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## EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

Health Care Without Harm's global mercury campaign has ushered in the new year with a mounting number of successes. Most prominent among them is the Resolution issued by Argentina's Minister of Health, Graciela Ocaña, instructing all hospitals and health care centers to purchase mercury-free thermometers and sphygmomanometers. The Resolution also initiates a process to gradually phase-out other uses of mercury.

Argentina is now a model for Latin America and a world leader in the effort to eliminate mercury from health care. The country joins the Philippines, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark, all of whom have national policies mandating mercury-free medical devices. It also joins the European Union, Uruguay and Taiwan, which all have announced the phase-out of mercury thermometers nationally—or in the case of the EU, regionally.

What's more, Argentina's action will play an important role in moving forward the aims of the Collaborative Initiative between WHO and HCWH to phase-out mercury-based medical devices globally.

At nearly the same time as Argentina's announcement, in mid-February the world's environment ministers agreed to negotiate a legally binding treaty to limit global mercury pollution. Notably, the US government reversed an eight year policy of intransigence as the new Obama administration lent its support to a multilateral environmental accord; in response both India and China dropped their opposition to the agreement.

Thus it seems, despite all the turmoil surrounding us, the world's nations have demonstrated their capacity to take a positive step forward together.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Joshua Karliner  
International Team Coordinator

## Featured News

**World's Governments Support Breakthrough Agreement on Mercury**

More than 140 countries agreed to launch negotiations for a legally binding treaty and immediate action limit global mercury pollution. [Read the News](#) and the [Press Release](#)

## US and Europe

**US: Hospitals and Healthcare Leaders Shift Dairy Market**

Responding to pressure from US hospitals, which purchase large amounts of food, major companies announced they will stop using milk from cattle injected with the growth hormone rBGH. [Read the Press Release](#)

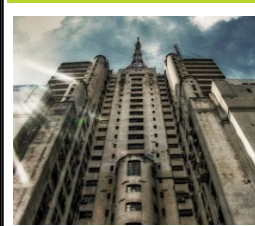
**EU: Seminar on British NHS' Carbon Footprint**

HCWH and the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland (AAGBI) work together on a seminar that addresses several important environmental topics in healthcare. See full program [here](#) and book a place [here](#).

## LATIN AMERICA

**Argentina Ends Purchase of Mercury Medical Devices**

As a result of the work of HCWH Latin America office and other partners, Argentina's Ministry of Health issued a resolution ending the purchase of mercury thermometers and sphygmomanometers in the country's hospitals and instructed hospitals to buy mercury-free measuring devices. [Read the Press Release and the Resolution](#).



**No More Mercury-containing Thermometers in Uruguay**

The Public Health Minister decided to phase-out mercury-based thermometers and replace them with digital ones. The effort includes a campaign to raise awareness among families to encourage phase-out of mercury containing thermometers from their household use. [Read the News](#)



## ASIA

**Congressmen Sign Debt Cancellation Move**

At the behest of an HCWH-led coalition, forty-three Philippine Congressmen signed a petition to cancel the 1994 Austrian government loan used to fund the defunct Austrian Medical Waste Incinerator Project. HCWH-SEA called on the Congress to instead channel the loan payments to environmentally-safe medical waste disposal facilities. [Read the Press Release](#)



## Events

**CleanMed Conference**



This year's CleanMed Conference will take place in Chicago, May 18-20, 2009. CleanMed is the premier environmental conference for leaders in health care. Visit the Conference Website [here](#) for more information.

### Mercury Polluted Fish in India



HCWH partner in India, Toxics Link, in association with DISHA released a study on levels of mercury found in fish collected from Kolkata and other locations in West Bengal. The study proves that popular varieties of fish used for human consumption are contaminated both in the water and when on sale in the markets. [Read the Summary here and order the full report](#)

## AFRICA

### **Wasting the Nation** making trash of people and places



### Wasting the Nation

Our South African partner, groundWork, released their annual report in which they review the politics of waste in the country and the failure of the South African government to produce accurate and legitimate figures on the production of waste in South Africa. It includes a note on the joint program with HCWH held in KwaZulu-Natal on medical waste management. [Read the Report.](#)

**Health Care Without Harm** is an international coalition of 473 organizations in more than 50 countries, working to transform the healthcare sector so it is no longer a source of harm to people and the environment.

You can visit us in [www.noharm.org](http://www.noharm.org) to find out more about our campaigns

If you no longer wish to receive updates on our work to transform health care sector worldwide, you may send an email with "unsubscribe" in the subject to [globalsouth@hcwh.org](mailto:globalsouth@hcwh.org)