

**RCEN Annual Report: Health Caucus
Activities from April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009**

by Monique Lefebvre
with input from Health Caucus Steering Committee members

Health Caucus Steering Committee Skype Teleconferencing Pilot Project

As part of this year's workplan, the Health Caucus Steering Committee (HC SC) decided to launch its Skype pilot project for conferencing. The HC SC has successfully held its first 4 Skype conference calls and now many members are regularly using Skype as a primary means of communication between steering committee members and the national office.

UN-HABITAT's Fourth World Urban Forum

As a continuation of the Roundtable on the Environment hosted by the RCEN Health Caucus at the third World Urban Forum from 19-23 June 2006 in Vancouver, the Health Caucus submitted an application to UN-HABITAT on 31 March 2008 to lead a Networking Session at the fourth World Urban Forum (WUF4) taking place in Nanjing, China from 3-7 November 2008. Upon approval to host our networking event, a team of delegates was chosen to participate in the 4th WUF where they hosted a networking session entitled *Habitat Seminar: A Culture of Sustainability – A Multi-stakeholder Approach*. At DFAIT's request, Arciris was part of the official Canadian delegation to WUF4. We are presently, strategizing WUF4 next steps.

Canadian Network of Human Health and the Environment (CNHHE)

In its early development the Canadian Network of Human Health and the Environment (CNHHE) has sought the input and collaboration from the RCEN. It has done so by inviting Health Caucus Steering Committee members to be part of their Interim Advisory Committee which worked on establishing its mission, vision, delegate selection and certain other organizational points. As a Canadian-based network of non-governmental and other focusing on human health and the impacts of environmental exposures, the CNHHE plays a similar role than that of the RCEN's Health Caucus. Therefore, as a member of the Interim Advisory Committee we were able to coordinate work between both networks in situations where both environmental and health NGOs are requested by Environment Canada.

Health Caucus Steering Committee (HC SC) at AGM

All members of the Health Caucus Steering Committee were present at the AGM. In response to RCEN's Annual General Assembly adopted theme of Health and the Environment, a few HC SC members did a panel presentation based on themes HC SC members work on such as chemical sensitivities, WHO – Social Determinants to Health Report, etc. This presentation was open to all RCEN members and Health Caucus members.

Barbara McKinnon, who is the leading the development of the CNHHE, was invited to the AGA and did a panel discussion on Children and the Environment with other guest speakers.

Social Injustice and/or the Social Determinants of Health

In response to some of the conclusions from both the World Health Organization report "Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health" and the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) Conference, the CPHA sought Health Caucus members counsel and input in regards to their involvement in and what social injustice and/or the social determinants of health means to them.