

## ***Summary of the Academic Sessions***

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Over 300 people participated in the academic sessions which was held between 10:15 a.m. and 15:20 p.m. on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Experiences and ideas about useful strategies, successful stories, and ways to strengthen the city alliances were exchanged, in order to combat against various health threats cities are facing. Under the ten sub-theme sessions, 83 oral presentations and 28 poster presentations were made by delegates from 10 countries. The importance of health security and existence of the wide range of health threats in cities were further acknowledged.

### ***The Session Themes***

S1: Chapter activities enhancing the networking of Healthy Cities

S2: The settings approach moves toward the future

S3: Evaluation in Healthy Cities for mechanizing sustainability

S4: Creating safer living environments

S5: Development of the community through the Healthy Cities approaches

S6: Effective use of information technology in Healthy Cities initiatives

S7: The Healthy Cities tasks for future generations

S8: Considering dietary issues from various aspects

S9: Physical activities for health and fitness

S10: Supportive environment for mental health

Exchanging experiences and ideas is one of the key factors to advance Healthy Cities programs. It is the opportunity for greater knowledge, inspirations, and resources. When you exchange experiences and ideas, however, avoid a simple story telling or listening but compare to previous experience or experience in other areas. By forming solid and reliable evidence, sustainability of Healthy Cities will be ensured and the capacity of key players will be built, to run the program in success. Exchanging experiences and ideas has another purpose, to learn about each other. It is the opportunity to deepen communications and develop sense of connectedness - important elements for taking cooperative actions.

International networking brings significant benefits to the development of Healthy Cities. No city can stand outside of global urbanization. Also, the participants learned that health threats are becoming more and more borderless in this globalization era. I sincerely hope all the delegates and participants gained fruitful learning and inspirations and deepened friendships from the international academic experience sessions, and the gains will be used to make their cities and world to be healthier and safer.