

LODI DECLARATION ON HEALTHY VILLAGES

Adopted by the 16th International Congress of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health, Lodi, Italy, 18–21 June 2006

Whereas more than half of the world's population live in villages and bear a disproportionate burden of diseases, occupational and environmental health risks,

Whereas many solutions for achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to public health and environment lie in the rural settings,

Whereas people in villages have limited or no access to primary health care, basic occupational, environmental, and public health services, as well as to safe water and sanitation,

Whereas the villages with their specific cultural and social capital provide ample opportunities as settings for delivery of essential health interventions, for protecting and promoting human health,

Whereas unsustainable, unhealthy and unsafe agricultural practices cause substantial numbers of occupational and work-related diseases and injuries, disabilities, premature deaths, loss of income potential and human suffering, and thus perpetuate poverty in rural areas,

Whereas international, national and local actions have not been commensurate to the above mentioned challenges,

Acknowledging the progress made in addressing health aspects of urbanization, but being concerned that the lack of comprehensive initiatives to protect and promote health in villages can further exacerbate health inequalities within and between countries,

Emphasising that the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health is impossible without improving the health of rural populations,

Taking into consideration the Declaration of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, USSR, 1978, the Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All adopted by the World Health Assembly with Resolution 49.12 from 1996 and the Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2003,

Recalling the outcomes of previous international deliberations on occupational health in agriculture and rural health, such as the Declaration of the First International Congress on Rural Health in the Mediterranean and Balkan Countries (Bari, Italy, 2002), the Agenda on Rural Health (Loni, India, 2002), and the Declaration on Occupational and Environmental Rural Health (Belgrade, Serbia, 2004),

We, the 350 participants from 43 countries from all continents who took part in the 16th International Congress of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health, held here in Lodi, Italy, from June 18 to June 21, 2006, discussed the challenges to providing adequate occupational and environmental health, food safety, public health and medical services in villages, and

WE DECLARE THAT:

1. We commit ourselves to a global movement in developing Healthy Villages to respond to the specific occupational, environmental and public health problems and the inadequate access to health care and health promotion in the rural areas;
2. We call for concerted national and international efforts to improve the scope and the coverage of primary health care to better address the needs of rural communities, as well as to providing access to occupational and environmental health services in rural areas and to improving the quality of service delivery;
3. We are determined to advocate and provide support for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in rural and remote areas, to promote the legalization and the official recognition of informal and migrant agricultural workers as well as to contribute to a global decent work agenda in villages;
4. We recommend incorporating the rural dimension into international, national and local environmental, occupational, and health action plans to meet the special needs of people living in villages;
5. We recognize the need for increasing stewardship of governments and industry and collaboration between the ministries of health, environment, labour, agriculture and other relevant state agencies as well as private enterprises and workers' organizations in addressing occupational, environmental health and public health risks in rural areas;
6. We also highlight the importance of the actions taken by local authorities and the public initiatives to protect and promote the health of rural populations;
7. We urge for an increasing collaboration between the relevant disciplines, such as medicine, public health, occupational and environmental health, health promotion, food safety, chemical safety, agricultural and veterinary sciences, and social sciences for addressing the special health needs of rural populations;
8. We pledge our support to the international activities related to developing Healthy Villages of the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, acknowledging the importance of collaboration with the other relevant UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, FAO, UNHABITAT, and the regional bodies, such as the European Union;
9. We encourage the International Association on Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health, the International Commission on Occupational Health, as well as the organizations of farmers, agricultural workers, agricultural industry, and the relevant non-governmental organizations and networks to take action to support and promote the development of Healthy Villages;
10. We believe that the Healthy Village concept needs to be introduced in training and educational programmes, in order to build the necessary human resources to provide health services of good quality to rural populations and agricultural workers;
11. We realize the need for adequate and reliable data collection and analysis for needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation of Healthy Villages programmes and thus we will collaborate for the development of international models for rural health profiles and indicators;

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12. We call upon the governmental agencies and local authorities to ensure equal and proper access of people in villages to information on public and occupational health and the environment, stimulate social and environmental justice, as well as to provide means for empowerment of rural populations to protect and promote their health, and to improve their working and living conditions;
13. We see a growing need of creating reference centres at the local, national and international level for providing expertise and support to the development of Healthy Villages. Therefore, we welcome the initiative of the Department of Occupational Health, Institutes of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Milan to establish an interdisciplinary group for providing such expertise and support. We encourage these bodies, in collaboration with other relevant organizations, to consider establishing an international centre of excellence for the global Healthy Village movement;
14. We are committed to share our good practice and experience in devising, implementing and evaluating programmes for the development of Healthy Villages, and will work together to elaborate the necessary technical tools and guides.

We, hereby, authorize the Congress President, the Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee and the President of the International Association of Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health to sign this declaration on our behalf.

Lodi, 21st June 2006

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