



NEWSLETTER

International Federation of Environmental Health

January 2010 Edition

Happy New Year/ Bonne Annee/ Is-Sena t- Tajba/ Feliz Ano – Nuevo to all Members of the IFEH

On behalf of the Council and the Board of the Federation may I take this opportunity to wish all IFEH members around the world a Happy and Prosperous New Year? As I have said so often in the past much of what environmental health professionals do on a day to day basis is, unfortunately, taken for granted so I hope that 2010 will bring you and your colleagues much success, together with the recognition that you deserve, as you continue to work to improve public health standards in your country. The financial climate and the problems associated with local and national government finance is a problem that is facing many countries at present. However, we all know the benefit of investing in good public health services. A recent report from the World Health Organisation indicates that some 36 million people have been cured of tuberculosis (TB) over the past 15 years. Clearly the significant TB investments made over this period have been highly successful with, it is estimated, up to 8 million TB deaths averted. However, there is a significant funding gap of some US\$2 billion in 2010 for TB care and control.

Membership news

The **Environmental Health Specialists Association of Indonesia (EFSA)** held a three day International Seminar and Workshop at the beginning of October 2009. The seminar was held in Bogor, known as the City of Rain, 60 km south of Jakarta. The average rainfall in Bogor is 3336 mm/yr but I was fortunate to only witness a few mm during my visit. The purpose of the seminar and workshop was to discuss current issues in environmental and occupational health including the impact of climate change and global warming on health, disease epidemiology, and environmental management. Two of the days were set aside to review and edit research papers. This was a very well attended and organised event by one of the Federation's newest members.

The **Association of Public Health Inspectors, Cyprus (APHIC)** held a conference on 'Trends in Food Health and Safety' in the Aldiana Larnaka Hotel at the beginning of December. About a 160 participants from the public health services, the food and drinks industry as well as consultants, academics and students heard speakers from around Europe, including IFEH Secretary Ray Ellard and Dr A Zampelas, President of EFET (Hellenic Food Authority). Copies of papers presented can be found at www.aphic.org

The **Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland** held their Annual Awards Ceremony and AGM in Edinburgh at the end of November. Rod House, a Consultant in Environmental Health at Health Protection Scotland, took over as President from Colin Wallace. REHIS also announced the purchase of new offices in the west end of Edinburgh close to their existing rented headquarters. It is expected that REHIS will move to their new HQ sometime in the spring of this year.

The **Malawi Environmental Health Association (MEHA)** Secretary, Young Samanyika was in Scotland for twelve weeks on a Commonwealth Universities Fellowship. The aim of the visit was to assist in the development of the environmental health profession in Malawi and to assist in the re-establishment of MEHA as the professional body. During his visit to Scotland Young visited a number of local authorities, the Food Standards Agency Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency as well as speaking at a REHIS Continuing Professional Development seminar.

Dr Tracy Morse, Project Manager of the University of Strathclyde's Scotland Chikwawa Health Initiative, was recently presented with the 2009 REHIS Meritorious Endeavours in Environmental Health Award. The initiative works to improve environmental health and maternal health and to drive down infant mortality rates in four villages in Chikwawa, Southern Malawi.



The [Malta Association for Environmental Health Officers \(MAEHO\)](#), in collaboration with the Department for Environmental Health, organised a CPD day seminar for all EHOs. The topics that were discussed included animal by-products, waste management, climate change, and infectious diseases. The seminar was held at the conference centre of the Malta International Airport. At the seminar a presentation was also delivered about the new promotional campaign being organised by the department to entice students into joining the environmental health profession. This seminar was very well received by all those present and this augurs well for further seminars to be organised by MAEHO together with the department.

In November the MAEHO hosted the EFEH meeting. This was held at one of the conference rooms at the newly built Mater Dei Hospital. During the meeting, which was attended by John Attard Kingswell, Director Environmental Health, a number of important issues were discussed and it is hoped that next year EFEH will propose a policy paper for the up coming IFEH World Congress. Following the meeting a detailed tour of the hospital catering service was given by Aaron Simpson, President MAEHO.

Only 5.4% of the world's population covered by comprehensive smoke-free laws.

9 DECEMBER 2009 | GENEVA | ISTANBUL -- Only 5.4% of the world's population was covered by comprehensive smoke-free laws in 2008, up from 3.1% in 2007, WHO reported today in its second report on the global tobacco epidemic.

This means that 154 million more people are no longer exposed to the harms of tobacco smoke in work places, restaurants, bars and other indoor public places. Seven countries – Colombia, Djibouti, Guatemala, Mauritius, Panama, Turkey and Zambia – implemented comprehensive smoke-free laws in 2008, bringing the total to 17. These findings, and others are contained in the *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2009*.

WHO chose to make smoke-free environments the focus of the report because of the harm of second-hand smoke, which causes about 600,000 premature deaths per year, countless crippling and disfiguring illnesses and economic losses in the tens of billions of dollars per year. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. Therefore, action is needed by governments to protect their people," Dr Alwan said. "The WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2009 is an essential resource."

The report devotes particular attention to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control's Article 8, which addresses protection from exposure to tobacco smoke. The Framework Convention, which took effect in 2005, is ratified by nearly 170 countries.

The report also describes countries' efforts to implement the tobacco control package called MPOWER, which WHO introduced in 2008 to help countries implement some of the demand reduction measures in the WHO Framework Convention and its guidelines. These measures are:

- monitor tobacco use and the policies to prevent it;
- protect people from tobacco smoke;
- offer people help to quit tobacco use;
- warn about the dangers of tobacco;
- enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and
- raise taxes on tobacco.

Less than 10% of the world's population is covered by any one measure, the report states.

Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of death, killing more than 5 million people per year. Unless urgent action is taken to control the tobacco epidemic, the annual death toll could rise to 8 million by 2030, the report states. More than 80% of those premature deaths would occur in low- and middle-income countries – in other words, precisely where it is hardest to deflect and to bear such tremendous losses.



Other key findings of the report include the following.

- Five more countries — Djibouti, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and Mauritius — met the best practices for health warnings on cigarette packages.
- Three more countries — Israel, Romania and the United Arab Emirates — offered comprehensive help to quit.
- Only one country — Panama — joined the small group of countries that bans all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. More than 90% of people lack protection from tobacco industry marketing.
- Six more countries — Czech Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, the Netherlands and Seychelles — levied tobacco taxes higher than 75% of retail price.
- Of the world's 100 most populous cities, 22 are smoke-free.

IFEH / EnviNa participation at the OECD World Forum, Busan 2009.

By Henning Hansen, coordinator of the IFEH working group on the IFEH Sustainability Indicator Initiative (IFEH SII)

On behalf of IFEH and EnviNa I participated as invited speaker at the 3rd OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life, 27-30 October 2009, Busan, Korea.

The OECD conference was the third in a row on the continuing OECD Global Project on “Measuring the Progress of Societies”.

The presentation was about the IFEH Sustainability Initiative SII - besides some more general issues. The UNDP was present as an observer at the presentation - and the UNDP will try to get some of their best cases into the IISD-IFEH compendium on sustainability indicators.

Approximately 2000 invited high level scientists, civil servants and statesmen / politicians from approximately 140 nations attended the conference.

Some of the main messages given to the OECD World Forum by the IFEH were:

- A strong need for a coordinated dissemination of information, knowledge and capacity building on the use of monitoring, measurement and reporting systems. Potential use of the Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives
- Continuing efforts to harmonize indicator initiatives, with emphasis on sustainability and well-being indicators – with emphasis on enhancing the GDP / national economic accounts with similar robust and globally recognized indices regarding environment and social factors.
- Recognizing that the basic monitoring, measurement and reporting systems are still not implemented on a satisfactory level in many developing countries – which to some extent also, goes for the developed countries. (e.g. on CO₂-emission, water, health, social and economic factors).
- To seek binding commitments on a high international level for all nations to implement measurement systems and so that all nations issue publicly available reports on all key aspects of sustainable development.
- All local/regional governments could be required by national law to establish measurement and reporting systems regarding the local community – given that they are provided with proper guidelines and finances.
- Ideally we would end up with a system where local/regional measurement systems are integrated smoothly into national systems which finally are nested into international and global measurement systems.



The messages were very well received by the Conference – and clearly the IFEH is now recognized by the UN as well as the OECD. The OECD would like our presence at the next coming OECD World Forum which is to take place in India 2011. This invitation was given to me personally by Jon Halls who is the chief OECD manager behind the OECD Global Project on “Measuring the Progress of Societies”.

More information on the Conference can be found at the OECD Conference website:
www.oecdworldforum2009.org

The IFEH presentation and abstract can be found on the IFEH website also.

My final appeal in this short article is to all IFEH member organisations. Please consider contributing to the IFEH-IISD database www.ifeh.org/indicators/compendium and also advertise the Invitation Letter www.ifeh.org/indicators/compendium/docs/Compendium_Invitation.pdf through their own websites and other publications.

A Generic Curriculum for training programmes in Environmental Health in Africa

The African Academy of Environmental Health (AAEH) was launched in August 2008 in Nairobi with the main aim of advancing the science and practice of environmental health in Africa. Since then a lot of work has gone into the development of an international programme on environmental health intended to ensure that irrespective of the location within Africa all environmental health professionals will be educated to the same core curriculum. An article by Dr Koos Engelbrecht, Chairperson of the AAEH, outlining the work carried out so far, will appear in the next issue of the Federation’s magazine due out later this month. The final curriculum is to be formally launched during the 2nd All Africa Environmental Health Congress which will be held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 24 – 27 May 2010.

Finally the next issue of the Newsletter will be published in April 2010. If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send it to me for the first week in March. My thanks go to Koos Engelbrecht, Hadrian Bonello, Henning Hansen and Andrew Forteath who have assisted in the production of this issue.

If you wish to feature any news from your organisation in the next IFEH Newsletter, please contact: Bernard Forteath, President, Email: president@ifeh.org

