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# NEWSLETTER

*International Federation of Environmental Health*

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**May 2016 Congress Edition**

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At the IFEH conference we will transfer the Presidency. Our current President Henning Hansen has been an impressive advocate for the IFEH and has made new friends in Global organisations including WHO International Congress on Health and Climate, United Nations Environment Programme, the World Federation of Public Health Associations and UNISDR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) amongst others. Henning has worked hard to promote the aims of IFEH and will continue his involvement as webmaster. I am sure all those involved with the IFEH will join me in thanking him and his supportive family for everything he has done in moving the organisation forward over the last 2 years.

This edition highlights the priority of our incoming President – Peter Archer who is determined to focus on narrowing health inequalities that occur within all countries and between countries. This touches the work we all do in Environmental Health whether it is providing clean food and water, ensuring housing conditions are decent, preventing danger in the workplace, living in a healthy environment or preventing the spread of infectious diseases and vector control.

I must also use this moment to register the support of the global Environmental Health family for colleagues who have suffered the loss of loved ones and colleagues over the last 12 months. Whilst we will never find out about all tragedies that occur as a result of war or random violence we do particularly express our support for colleagues in San Bernardino who suffered unimaginable tragedy and Georges Salines who lost his daughter at Le Bataclan in Paris. Our thoughts remain with you all.

## Working towards Achieving Health Equity

Message from our incoming President  
Peter Archer

On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May in Lilongwe, Malawi I will take over the IFEH presidency from my friend and colleague, Henning Hansen, from EnviNa in Denmark. Henning has done a brilliant job in his two years as President working tirelessly for the good of the Federation and reaching out to other organisations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. In doing this he has made a real impression on other international bodies. Besides visiting member organisations in every continent other than Antarctica, he has continued as the IFEH webmaster posting documents daily and with great skill. As a result, Henning hardly ever sleeps! Thank you Henning for all you have done to secure the IFEH's future.

My first experience of the International Federation was when I attended the Fifth World Congress in 1998 in Stockholm, Sweden. At that time I chaired the General Council of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. I was asked to present a paper on 150 years since the 1848 Public Health Act which followed on from publication of Chadwick's 1842 Report, *The Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population in Great Britain and Ireland*. Chadwick's groundbreaking report linked poor housing and sanitation with the health and productivity of the workforce. This helped factory owners to appreciate that if they wanted to achieve high productivity, they had to take care of their workers, their families and the environment in which they lived and worked.

Since 1998 I have attended a further eight IFEH world congresses in cities as far apart as Brisbane, Australia and Vancouver, Canada.

Many of the messages in Chadwick's 1842 Report are as relevant in 2016 as they were then. During my two year term of office, I want to ensure that all environmental health professionals (the IFEH now represents more than 50,000 EHPs) appreciate the battle we have ahead to reduce health inequalities. In the 2008 WHO 'Closing the Gap in a Generation, the Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health' Geneva, Switzerland and chaired by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, it says '*Social justice is a matter of life and death*'. The report concludes '*health inequalities are killing on a grand scale but that by working together we can close the gap in a generation*'. At a WHO Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2011 more than 190 countries pledged their governments to work to this goal.

The IFEH has made a commitment to work towards reducing health inequalities. In 2012 the IFEH published *Policy Statement 10 – 'A Declaration on Health Equity – Closing the Gap in a Generation'*. We are now on a journey and have created an international project which I am anxious to advance in my presidential term of office. This is a project in which we are all involved and already we have details of almost 100 such projects in which EHPs are involved. These projects are diverse; from hand washing training for kindergarten children in Bergen, Norway, to a text alert system for high levels of air pollutants to warn vulnerable people in London, to major water and sanitation projects in Africa. All these projects have a common aim, this being to improve the health of vulnerable children and adults. Are you involved? It's easy to join and to place your project on the international stage!

The template for completing a postcard will be available for completion on the IFEH website soon.

## Example Postcard from Korean National Environmental Health Survey

### Korean National Environmental Health Survey



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#### Aim of project

- \* To understand background biomarker level in Korean population
- \* To determine environmental factors associated with exposure
- \* To estimate temporal and regional difference of environmental exposure

## National Biological Monitoring Program

### What we did

- With support from National Institute of Environmental Research, national scale biological monitoring program was conducted. Since 2012, over 5000 people per year was recruited from representative national population. All subjects were over 19 years or older.
- Questionnaire was used to collect personal information including socioeconomic status as well as environmental conditions.
- Blood and urine samples were collected from the subjects with physical check-up.
- The samples were analysed for 19 types biomarkers and 21 environmental contaminants.
- The biological monitoring survey is continued every year and 2000 subjects will be recruited in 2014.

### What were the outcomes

- We determined physical conditions by 19 biomarkers and biological exposure level of 21 chemicals.
- The exposure database was established for National environmental health policy.

Example Postcard from Eden Municipality South Africa

**Environmental Protection /  
Chemical Safety**



**Farm workers who were trained as part of the programme**

## Chemical Safety in Eden Municipality South Africa

### What we did

An education campaign to raise awareness about personal and environmental safety when using chemicals

- A few pointers to remember when working with chemicals in your household
- Make sure containers are properly labelled.
- Make use of the appropriate personal protective equipment/clothing when handling chemicals.
- Store chemicals away from children preferably in a lockable cupboard.
- Make use of child proof caps for chemical containers.
- Do not mislead other individuals by storing chemicals in food containers eg. Coke bottles or milk cartons.
- Chemicals, if not disposed of in the correct manner i.e. down a storm water pipe, may find its way in a nearby river or stream and can later on contaminate our drinking water source.
- It is the responsibility of every one to make sure all chemicals are disposed of in the correct manner in order to avoid polluting our natural environment. We are after all the custodians of mother earth.

### What were the outcomes

- Ingestion of poison by individuals is notifiable by law, where after the case is investigated to determine whether mandatory control measures are in place to avoid ill health or death.

### Aim of project

a total of 44 poisoning cases in the Eden District region have been reported in the period from January 2010 to August 2015.

Education in terms of the safe handling, labelling, storage and disposal of these chemicals is crucial to reduce the health risk associated with exposure to these chemicals and to prevent environmental pollution

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## IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health 2016

*Solving emerging and prevailing global health risks*

Lilongwe, Malawi 3 – 6 May 2016



WELCOME

The 14th IFEH World Environmental Health Congress to be held in **Lilongwe, Malawi from 3 to 6 May 2016** at the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC). As environmental health practitioners face increasingly challenging global risks to health, from climate change to the control of communicable diseases such as ZIKA virus and Ebola, the conference promises to be an excellent platform for informed debate, research dissemination and expert panel discussions. For those who cannot attend look out for papers being posted on the IFEH website.

Under the theme of **Environmental Health: Solving Emerging and Prevailing Global Health Risks**, the partnership of the International Federation for Environmental Health, The Malawi Environmental Health Association, The Government of Malawi and the University of Malawi will ensure truly global representation at the second World Congress to take place on the African Continent. Regarded as the Warm Heart of Africa, Malawi has already hosted a successful IFEH Africa Group Congress in 2010, welcoming delegates from 14 countries on 3 countries





## Malawi Environmental Health Association

The Malawi Environmental Health Association (MEHA) is an independent charity organization. The association was first registered as Public Health Inspectors Association of Malawi (PHIAM) in 1990 and was changed to Environmental Health Association of Malawi on 23rd June, 2009. The change in the name has been effected to correspond to the change in name of the concerned professionals i.e. Public Health Inspectors are now called Environmental Health Officers (with degrees) and Assistant Environmental Health Officers (with diplomas).



### Objectives of the Association

Environmental Health (EH) is the assessment and management of environmental influences (e.g. chemical, physical, biological, social and psychosocial factors) on human health. This entails the study of water and food safety and hygiene (including production, distribution and fitness for human consumption), occupational health and safety (including investigation and control of work-related ill health), communicable disease (including

investigation, control and prevention), the built environment (including homes, workplaces and public spaces) and environmental protection (including the control of the air, land and water pollution). EH is about taking a preventative approach to tackling disease and ill-health rather than relying only on the curative approach.

The goal of MEHA therefore is to make Malawi free from diseases arising from poor environmental factors (e.g. cholera, dysentery, typhoid, malaria, Bilharzia and other Worm Infections, Conjunctivitis, Scabies and injuries) and deaths which could arise due to poor environmental health.

The main aims of the association are:

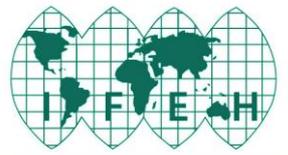
1. To promote the objectives of Environmental Health Sciences and related subjects through:
2. To promote and encourage professional efficiency and ethics and advancement of the members of the association through
3. To promote high standards of Water quality, Waste Water Disposal, Air Pollution Control, Noise Control, Occupational Health, Basic Sanitation and Hygiene in both urban and rural settings of Malawi through:
4. To establish relationship, as long as approved by two – thirds majority vote, when and where desirable, with such bodies, local or foreign, governmental or non-governmental, which shall advance the course of the association and the public it would like to serve.
5. To establish a national executive committee and other committees, as may be required from time to time, with powers to constitute various categories of membership of the association, to determine qualifications or requirement for membership of such categories.
6. To acquire funds, land or any tenure with power to sell, lease, mortgage or erect buildings for the smooth running of the Association and advancement of its ideals.
7. To accept gifts, endowments or bequests made to the Association, generally, or for any particular purpose of any specified object or objects connected with the association or advancement of environmental/public health.



### Theme

### **Tobacco Control... a response to the global tobacco pandemic**

World Environmental Health Day 2016 26 September 2016 Tobacco Control... a response to the global tobacco pandemic Smoking, and the use of tobacco, is the primary cause of PREVENTABLE illness and death. Six million people are killed globally by tobacco EVERY YEAR. Of this number 600,000 are killed by second-hand smoke. There is clear evidence to link tobacco to lung cancer but there is also evidence of an association with cancer of the kidney, cancer of the larynx and head and neck, breast cancer, bladder, oesophagus, pancreas and stomach cancer. About a half of all life-long smokers will die prematurely and on average cigarette smokers die 10 years younger than non-smokers. Smoking is therefore a major Public Health and Environmental Health issue Worldwide and the IFEH Board would wish to encourage all Member Organisations to take part in this years' World Environmental Health Day(WEHD) in September 2016. When considering your contribution to WEHD you may wish to consider the following aspects of tobacco control: - the effects of second hand smoke - smoking cessation activities - the sale of tobacco in plain packaging - the illicit trade of tobacco products - the sale of tobacco products to minors - support viable alternative activities to growing tobacco - tobacco growing and pesticides - the health risks posed to tobacco farmers - the use of child labour in tobacco picking - tobacco, deforestation and climate change The Board wish to encourage all member organisations, regional groups, academic associates and associate members to set up local initiatives to celebrate World Environmental Health Day. We would also ask Universities to encourage and support their students to take part. Information on planned national/regional activities will be displayed on the IFEH website [www.ifeh.org/WEHD](http://www.ifeh.org/WEHD). Non members of the IFEH are encouraged to take part. Information about your initiatives should be sent to the IFEH PRO, email:[pro@ifeh.org](mailto:pro@ifeh.org)



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