

## ***Supplementary Appendix B: Draft Call for Action from the International Ecohealth Forum, Merida, 2008***

### CALL FOR ACTION

### DRAFT

THE ORIGINS OF THIS CALL FOR ACTION: The International EcoHealth Forum 2008 brought together researchers, policy-makers and civil society representatives to share experiences, evidence and theories at the intersection of ecology and health, locally, regionally and globally. The goal of the Forum was to identify options for the sustainability of ecosystems and human health.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CALL FOR ACTION is to rally EcoHealth Forum 2008 participants and others to strive for changes in research, practice and policy that will better protect both ecosystem and human health, now and for generations to come.

Reference: Soskolne CL, Westra L. "Public Health in the Face of Global Ecological and Climate Change". Chapter 13, pp. 247-63. In: Democracy, Ecological Integrity and International Law [Editors: J. Ronald Engel, Laura Westra and Klaus Bosselmann]. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1767-7; ISBN (10): 1-4438-1767-8. Please note that the DRAFT Call for Action from Merida appears as an Appendix pp. 261-3.

TO THOSE DEDICATED TO RECONNECTING HUMANS TO THE ECOSYSTEMS OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART AND THEREBY TO RESTORING AND MAINTAINING THE HEALTH OF ALL LIFE FORMS

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Chair of Synthesis Plenary Session, International EcoHealth Forum 2008, Mérida, Mexico, December 1 – 5, 2008

[www.ecohealth2008.org](http://www.ecohealth2008.org)

### CALL FOR ACTION

Overwhelmingly, interdisciplinary evidence from the International EcoHealth Forum 2008 was compelling on the need for action to avert the rapid rate at which ecological decline is occurring around the world. Improved and sustained human health depends on healthier ecosystems and on sustainable ways of living. Indeed, in order to achieve health as a sustainable state of self-regulating harmony between humans and their physical, biological and social environments that enables them to co-exist indefinitely, urgent action is needed. We – responsible and concerned professionals, practitioners and civil society representatives – can and must help society, wherever in the world we live, to change course, from one of ecosystem destruction, to one of global sustainability ☐ locally, regionally and globally. We, therefore, promote this CALL FOR ACTION by calling on our professional organizations, and on civil society and governments, to act with urgency on the following 14 points from our International EcoHealth Forum 2008:

1. We must work to engage with both community-based grassroots efforts and in the formulation of national, international and private-sector policies to move the world onto a sustainable path to secure a healthy future. Existing national laws and international agreements favouring sustainability and health must be upheld and enforced.
2. We must work to reconnect humans to the natural ecosystems of which we are a part and to which our futures are inextricably linked. Where existing research supports action, we encourage action; where more research is needed to reduce uncertainty and/or to eliminate gaps in knowledge, more high quality research should be undertaken.
3. We must adjust our lifestyles and expectations, both individually and collectively, to transform current paradigms destined to collapse to sustainable ways of life. All around the world there is a need to recognize the importance of ecosystem sustainability for human health and well-being.
4. Efforts to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goals must be increased if the goals are to be met.
5. Our approach to research and practice must integrate the social and environmental dimensions of health with ecosystems, including the elimination of social inequalities and health disparities, regionally and globally.
6. We must expand awareness across generations, disciplines and sectors about the importance of shared values and ethics, foundational to a path of sustainability.
7. We must work to inform and influence policy at the highest levels. We do so by engaging with the actors ultimately able to make changes in policy and practice based on the evidence, be they in government, in the private sector, or in the community.
8. We must work to show that people need to better manage themselves rather than work to manage ecosystems.
9. We must work together and more effectively with local knowledge sources and a broad range of other stakeholders in adopting integrated, transdisciplinary approaches to face the complex problems of today.
10. Researchers among us must win the community's trust if they are to remain relevant and have lasting impact.

11. We must work to reduce fragmentation in Governance.
12. We must work to establish stronger inter-sectoral public health policies that include those communities traditionally marginalised or excluded from decision-making processes.
13. Delegates at future EcoHealth conferences must continue to strive to ensure the participation of a broad range of stakeholders; from funders and employers, to affected communities, indigenous peoples, policy-makers, and international development agencies, and from NGOs to business interests.
14. We respect those among us who have worked for years and even decades to bring attention to our collective ecological plight. It is on their shoulders that we stand today. We recognize the forces that have undermined their efforts and brought us to the current state of ecological decline. We therefore commit to joining with their legacy to protect the global public health interest above any other narrow short-term interests.