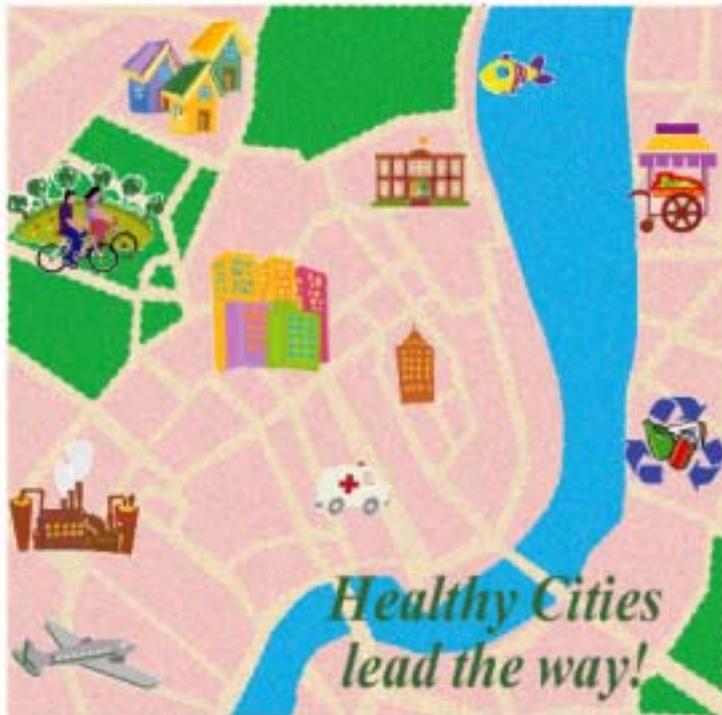


## Global leaders of Healthy Cities fly to Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia on October 12-14, 2004



### Welcome to the Inaugural General Assembly and Conference

The conference is the first major event of the Alliance for the Healthy Cities. Mayors, city executives, healthy city professionals, community groups, Healthy City academic leaders, national and international leaders join the conference. We are very grateful that there are many participants joining this conference. Through the paper presentations, networking, Inaugural General Assembly, and other related activities, participants will enjoy fruitful discussions as well as the hospitality of the people in Kuching.



### Message from WHO

The Alliance for Healthy Cities is a shining example of how a clear and common vision can mobilize support for the upliftment of all. Armed only with the desire to improve the quality of life in urban settings, the cities of the Western Pacific Region have rallied around the Healthy Cities approach, closed ranks and aligned themselves to a future where health is at the center of urban development. On behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO), I would like to thank the host city, Kuching, Malaysia, for its generous hospitality and for taking the lead at this first General Assembly of the Alliance. I would also like to congratulate all the cities of the Region who have contributed to making this event a success. Be assured of WHO's strong and sustained partnership in building cities that promote health and well-being.



Shigeru Omi, MD, PhD.  
Regional Director  
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

# About the Alliance

## OVERVIEW

The Alliance for Healthy Cities is an international network aiming at protecting and enhancing the health of city dwellers. The Alliance is a group of cities and other organizations that try to achieve the goal through an approach called Healthy Cities. We believe that international cooperation is an effective and efficient tool to achieve the goal. And we promote the interaction of people who are in the front line of health and quality of life issues.

The Healthy Cities approach was initiated by the World Health Organization. In order to cope with the adverse effects of an urban environment over health, the WHO has been promoting the approach worldwide. The Alliance closely works with the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) based in Manila, Philippines.

As an increasing number of population live in cities amid global urbanization, we hope that our international network will help make strides in the promotion of health of the people living in cities.

## WHAT'S THE ALLIANCE?

The Alliance for Healthy Cities is the network founded on the international efforts on Healthy Cities in the Western-Pacific region. Our members are municipal governments, national governments, NGOs, private sectors, academic institutions, and international agencies. We all supported the Healthy Cities approach.

Through the network of the Alliance, it is hoped that its members cooperate and are inspired to make the best use of the Healthy Cities approach. Experiences by one city or one person can be a good guide to others. If the members accumulate such experiences, it would be a

great vehicle to improve the health of urban residents in member cities and towns. To that end, the Alliance promotes the interaction of people and information exchange, research development, and capacity building programs.

On top of promoting Healthy Cities programs for our members, the Alliance will work to raise public awareness on the Healthy Cities approach beyond the scope of the Alliance members. The ultimate goal of the Healthy Cities program is to create sustainable cities with the focus on health.

And hopefully, we can enjoy the process of creating healthier cities and befriending others through an international network.

## History

The Alliance was founded October 17, 2003, at an inaugural meeting held at the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines. The participants of the inaugural meeting were cities, national coordinators, NGOs, and academic institutions that were engaged in the Healthy Cities program in the Western Pacific Region.

At the inaugural meeting, the participants adopted the Charter of the Alliance as the backbone of our organization. At the same time, they designated five cities and two non-city members as the members of the Interim Steering Committee. Tokyo Medical and Dental University, which serves as the WHO Collaborating Center for Healthy Cities and Urban Policy Research in Tokyo, was designated as the Interim Secretariat.

In contrast to the short history of the Alliance, Healthy Cities activities in the Western Pacific region date back to the 1980s. In cooperation with the WPRO, cities and other groups have launched

the Healthy Cities program. In the region, cities and groups adopting the Healthy Cities program is said to number more than 100.

There are now 25 founding members and more cities and organizations are joining.

## Healthy Cities Key Words

[Source: Health Promotion Glossary, WHO, 1998]

### Determinants of health

The range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors which determine the health status of individuals or populations.

### Health Promotion

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health.

### Healthy Cities

Healthy Cities are cities that are continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all functions of life and in developing their maximum potential.

### Healthy Settings

Healthy Settings are social and physical contexts that serve as supportive environments for enabling people to increase control over; and improve their health.

### Intersectoral collaboration

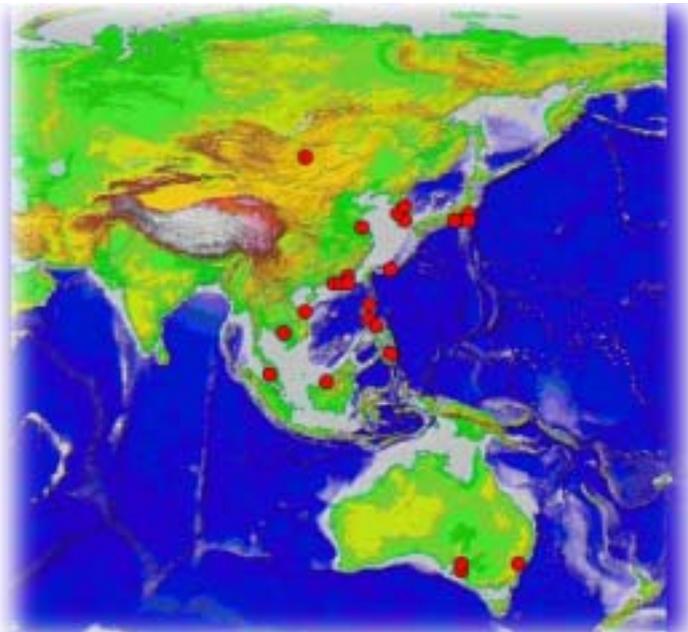
A recognized relationship between part or parts of different sectors of society which has been formed to take action on an issue to achieve health outcomes or intermediate health outcomes in a way which is more effective, efficient or



sustainable than might be achieved by the health sector acting alone.

## Founding Members

- Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Kwai Tsing District, Hong Kong SAR, China
- Macao Special Administrative Region, China
- Sai Kung District, Hong Kong SAR, China
- The City of Suzhou, China
- Fukuroi City, Japan
- Hirara City, Japan
- Ichikawa City, Japan
- Owariasashi City, Japan
- Changwon City, Republic of Korea
- Seoul, Republic of Korea
- Wonju City, Republic of Korea
- Kuching City, Malaysia
- Ulaanbaatar City, Mongolia
- Marikina City, Philippines
- San Fernando, La Union, Philippines
- Tagaytay City, Philippines
- Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines
- Hue City, Vietnam
- Healthy Cities Illawarra, Australia
- Healthy Cities Noarlunga, Australia
- South Australian Community Health Research Unit, Flinders University, Australia
- Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China
- Health Promotion/International Health, Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan
- National Coordinator of Healthy Cities, Malaysia



### Interim Steering Committee:

Hirara City, Japan; Kuching City, Malaysia; Marikina City, Philippines (Chair of the Interim Steering Committee); The City of Suzhou, China; Ulaanbaatar City, Mongolia; Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion, Chinese University of Hong Kong, China; National Coordinator of Healthy Cities, Malaysia.

### Interim Secretariat:

Secretary, Professor Takehito Takano, MD, PhD  
Health Promotion/International Health, Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan

**First Convener and Chair City:** Kuching City, Malaysia

## WHO Awards for Healthy Cities 2004

In support of the work of the Alliance of Healthy Cities, WHO will provide recognition and support to good practices and innovative projects within the framework of Healthy Cities. Only Alliance members are eligible for these awards. The awards will be presented at the Inaugural General Assembly in October 2004. The categories are:

**Category A: Regional Director's Award for Healthy Cities**

**Category B: Healthy City Project Awards 2004**

- **Healthy environments for children**
- **Reducing the fat of the land:**
  - **Promotion of healthy diet and physical activity through urban planning**
- **Health promotion investment planning in Healthy Cities**
- **Making our cities safer through emergency preparedness planning**

## Get To Know Each Other

It is our great pleasure to launch the Newsletter of the Alliance for Healthy Cities. The first issue coincides with the first anniversary of the foundation of the Alliance. In this short period of time, 25 cities and organizations from nine countries have committed to Healthy Cities as founding members of the Alliance. And inquiries are coming in from those who are interested in Healthy Cities and the Alliance as well. It is a wonderful surprise to find diversity in our members – diversity in culture, ethnicity, geography, size and experience in Healthy Cities, etc.

In order to get to know and understand one another, we have started a series of short articles that introduce our members and their Healthy Cities activities. The first of the series features five cities – Hirara (Japan), Kuching (Malaysia), Marikina (Philippines), Suzhou (China) and Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia). We hope that this sequence of articles will give you an outline of individual members and promote communication among our members.

### Hirara – “Sports Island”

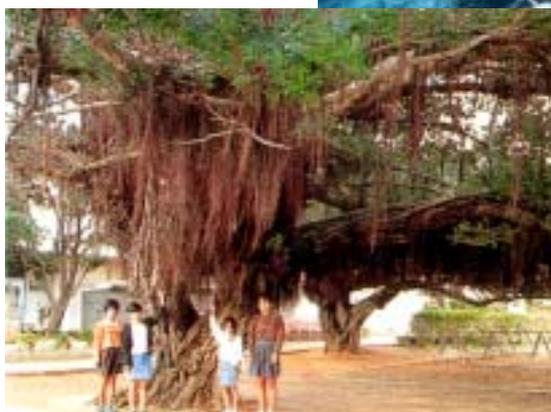
Hirara’s Vision – Paradise islands where people, nature and communities coexist in harmony

#### Hirara in brief

Population - 35,000  
Area - 65 sq kilometers  
Climate - Subtropical  
HC program started in - 1997  
Area of Priority – Life-style, urban environment and nature

In the western part of subtropical Pacific Ocean, Miyako Island traditionally serves as a center of politics and economy of Miyako County, Okinawa Prefecture. The city of Hirara, which is located in

Miyako Island, endowed with blue ocean, coral reef, tropical flora and fauna, continues to attract tourists from the rest of Japan as well as foreign countries. Tradition of Miyako islanders also helps lure tourists.



Until very recently Okinawa Prefecture had been known for the highest longevity in Japan, where Japan itself has long time been enjoying the longest life expectancy in the world. However, nowadays Okinawa Prefecture has its challenge in terms of health. It has seen an increase in life-style related diseases among its citizens, while health management of senior citizens is an important issue amid rapidly graying population. Hirara City is no exception.

In an effort to tackle the health issues, Hirara City has been undertaking Healthy City Hirara 21, a set of human health and environmental programs, since 1997. Healthy City Hirara 21 aims at improving health in three areas of people, communities and nature. For instance, Healthy City Hirara 21 promotes healthy life-style, such as healthy diet, proper drinking habit and modest exercises.

Also, Healthy City Hirara 21 pays close attention to the relationship between people and natural environment. The island has no

rivers. Therefore, the people totally rely on groundwater in all aspects of life. It is critical to keep up water quality. Also, coastal and marine environment, including coral reef ecosystem, is indispensable for the people, because it provides invaluable natural resources crucial to support not only lives but also tourism. Among various issues, top priority is placed on forest

preservation and coral reef conservation.

A coral reef conservation project, for example, started when landing tours onto Yabiji Reef became popular and alarming to the ecosystem. Yabiji Reef is one of the largest and most valuable coral reefs of Japan. In order to minimize the damages caused by tourism and raise awareness on the sustainable use of coral reefs, Hirara City has conducted a comprehensive research. To keep balance between tourism and nature conservation, the city introduced an eco-tour guides program. The guides were deemed to be and are actually giving guidance to the visitors.



In the year of 2000, Mayor Dr. Akira Ishimine was awarded a



Healthy City Best Planning Award at the International Conference on Healthy Cities and Urban Policy Research held in Tokyo. Hirara City is about to harvest the fruits of the program.

## Kuching – The Cat City

There is no doubt that Kuching is the most famous and popular city among our members this year. That is because Kuching is the host of the Conference & Inaugural Assembly of the Alliance.

The city of Kuching is located on Borneo Island and serves as the capital of Sarawak State, the largest state in Malaysia. Kuching means cat in the Malay language.

### Kuching in brief

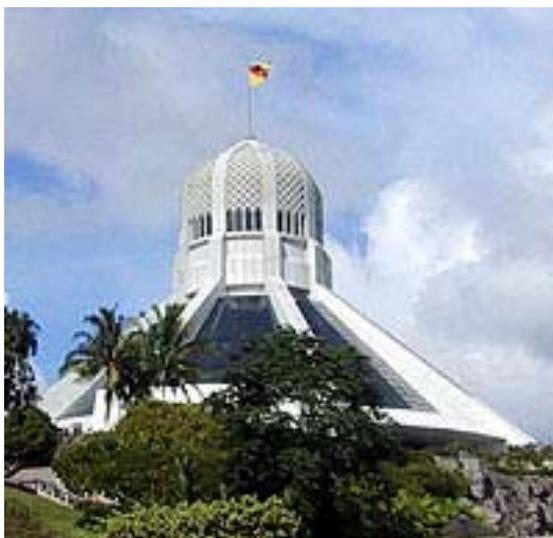
Population – about 400,000  
 Area - 431 sq kilometers  
 Climate – pleasant, average temperature: around 32 degrees Celsius  
 HC program started in - 1994

Thus Kuching city is nicknamed as “The Cat City” and cat statues greet visitors around the city. Kuching was proclaimed a City on 1st August 1988, and at the same time it was reconstituted administratively into two city councils, namely the Kuching North City Hall (DBKU) and the Council of the City of Kuching South (MBKS).

These two administrative units cover a combined area of 431 square kilometers. However over the years, as a physical entity, Kuching has developed substantially outside the administrative boundaries of the City, into the adjacent local authority areas under the jurisdiction of the Padawan Municipal Council and Samarahan District Council. Today, Kuching has grown to a City with a population of around 400,000. The present living environment of

Kuching city can be considered as pleasant even though the average daily temperature is around 32 C with an annual rainfall of around 160 inches and generally very high daily average humidity. This year, the city of Kuching commemorates the 10th anniversary of Healthy City Kuching that originally began in July 1994 when it joined the WHO’s Healthy Cities project. In the city of Kuching, the Sarawak River flows in the heart of the city

conducted. While the Sarawak River is one of the most visible examples of Healthy Cities programs, HC Kuching is extensive in terms of areas and dimensions covered. For instance, in the economic dimension, it deals with employment opportunities and welfare of workers, including the living environments of workers. The other two dimensions are physical and social. The conference is the first major



and provides a relaxing waterfront area to citizens. By strolling in the waterfront area, visitors might observe what “The Cat City” has achieved through the decade-long Healthy City Kuching. In order to create a clean river and turn the river into a recreational resource for citizens, riverside residential houses were relocated and promenades were created on river banks. At the same time, river taxis have been encouraged and study on environmental control and management of the river was

event of the Alliance. We are very grateful that there are many participants joining this conference. Through the paper presentations, networking, Inaugural General Assembly, and other related activities, participants will enjoy fruitful discussions as well as the hospitality of the people in Kuching.

## Marikina – The City in the Pink of Health

Marikina's Vision: A community whose people experience the integrity and ownership of change and development in partnership with the local government with the end in view of building good neighborhoods that make happy



families.

“Transformation” may be a keyword to describe the city of Marikina. The city itself calls its development and change as “from a hick town into a model city in the

### Marikina in brief

Population – about 427,037

Area – 2,150 ha

Climate – Dry season - Nov to Apr

Wet season - May to Oct

HC program started in – 1999

Area of Priority – Health, Education, Peace and Order and Investment

Philippines” in the area of community management. Marikina City's efforts for transformation started 1992. This means that Marikina's HC program, which was launched in 1999, is incorporated into continuous efforts by Marikina toward its vision. One of the city's innovative Healthy City programs is the “5-minute

Quick Response Time.” The program guarantees that Marikina citizens can receive emergency services such as medical and police in five minutes upon a call for assistance. This program covers any place in the city. By shortening response times, police can foil crimes, paramedics can save more lives and firefighters can prevent fires from spreading.

The program also created citizen participation in the Healthy City. Marikina citizens can monitor by themselves whether or not fire-engines and ambulances arrive at the scene in time. Another example of their Healthy City program is the rehabilitation of the Marikina River. Before the “Save the

Marikina River Project” was launched, the river was filthy and had a stench. The project completely changed the river which now provides comfort to citizens and visitors. The 220-hectare Marikina River Park features a 12-kilometer jogging/biking lane, flower beds, a floating stage and more. Marikina is called the River City.

On September 24, 2004, Marikina City garnered several awards from the concluded Search for Most Outstanding Healthy Places in Metro Manila. The city won in different key settings such as Healthy Public High School; Healthy Prison; Healthy Public Restroom for males; Healthy workplace (small scale); Healthy Market; Healthy workplace (medium); Healthy Public Elementary School.

Mayor Maria Lourdes Carlos Fernando is the Chair of the

Interim Steering Committee and has steered an AFHC tugboat to arrive in the port of Kuching.

## Suzhou

Situated in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the city of Suzhou is a famous historical and cultural city in China and renowned for its beautiful gardens designated as a world heritage site. Suzhou City is often described “Oriental Venice,” whether local people like it or not. The city of Suzhou is a major tourist destination in China. Bordering on Shanghai, China's economic powerhouse, in the east, the city of Suzhou has been enjoying economic growth. At the same time, it has been experiencing urbanization – rapid and massive one. Out of its 5.91 million in population, more than 2 million people live in its downtown area, according to the Suzhou Municipal Government.



The rapid urbanization has brought about challenges in the field of health. Such health problems range from unemployment to social security and water and food supplies. Rapid industrial development continues to bring pressures on the environment in the city in such forms as air pollution and soil contamination. The on-going urbanization makes it difficult to prevent infectious diseases such as SARS.

Suzhou's Healthy City Program started in 2001 when the Office of National Patriotic Health Campaign Committee selected Suzhou as one of pilot Healthy Cities in China. Since then, the city has taken systematic approach to plan and implement Healthy City activities.

## Suzhou in brief

Population – about 5,909,700  
(2003)

Area – 8,488 square kilometers

Climate – mild, four seasons and  
lots of rainfall

HC program started in – 2001

Area of Priority –



Healthy Environment  
Public Health  
Healthy Society  
Healthy Population

Suzhou actively engages in the healthy setting approach called the project of “healthy cell”. The approach covers more than 120 communities and 660 units, including families and volunteers.



Suzhou is enthusiastic about raising public awareness on health issues and Healthy City activities through web-site, handbooks, and lectures. Family medical kits and medical herbs were distributed to the experimented healthy families and families that most need them. The city also adopts the so-called Healthy City Index System to evaluate health status of its citizens and progress of Healthy City activities. Under the index system, a broad range of elements from social conditions to health services are considered.

The City of Suzhou contains five cities of county level – Zhangjiagang, Changshu, Taicang, Kunshan and Wujiang. Under leadership of the city governments, their community-oriented programs are designed to strike a balance between health and economic development in a sustainable manner.



the city adopted the Healthy Food

## Ulaanbaatar

The city of Ulaanbaatar is a textbook case of urbanization. The city faces rapid population growth as people migrate from rural areas into urban areas amid the country's economic transition from a planned economy to a market-oriented one. The population growth and the concentration of industries in Ulaanbaatar City create pressing needs for public services such as infrastructure, education and medical services. The urbanization also negatively impacts the city's environment as well as citizens' living conditions and health, according to the Ulaanbaatar Municipal Government.



In June 1997, the city of Ulaanbaatar introduced the “Healthy City” program in cooperation with the WHO. Among issues targeted by the city are air pollution, waste management, improvement of water supply and healthy food.

As part of the Healthy City program,

Market program and carries out various activities, including improving working conditions for market workers and raising awareness on health among market traders. The city decided to adopt the Healthy Food Market program because, out of patients suffering from communicable diseases, 24% of them were infected through food items. Ulaanbaatar City offers health training to citizens and health professionals under the “Healthy Sub-district” program. Those who received training in this program participated in surveys on pollution and public illness as volunteers. The city also carries out a smokeless stove project in “ger” areas. The project aims to reduce smoke from coal and firewood down to a norm and increase fuel efficiency.

As the capital city of Mongolia,



Ulaanbaatar Healthy City's approach is providing a model for cities in Mongolia and beyond.

## Ulaanbaatar in brief

Population – 854,300

Area – 470,000 ha

Climate – average temperature in winter: - 19 degrees Celsius

HC program started in – 1997

Events since October 2003

Oct. 2003

The First Organizational Meeting of the Alliance for Healthy Cities, **Manila**, Philippines, 17 Oct. 2003

Consultation on a Regional Network for Healthy Cities, **Manila**, Philippines, 15-17 Oct. 2003

2003 International Healthy Cities Conference, **Belfast**, UK, 19-22 Oct. 2003

Healthy Cities International Exchange Programme, **Promotion Committee for Healthy Cities-Changwon**, 5-10 Oct. 2003

Opening of Public Health Leaders' Course Program 2003, **Graduate School of Tokyo Medical and Dental University**, Japan.  
Studies for PhD in relation to healthy cities, urban health policy, and other public health topics.

Dec. 2003

**Marikina** was awarded Most Healthy Market in the Philippines by Department of Health Philippines, WHO, 2003

Pilot for the project Healthy Tourist Park in the **Philippines**: Featuring 220 kilometer Marikina River Park, **Marikina** Botanical Project, **San Fernando, La Union**

Establishment of the Senior Citizen Healthy Lifestyle Center, **Marikina** Free specialty and diagnostic clinic as well as free prosthesis services for elderly.

Feb. 2004

Ground Water Summit, **Hirara**, Japan

Healthy 10, 000 Steps Activity, **Tseung Kwan O (TKO)**, Hong Kong, China

Apr. 2004

World Health Day 2004: 'road safety', 7 April 2004

The 18<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Health Promotion & Health Education, **Melbourne**, Australia, 26-30 Apr. 2004

May 2004

National Seminar on Healthy Cities, **Shanghai**, China, 10-12 May 2004  
Participants were more than 30 officials and scholars from Ministry of Health, 12 provincial health departments, and 22 health departments at city level and related Universities.

June 2004

Declaration of the Healthy City Policy, **Macao SAR**, China, 13 June 2004

Aug. 2004

Convention for the Owariasahi Charter for a Healthy City, **Owariasahi**, Japan, 1 Aug. 2004  
The city declared far and wide that the city would make efforts with its citizens to make Owariasahi a healthy city by international standards through collaboration and discussions with its citizens.

National Seminar on Healthy Cities, **Haikou**, Hainan Province, China, 8-10 Aug. 2004

Participants were more than 30 officials and scholars from Ministry of Health, 8 provincial health departments, and 10 health departments at city level and related research Unit.

The Philippine Healthy Cities Network was invited to the General Meeting of the League of City Mayor in the Philippines (LCP). **Philippines**, August 2004

Mayor MC Fernando invited all mayors to join the AFHC and to attend the Assembly in Kuching.

Sept. 2004

International Seminar Commemorative of Affiliation with the Alliance of Healthy Cities, **Changwon**, Republic of Korea, 16 Sept. 2004

Healthy Cities and Communities Short Course, **Department of Public Health, Flinders University**, Australia, 20-24 Sept. 2004

Marikina Healthy City Projects garnered awards for Healthy City Key Settings from the Center for Health Development (DOH-Metro Manila). **Manila**, Philippines, 24 Sept. 2004

Oct. 2004

1st Conference and General Assembly of the Alliance for Healthy Cities, **Kuching**, Malaysia, 12-14 Oct. 2004

Opening of Public Health Leaders' Course Program 2004, **Graduate School of Tokyo Medical and Dental University**, Japan.

The Third International Conference on Urban Health, **Boston**, USA, 20-22 Oct. 2004

Nov. 2004

Declaration Ceremony on Health City **Ichikawa**, Japan, 3 Nov. 2004  
The city celebrates the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city's incorporation and announces a Healthy City Declaration.

Healthy City Week and Symposium, **Ichikawa**, Japan, 14-21 Nov. 2004  
A week-long information sharing event with community groups.

National Workshop on Expansion of Healthy Cities initiatives, **Ulaanbaatar**, Mongolia, Nov. 2004  
Introduction of the activities of the Alliance, recommendations from October Kuching forum will be important issues in the agenda of the workshop.

Newsletter of The Alliance for Healthy Cities

*Editor-in-Chief:* Keiko Nakamura, MD, PhD  
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Photos courtesy of Hirara City, Kuching City, Marikina City, The City of Suzhou, Ulaanbaatar City, Health Promotion/International Health, Tokyo Medical and Dental University, and World Health Organization Western Pacific Regional Office

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