



The Alliance for Healthy Cities

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Press Release

Conference of Global Initiative on Urban Public Health Commenced

October 28, 2006 (Suzhou, China) --- Hon. Yan Li, Mayor of the City of Suzhou, declared the opening of the Second General Assembly and Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities this morning. This conference, occurring once every two years, is for members of an organization called the Alliance for Healthy Cities to share the progress that member cities have made in improving health and quality of life, identify new challenges cities face, and develop good models of plan, implementation, and evaluation of health-centered comprehensive programs in cities.

The theme of the conference is "Healthy Cities in a Globalizing World". The members of the Alliance for Healthy Cities are committed to a new form of international mutual collaboration. They are concerned with public health issues that face their cities and with global issues in public health.

The meeting in Suzhou is historic since it is the first time such a large number of city mayors have gathered to address their priority issues of improving quality of life of urban residents, witnessing progress in urban public health, and sharing their commitment towards healthier cities. Forty-one mayors from 20 countries are meeting at the conference to share their commitment to take further action to strengthen local initiatives for health and quality of life of people.

The Healthy Cities approach was initiated by the World Health Organization to cope with the adverse effects of urban environments upon health. The WHO promotes the approach world wide.

The situations cities face are diverse and change rapidly due to urbanization's rapid pace. There is diversity in the development, resources, and socio-cultural / political environments of cities, so it is very important that evidence of successes in actual cases is shared to expand global wisdom on how cities can make better changes.

This conference would never have happened without Suzhou City's commitment to its citizens and its concern for the health of the people in the world. Suzhou's leadership in making various "settings" programs (programs suited for a local context) as well as its foresight of economic developments in the Suzhou area are actualizing good models of healthy cities and healthy settings. Much progress in public health has started from similar, significant first steps. Good examples are the Mayors Summit in Miyakojima city, Japan, in 2002, which gathered five mayors from different countries in the Asia Pacific. Another example is Wonju City, Korea which places "capacity building" (improvement of skills) of all sectors of the government as one of its key approaches to accelerate the evaluation, planning, and implementation of local initiatives.

For further information please contact to:

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