



... the first issue of *EHP* designed specifically for distribution in the People's Republic of China.

### Rededication of Service to Developing Countries

You might think dedication of *EHP* to the service of environmental health around the world is a broad but insubstantial goal. However, from the first issue of the revised *EHP*—published on Earth Day, 22 April 1993—to today, we have worked diligently to make that goal a reality and, to that end, many educational and research institutions in developing countries have for the last eight years received the journal free of charge. The list of free subscriptions in developing countries has grown to over 1,300, and the number of developing nations now served is 123. *EHP* is proud to be part of the international environmental health community.

The foresight of Kenneth Olden, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program, was instrumental in bringing *EHP* to the service of the international community. This month, on the eighth anniversary of the revised journal, we rededicate ourselves to the needs of developing countries. However, with this issue we celebrate not only the beginning of the revised journal but also a unique event in the history of *EHP*. We are pleased to announce the first issue of the journal designed specifically for distribution in the People's Republic of China. A picture of the cover of this first issue is shown above. This Chinese-language supplement of *EHP* has been brought about in collaboration with the Sun Day Center for Chinese Environmental Health, an organization of university scholars based in Nanjing. For now, we intend to publish a Chinese-language version three or four times per year. We at *EHP* feel especially fortunate to be present as the doors of trade begin to open to the most populous nation on the earth. As China strives to overcome years of environmental degradation, we believe that *EHP* will be able to help.

During this last year *EHP* also contributed to the International Conference on Environmental and Occupational Lung Diseases held in Lucknow, India, in November 2000. This meeting was designed to identify and address the needs of developing countries and to formulate a list of recommendations that attendees perceived to be the most urgent. These recommendations and the meeting report are published in this issue (1).

Of the many recommendations made by some 175 scientists from 21 nations, one in particular bears closer scrutiny because it has the potential to go beyond the usual “do this or do that.” This recommendation is that developing countries should create centers of excellence to address environmental problems. International collaborations could be set up through these centers for the purpose of sharing knowledge and expertise. The idea is basically a good one, but the question always comes back to this: where does the money come from?



In recognition of the international nature of environmental health problems and the residence of trained experts in developed countries, internationally funded research institutions could be located in developing countries with specific missions to address local, regional, or national environmental health problems. International scientists, working alongside researchers from developing countries, teaching and training while solving difficult environmental problems, is a step in the right direction, especially because international exchange is consistent with the idea that education is the most effective long-term means to overcome environmental degradation and improve public health.

Improvement of life for a nation's people usually involves industrial development. Unfortunately, there is always an environmental price to be paid. However, the path to industrialization has been traveled previously by developed nations, and many of the lessons learned lie deeply etched in memories of the industrial revolution in Europe and North America. Some of those lessons are being relearned today, and although the venues have changed, the costs in terms of human suffering have not.

As new plans are being made for the future, the focus on environmental health crises in developing countries must intensify and not be diverted. The “grand challenges in environmental sciences” (2) lie primarily in our own and in our neighbors' yards. Some of the most devastating environmental health problems reside in developing countries, and it is critical that those problems, such as air and water pollution, receive immediate attention.

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#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Rahman Q, Nettesheim P, Smith KR, Seth PK, Selkirk J. International Conference on Environmental and Occupational Lung Diseases. *Environ Health Perspect* 109:425–431 (2001).
2. Grand Challenges in Environmental Sciences. A report of the Committee on Grand Challenges in Environmental Sciences of the National Research Council. Available: <http://books.nap.edu/books/0309072549/html> [cited 26 February 2001].