

# Ökologischer & Ärztebund

Deutsche Sektion der ISDE

International Society of Doctors for the Environment

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**Zeitgleich mit der 3. Ministerkonferenz der Umwelt- und Gesundheitsminister von ca. 50 WHO-Mitgliedsstaaten in Europa fand in London vom 15.-18.6.99 das Healthy Planet Forum der Nichtregierungsorganisationen statt. Das im Folgenden dokumentierte „Manifest für Umwelt und Gesundheit“ wurde auch vom Ökologischen Ärztebund unterzeichnet.**

## A Manifesto for Environment and Health

Good health is crucial to the well being of everyone. The health of millions of people across Europe is threatened by the poor quality of their environment. We, members of civil society supporting the Healthy Planet Forum welcome the new focus on the impact of the environment on public health. We believe that the requisite improvements can only be attained through well-resourced programmes and legal and administrative frameworks with clear objectives which realise the fundamental human right to good health, a healthy and safe environment and sustainable development.

### Water

We welcome the Protocol on Water and Health. We fully support the call for everyone in Europe to have access to a safe supply of drinking water and adequate sanitation. We believe that the only obstacles to this are financial and institutional and therefore call on governments to apply its provisions immediately, to ratify the protocol without delay and to work together with international agencies and NGOs to implement the protocol and set a timetable to deliver its goals.

### Transport

Transport has more impact on environment health and safety than any other economic sector. The need to restrict pollution caused by transport and to plan for sustain-

able, integrated transport should be a priority throughout Europe. We thus welcome the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health but believe it is necessary to begin work on a binding convention building on the Charter. In addition, we call on governments to develop Europe-wide programmes to cut vehicle pollution, to cut traffic related deaths, to maintain and promote public transport and to promote a shift to healthy modes of travel for local journeys.

### Climate Change

Global climate change threatens the long-term health prospects of everyone. We welcome WHO's recognition of the importance of the problem and its commitment to do more research. We remind governments that international agreements have already been made on this issue through the Kyoto process.

While these agreements are not adequate to deal with the problem, they are a valuable first step and their implementation must be a priority. WHO should take a clear lead on climate change and support moves both to prevent global warming and to reduce its effects on human health.

### Vulnerable groups

Whilst the inclusion of children's health on the ministerial agenda is to be applauded, we consider that WHO and Governments should set exposure levels for pollutants based on the particular vulnerability of children.

The special vulnerability of women, the elderly, low income groups, indigenous peoples and minority groups should also be recognised. They suffer unfairly from environmental hazards including pollution, occupational hazards and access to a safe and adequate food supply.

### Public Participation for better health and a better environment

All sectors of society have a role to play in improving our health and our environ-

ment. Such improvements require careful planning and public participation is an essential part of such planning. Participation can enhance the quality of decisions made and build support for the decisions taken and is crucial for the development of 'civil society'. We call for swift application of the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters, and ratification by the year 2000. We welcome the development of National and Local Environment and Health Action Plans. We urge governments to apply the provisions of Aarhus in preparing, updating and implementing their NEHAPs and LEHAPs and to ensure that such plans have adequate financial and human resources.

Finally, we call on governments to employ the precautionary principle as the only sound basis for protecting human health from potential environmental hazards and threats.

*This statement has been developed by the pan-European Advisory Group for the Healthy Planet Forum, a people's event bringing together environment and health non-governmental organisations, environment and health professionals, local authorities, Trade Unions and other groups from the European region to discuss and plan action on Environment and Health issues.*

*The event runs from 15-18 June in parallel to the WHO European region Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. For more information, see <http://www.oneworld.org/uned-uk/health>*

*The Manifesto is an executive summary of the Healthy Planet Forum declaration and is supported by many organisations and individuals.*