

The United States' intervention pointed out that sound development is impossible without a healthy population. Many of the health problems of poorest people are caused or at least exacerbated by environmental factors. Insect borne malaria causes over a million childhood deaths in Africa. One billion people lack safe drinking water and 2 billion lack sanitation. Over 1 billion people live in urban areas where the daily level of particulate matter exceeds WHO guidelines. These guidelines are exceeded several times over when biomass fuels are burned inside homes.

Steps to change this situation should be incorporated into Agenda 21. The subjects of such a programme should include clean air, pure water, safe food, sound nutrition, and sanitation. Success in achieving a healthier environment will have to relate to other agenda 21 topics such as human settlements, fresh water, air pollution, toxic and solid wastes. Such a programme should include risk assessment, which involves basic, applied and operational research and risk management which includes prevention, control and in extreme cases remediation or treatment. Thus operational efforts should be focused overwhelmingly on preventing problems rather than on expensive remediation procedures.

Finally the WHO presented the preliminary findings of its Commission on Health and Environment. The Commission held its last meeting in July of this year and is now finalizing its report which will be available in November together with the reports of the individual panels on energy, industry, urbanization and food and agriculture.

Some key findings of the report, included as an annex to this report, were that despite the high priority that people give to health, in general health has so far been excluded from the debate on environment and development. They called for Agenda 21 and the Earth Charter to deal with this concern. The report also noted that to achieve a sustainable basis for health for all a high priority should be given to reducing population growth rates and to reducing over-consumption and waste generation. Finally they called for greater initiatives on the part of the health sector in guiding all government sectors dealing with development policy and planning to ensure that human health is made to benefit from development.

OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

In the Chairman's summary of the poverty, population, health and education debate, one point was devoted to health issues as follows: "health is a fundamental condition for development and therefore the protection and improvement of the health of women, children and all people should be integrated in all poverty alleviation as well as other appropriate programmes."

This seeming inadequacy is perhaps explained by the relatively fewer mentions of health in interventions (unlike the issue of population which was brought up by several developing and developed country delegations). A clear process will have to