Letter from President

Message from the President

There is growing scientific evidence of the detrimental effects that global change is having on ecosystems and, in turn, human health. This trend is likely to continue into both the near- and long-term future. Every environmental perturbation has an impact on the delicate balance and context in which diseases manifest themselves within human and wildlife populations.

Global change and regional environment change are important contributors to a range of infectious disease outbreaks and emergence events, and are contributing to noninfectious conditions such as heat-mortality, asthma, and other respiratory diseases. Examples of health-relevant environmental stressors include global warming, deforestation, dam building, road construction, mining, wetland modification, and agricultural encroachment. Many non-infectious diseases have their roots in the “built” urban environment as well, since unplanned urbanization and sprawl contribute to health conditions such as obesity (now “epidemic” in the US), diabetes, and some types of cancer.

Consequently, there is a need for: (1) a venue for scientists from across disciplines to have constructive dialogue; (2) a new generation of scientists and science policy leaders who can grapple with understanding complex systems and translate research findings into health promotion as a core element of sustainability; and (3) ultimately a place where discovery and exchange of ideas transcends disciplinary boundaries, national borders, and knowledge systems.

The International Association of Ecology and Health along with its journal *EcoHealth* recently were established to address this need. Since the Association’s founding 2 years ago, we have grown steadily and our journal has matured, now being indexed both in Web of Science and in PubMed library databases. We are an inclusive Association whose mission is to help bridge ongoing activities from across many professional societies; the essential goal is to

Dr. Jonathan Patz, President of the International Association for Ecology and Health

foster innovative collaboration that can lead to novel approaches in addressing the health of our own species, and on other species and environmental conditions upon which our survival depends.

So a special welcome to those of you attending the 2008 EcoHealth Forum where you are invited to be broad in your thinking, collaborative in your spirit, and receptive to new ideas from whomever the source may be. Thank you for your valued participation and membership in our vibrant and timely International Association for Ecology and Health (or “EcoHealth” for short).

Have a wonderful conference!

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