



Ichikawa Declaration for Healthy Cities

October 25, 2008, Ichikawa, Japan

There is growing concern regarding international health security. The emerging threats to human health include rapidly spreading diseases, climate change, environmental pollution, contaminated food, crime, decline of social capital, rapidly graying populations, conflicts, and natural disasters.

Action at global and national levels on health security has already been initiated. However, without the full use of a city's capacity to address these issues and without effective mechanisms to continuously develop community resources, global health cannot be ensured. In this era, cities are at the forefront of health security, and their commitment to it commands considerable attention.

Unequal access to resources, information, health care, or social support are likely to aggravate disparities in the ability to respond to health threats.

For the last twenty years, there has been long-term investment to develop Healthy Cities worldwide. In collaboration with the World Health Organization, academics, and communities, cities have tried to apply the Healthy Cities approach to prepare against health threats and to redress health inequalities.

Since the establishment of the Alliance for Healthy Cities in 2003, 120 cities and organizations have endorsed the Healthy Cities approach and advocated it. These cities have developed a package of policies to act against health challenges in individual cities, and have implemented programs to address social determinants of health and improve the health and quality of life of citizens.

We, the leaders of cities, towns, metropolitan areas, local authorities, communities, and academics attending the Third Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities in Ichikawa, Japan, 23-26 October 2008, pledge ourselves to:

- Work together with citizens, community groups, and the private sector to strengthen health security in our cities
- Develop a package of policies to act against health challenges in our cities
- Strengthen evidence-based actions by working together with academics and communities

- Collaborate among the various departments of government to address a wide range of social determinants of health and redress inequity in health

- Encourage mutual learning by sharing lessons from local initiatives

All of these pledges are part of our most important pledge: to protect and promote the health of the city dwellers that we are honored to lead.

A Call for Action

To further strengthen health security in our cities, we commit ourselves to:

- Expand the capacities of people and communities
 - by creating settings to facilitate greater interaction among communities.
 - by advancing organizational development for cooperation among communities.
 - by expanding learning opportunities for community-based healthy city promoters.
 - by sharing what we have learned with other communities worldwide.
 - by carrying out activities in the October International Healthy Cities Month.
- Advance collaboration between cities and academics
 - for evidence-based actions.
 - for strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies.
 - for expanding the knowledge and skills of community workers.
- Enhance international collaboration
 - by increasing opportunities for sharing lessons learned through civic action.
 - by creating sustainable mechanisms for international cooperation.
 - by increasing understanding of the need for global cooperation to promote peace.

We also call for:

- The World Health Organization and other international and national organizations to support local civic action geared towards improving the health and quality of life of people in increasingly urbanized societies.
- More communities and people to work together to improve health security in cities.
- More cities to take up the Healthy Cities approach, placing the health and quality of life of urban citizens high on city agendas.
- More cities and communities to join us in this movement toward a greater network of the Alliance for Healthy Cities.