

**RCEN HEALTH CAUCUS
ANNUAL REPORT
2005 - 2006**

Over the past year, the Health Caucus continued to work on the activities identified in its 2005-2006 work plan. Networking and caucus activities include the Health Caucus meeting held at the RCEN 2005 ACE and the election of new Health Caucus Steering Committee members. The Health Caucus also led ENGO participation at UN-HABITAT's third World Urban Forum. Meetings were organized with Health Canada's Safe Environments Program to strengthen stakeholder relations with Health Canada. Lastly, Health Caucus representatives participated in various health and environment consultations and workshops.

1. Networking and Caucus Activities

Health Caucus Meeting at the RCEN Annual Conference on the Environment

A full-day Health Caucus meeting was held on September 22, 2005 during the RCEN's 2005 Conference on the Environment. A presentation on the World Urban Forum was also made during the meeting and Jean-Paul Ruszkowski, Director of External Relations, WUF Secretariat attended the RCEN ACE banquet on September 23, 2006.

Health Caucus Steering Committee Elections

The Health Caucus Steering Committee elected two new members in January 2006. Allan S. Taylor (Member of Saskatchewan Environmental Society) was elected for the first time and John Michael Lannon (Newfoundland & Labrador Environmental Network) was re-elected. In July 2006, Al Taylor from the Saskatchewan Environmental Network resigned from the Health Caucus Steering Committee following his participation in WUF3. He felt that his age no longer allowed him to take on all of the activities that he would like. As there are still seven members on the HC SC, there is no need to seek a replacement for Al.

2. UN-HABITAT's Third World Urban Forum (WUF3)

Habitat Jam

In November 2005, the RCEN signed a \$2 000 contract with the Globe Foundation to promote the Habitat Jam, a global online forum taking place from December 1-3 as a lead-up event to WUF3. Promotion included a page on the RCEN website, and announcements in the e-bulletin and through the International Program and RCEN staff listservs. The RCEN also distributed Habitat Jam material at COP11 in Montreal.

Third World Urban Forum

The WUF3 Secretariat (Human Resources and Social Development Canada) and Environment Canada provided \$30 000 each for participation of 19 ENGOs in WUF3, held June 19 to 23 in Vancouver, BC. In addition to participating fully in the many activities and events scheduled during the week, these delegates also organized several RCEN events at WUF3.

Roundtable on the Environment

The RCEN organized a Roundtable on the Environment on Wednesday, June 21st as part of the official World Urban Forum programme. The title of the Roundtable was **Strategic Eco-Innovation: Integrating Health and Environment into Sustainable Urban Practices**. The session aimed to foster strategic alliances within the environment sector, including Canadian and international NGOs, health professionals, labour unions, indigenous and youth groups, universities, the private sector and government. Drawing from participants' experiences and particular areas of expertise, the roundtable served as a forum to identify, through an environment and health lens, the challenges and opportunities to achieving sustainable cities. Examples of eco-innovation in the form of successful strategic alliances were presented and analyzed in a poster session. Lastly, pilot projects were identified, partnerships encouraged and preliminary action plans developed - the outcomes of which will be presented at WUF4 in Nanjing, China in 2008.

ENGO Reception

The RCEN also hosted a reception on Monday, June 19th at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel. The “**ENGO News and Views**” reception was an informal “meet-and-greet” opportunity for ENGOs and roundtable participants.

Morning ENGO Caucus Meetings

The RCEN hosted **morning ENGO meetings** throughout the week of the WUF. The morning meetings provided the opportunity for ENGOs to meet in small groups, to make announcements, to report back on the previous day's activities and to strategize.

Follow-Up to WUF3

The RCEN was asked to contribute to the UN-HABITAT and WUF3 Secretariat Review of WUF3 Roundtables to input into the transition advice to the Chinese government in support of preparations for WUF4. The small groups that were formed during the roundtable are continuing to work on their partnership projects and the following actions have been taken to date:

- *Youth and Education* – one teleconference was held but Anthony Akpan from Nigeria was unable to participate due to a poor telephone connection. The group's energy is currently focused on combining the FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education) eco-school concept with SYC's Sustainable Campus initiative.
- *Energy and Resource Management* – The interest exists among group members to launch the partnership project, but no one from the group so far has come forward to lead the initiative. John Michael and Lobie have been pursuing the FCM (from the Capacity Building division) for funding, and the International Composting Corporation.
- *Community Capacity Building* – Arlene Hache from the Indigenous Women's Network is working with Patricia Francis from OneSky in Nigeria to write a funding proposal. Arlene Hache and Sarah Heiberg organized a meeting in Ottawa on October 12, 2006.
- *Food - Food* - Annie Ferncase (Healthy Food Choices Group) contacted food groups in NL about a Canadian Food Resource Centre and participated in two workshops in St-John's on Health and Environment during one of which she gave a presentation on the Health Caucus work at the WUF, highlighting the Food subgroup partnership project. Alex Hill (Alternatives) is organized

the “Hundred Mile Meal” at the RCEN 2006 Conference on Agriculture and the Environment (CAE).

- *Safe Environments* – Al Taylor (Saskatchewan Environmental Network) wrote a letter including photos sent by Liliana Miranda Sara (Foro ciudades para la vida) of Peruvian schools containing Canadian asbestos, to the Prime Minister to demand a ban on Canadian asbestos exports. This letter was circulated to Health and Toxics caucus members. Sheila Cole (Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia - EHANS) presented on the WUF and healthy communities at the EHANS Annual General Meeting in 2006.

3. Relationship Building with Health Canada

Meeting with Health Canada’s Health Impact’s Bureau Director

Brigitte Gagné (RCEN Executive Director), Sheila Cole (Health Caucus Chair), Lobie Daughton (Health Caucus Steering Committee member) and Sarah Heiberg (Health Caucus Coordinator) had a meeting with Sue Milburn-Hopwood (Director, Health Impacts Bureau, Health Canada) and other staff members of the Health Canada’s Safe Environment Division on April 26, 2006 to discuss how the RCEN and Health Canada can collaborate on a multi-stakeholder consultation strategy on environment and health. The meeting was very positive and both parties agreed to pursue the relationship.

Meeting with Health Canada’s Risk Management Bureau Director

Brigitte Gagné (RCEN ED), Lobie Daughton (HC SC member) and Sarah Heiberg (Health Caucus Coordinator) participated in a meeting with Sue Milburn-Hopwood (who became Director of the Risk Management Bureau) and other staff members of the Safe Environments Program (SEP) on September 28, 2006. SEP would like to contract the Health Caucus to complete a proposal on Health Canada’s long-term stakeholder engagement strategy and the role that the RCEN could play in helping Health Canada achieve its stakeholder relations. This proposal would include a consultation of health-focused ENGOs in November 2006. The Health Caucus has submitted an initial proposal including consultation options ranging from \$25 000 to \$50 000. The RCEN has also submitted a proposal to organize a preliminary meeting with Miriam Padolsky from SEP and the Health Caucus Steering Committee at the Conference on Agriculture and the Environment (a \$2 000 contract).

4. Consultations and Meetings

Contaminated Sites Workshop

Jim Elliott (The Gaia Group) and Al Taylor (Saskatchewan Eco-Network) from the Health Caucus participated on behalf of the Health Caucus in Health Canada’s Contaminated Sites Workshop held March 2, 2006 in Ottawa to get civil society feedback on developing the concept of a “Citizen’s Guide to Contaminated Sites and Human Health Risk Assessments”.

Respiratory Health Framework Pre-Summit Meeting

Sheila Cole (EHANS) participated in a meeting lead by the Canadian Lung Association in Ottawa, April 26-27, 2006 to discuss a Summit on Respiratory Health that the Canadian Lung Association is organizing to develop a National Framework on Respiratory Health.