UNDCP-supported drug abuse control programme in Sri Lanka which will, after successful completion of the first two phases, now enter the third phase.

With WHO support, several countries have developed and are implementing national mental health programmes (NMHP) aimed at increasing coverage by apportioning tasks of treatment and care to the various levels of primary health care. Through this integrated approach, treatment coverage of mental diseases and epilepsy has increased steadily in the countries of the Region.

Promotion of Environmental Health

Community water supply and sanitation continued to be the areas of main thrust in WHO's environmental health programme. The increasing complexity of environmental issues in countries of the Region has resulted in greater concern with environmental health problems and their effects on human health and development.

To implement the Global Strategy for Health and Environment adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1993, the Regional Office has developed a strategic plan for health and environment. This plan provides the framework for WHO's collaborative activities with Member Countries to address health-and-environment issues. It includes comprehensive approaches to environmental health programming directed towards four broad priority areas: urban environmental health management; water supply, sanitation and hygiene (including food safety) in rural areas; health and environmental aspects of water resources, and chemical safety. In an effort to incorporate health-and-environment considerations in national plans for sustainable development, WHO initiated activities in Nepal and Sri Lanka for the inclusion of comprehensive environmental health programmes.
The Organization continued its support to training and other local activities for the water supply and sanitation sector in Bangladesh. A conference of chief engineers and a national seminar on the impact of water supply and sanitation were organized in India. Studies of water supply and sanitary protection as well as community involvement in water supply activities were completed in Indonesia. Support was provided to the national water supply and sanitation committee in Nepal and to the establishment of a sector information centre and the training of engineers in Sri Lanka. National consultants were engaged to review community management of solid wastes in Bangladesh and to train staff in information management in Sri Lanka. In India, WHO supported the production of a video film on solid waste management, a study of women’s involvement in low-cost sanitation programmes, and the development of human resources to conduct national environmental epidemiology studies of critically polluted areas.

Senior officers from Bangladesh attended a rainwater harvesting conference in Kenya while Indian officials participated in a water and environmental management conference in the United Kingdom and a meeting on desalination and water treatment in Japan. Study tours of water supply programmes in the Region were organized for sector staff from India, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Senior officials from Maldives also attended diploma courses in the United Kingdom on primary health care education and development and on development financing. In an effort to increase awareness of insanitary practices in the use of excreta, wastewater and nightsoil in agriculture and aquaculture, an informal regional workshop was held in the Regional Office in May 1994 with the support of UNEP and FAO. The water supply and sanitation programmes in the countries were also provided with technical literature, computers and software as well as office equipment.

In an effort to increase awareness of the environmental problems in cities, a review of practices in the Region relating to municipal solid waste collection, storage and transport was carried out in India with WHO support. A “Healthy City” project was initiated in Chittagong (Bangladesh), where a series of community-based workshops was supported by WHO and the first “City Health Plan” in this region was produced. Similar “Healthy City” activities have started in Nepal and Thailand.
Health Risk Assessment of Toxic Chemicals

With the widespread use of chemicals in agriculture as well as by industries and commerce in Member Countries, there is concern about the public health hazards and the risks posed by chemicals. WHO's collaboration focused on supporting the development and strengthening of national infrastructure and capabilities for dealing with health risks from chemicals, and on the prevention and treatment of chemical poisonings. In India and Indonesia, WHO-supported activities focused on the establishment of poison control centre networks and on assessment of the health risks from chemicals. In Mongolia, training in toxicological surveillance methods was provided to health staff and, in Myanmar, an intersectoral training course on the safe use of pesticides was conducted. In DPR Korea, support was provided for developing the national reference laboratory's capability to analyse pesticides and other toxic chemicals.

Control of Environmental Health Hazards

Most countries in the Region are developing their infrastructures to address environmental pollution caused by domestic, agricultural and industrial activities. In Bangladesh and Nepal, a review of legislation and institutional framework for the control of toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes was completed and priority areas of action identified. Consultancy services were provided to the Research Institute of Health in DPR Korea for strengthening the national environmental pollution monitoring network. In Nepal and Sri Lanka, WHO assisted in developing national air and industrial water pollution monitoring and assessment capabilities while, in Indonesia, noise pollution control activities were supported. Assistance was extended to Thailand in organizing seminars and workshops on environmental health hazards.

With support from WHO, studies were conducted in Sri Lanka on the treatment of wastewater from industrial and tourist areas. In Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, training was organized for national staff in such areas as environmental engineering, environmental epidemiology, environmental assessment and pollution control. In Indonesia, WHO is providing technical assistance to the UNDP-funded project on development of a national environmental health programme.

Food Safety

In view of the high incidence of diarrhoeal and other foodborne diseases, due largely to unhygienic behaviour and unsafe food, WHO support in this area has focused on developing national food safety programmes through institutional strengthening and...
human resources development. In Bangladesh and Nepal, technical assistance was provided for situational reviews and plans were prepared for the development of national food safety programmes. Seminars were conducted in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Thailand to address such issues as safe food handling, consumer protection, analytical quality assurance of food testing laboratories and the use of hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) methods. Laboratory equipment was supplied to State food control agencies in India. In Bangladesh and Nepal, studies on street-vended and weaning food were completed. The contamination of food by pesticides and other chemicals was the subject of studies conducted in India and Thailand. Food quality control, and assessment of risk factors and veterinary drug residues in food were also studied in Thailand. In Sri Lanka, consultancy services on food analysis and quality control were provided to the UNDP-funded food safety development project prepared with WHO assistance.

Diagnostic, Therapeutic and Rehabilitative Technology

The intercountry project to strengthen health laboratories for the effective delivery of primary health care in Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Mongolia and Myanmar was completed during the year. A document entitled 'Strengthening of Health Laboratories in Support of Primary Health Care', with guidelines on: (a) Policy for a network of health laboratory services; (b) Appropriate technology for health laboratory services with special reference to primary health care; and (c) Practice of quality assurance in laboratory medicine in developing countries, was prepared and copies have been sent to the countries of the Region.

Highlights of the Work of WHO in SEA