

## What's New?

Keep up to date with new initiatives and activities in the Ecohealth field. Regular updates are available at the *EcoHealth* website: <http://www.ecohealth.net>.

### **2ND BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ECOLOGY AND HEALTH: 2008**

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The International Association of Ecology and Health is pleased to announce that the next biennial conference will be held December 1–5, 2008 and co-convened with the International Development Research Centre (<http://www.idrc.ca>). The conference will be held in Merida, Mexico, hosted by the Instituto Nacional Salud Publica (INSP) (<http://www.insp.mx>). All members of the International Association for Ecology and Health will receive discounted registration at the event and will be kept notified of forthcoming deadlines for abstract submission, registration, Association activities, and student events. Full details about the conference will be updated regularly at the *EcoHealth* website: <http://www.ecohealth.net/events.php>.

### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN DIMENSIONS PROGRAMME 2008 OPEN MEETING**

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IHDP's 2008 Open Meeting—the 7th International Science Conference on Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change—will take place October 16–19, in New Delhi, India. The theme for this meeting is “Social Challenges of Global Change” reflecting the organizers wish to emphasize the need to incorporate not only discussion about climate change, but also other environmental changes such as resource shortages,

destruction of ecosystem services, and new threats to human health. Each day of the conference will focus on a different question, including: How do we deal with demographic challenges? How do we deal with limitations of resources and ecosystem services? How do we maintain social cohesion while increasing (global) equity? How do we adapt institutions to address global change?

The International Human Dimensions Workshop will take place prior to the conference (October 12–15) with a focus on The Human Dimensions of Health and Global Environmental Change: Global Change & Urban Health; Transitions to Sustainability through System Innovation; Urban and Regional Carbon Management; and Global Environmental Change and Human Security.

For more information, please visit the conference website: <http://www.openmeeting2008.org/index.htm>; or contact Lis Mullin at: [openmeeting@ihdp.unu.edu](mailto:openmeeting@ihdp.unu.edu).

### **COHAB 2 CONFERENCE 2008**

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The second Conference on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB) took place February 25–28, 2008 in Galway, Ireland. Delegates from over 70 countries were in attendance, as well as representation from a number of United Nations agencies and five Directorates General of the European Commission. The conference was organized around three workshops: “Disaster Relief and Emergency Response,” “Food Resources, Diet, and Nutrition,” and “Emerging Infectious Diseases.” In addition to the main workshops, four side events and three satellite workshops were organized.

The conference workshops, side events, and satellite workshops addressed three cross-cutting issues in integrating biodiversity, development, and health. These were:

- 1) Overcoming the barriers to communicating the inter-linked issues of biodiversity, development, and health, and to communicating lessons from experience (both regarding successes and failures);
- 2) Systemic approaches to health, biodiversity, and development (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, the EcoHealth Approach);
- 3) The links between climate change, biodiversity, and health.

A summary report presenting some of the key outputs of the conference discussions and copies of the conference presentations are available on the COHAB Initiative website (<http://www.cohabnet.org>). The conference proceedings are due to be published as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Technical Series during 2008.

One of the side events, “Biodiversity, Development, and Health in Higher Education: Current Provision and Future Potential,” was co-sponsored by the International Association for Ecology and Health, University of Guyana, and the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. Participants discussed the current state of higher education on integrating biodiversity, development, and health from the perspective of their particular countries and/or institutions.

In some countries (e.g., Kenya, Argentina, USA, and Australia), undergraduate and postgraduate curricula are being expanded to include issues such as biodiversity, climate change, global environmental change, and health. An increasing number of higher education programs have begun to incorporate elements of biodiversity, development, and health into their curricula. However, these programs are not widespread, their content may or may not be integrating multiple disciplines, and they are mainly targeted to postgraduate students from developed countries. Therefore, there is potential for improving current education in ecology, development, and health; it was agreed that common overarching concepts between the disciplines of biodiversity, development, and health could aid integration into curricula.

More information on the conference can be found at: <http://www.cohabnet.org/cohab2008/index.htm>.

## 93RD ANNUAL ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA MEETING

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The Ecological Society of America will hold its annual meeting in Milwaukee, WI, USA on August 3–8, 2008. The meeting's theme is “Enhancing Ecological Thought by Linking Research and Education,” highlighting the challenges of interdisciplinarity. Sessions of note include: Building Research and Monitoring Networks for Population and Ecosystem Ecology; Plant Pathogen Ecology: The Effects of Plant Pathogens on Individuals, Populations, Communities, and Ecosystems; The Ecological and Economic Impacts of Nonnative, Invasive Forest Insects and Pathogens; Global Climate Change and Agriculture: Interactions, Land Use Patterns, and Educational Connections; Are We Managing Holistic Ecosystems or Parts of Ecosystems?; and Tropical Deforestation and Climate Change: Contrasting Views of Science and Policy.

For more information, visit the meeting website at: <http://www.esa.org/milwaukee/>.

## WORLD VETERINARY CONGRESS 2008

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This year's World Veterinary Congress will be held July 27–31, 2008 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. With two tracks of sessions—one focused on private/clinical practice and the other on public practice/public health—a number of Ecohealth-related sessions and keynotes are scheduled. These include several keynotes and sessions on “One World—One Medicine—One Health,” and sessions on emerging infectious diseases and zoonoses, “Animals, Ecohealth, and Development: The Role of Veterinarians,” and the role of the veterinary field in the Millennium Development Goals.

Further information about the Congress can be found at: <http://www.worldveterinarycongress2008.com/>.

## CANADIAN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IN ECOSYSTEM APPROACHES TO HUMAN HEALTH

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A team of Canadian researchers from three universities (University of Guelph, University of British Columbia, Université du Québec à Montréal) have jointly developed a Canadian Community of Practice in Ecosystem Approaches to Health (CoPEH-Can) with initial support provided by IDRC. A community of practice is a network

of individuals and organizations with a common focus on a specific topic who come together to address a specific challenge, respond to professional needs, and develop new knowledge.

The CoPEH-Can's objectives include:

- to jointly plan and execute a course on the EcoHealth Approach for students and professionals doing international/development work;
- to provide a forum for Canadians to consolidate and extend the EcoHealth Approach through collaboration, exchange, and scholarly attention to methodology, pedagogy, and knowledge translation;
- to conduct an integrated program of participatory research and evaluation to examine the networking, educational, and capacity-building outcomes of the community of practice;
- to identify and develop strategies for long-term regional and institutional capacity to support ecosystem approaches to human health, including complementary funding for diffusion, research, and exchange.

The creation of a Canadian Community of Practice in ecohealth provides a platform for Canadian Ecohealth contributions to expand their impact, stimulates knowledge sharing between Canadian and international researchers, stakeholders, and decision makers, and will improve training in ecohealth. Additionally, CoPEH-Can holds that indigenous communities and their traditional relationships and perspectives on nature and health have particular relevance to ecohealth planning and actions.

This pan-Canadian initiative is a start to the development and promotion of ecosystem approaches to health. CoPEH-Can hopes to be able to mobilize the individuals and groups in Canada already working in the field, and that together this group can offer a forum for exchange and collaboration that enhances both individual and collective impact.

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