thematic Working Groups, and discuss and agree on new directions and priorities of our collaboration.