



The 2007 Walter F. Snyder Award

For achievement in attaining environmental quality

Presented to

Dr. Wilfried Kreisel

Dr. Wilfried Kreisel is being honored for an exemplary 25-year career of achievement with the World Health Organization (WHO). His devotion, passion and wisdom have been the driving force that has left an indelible mark on the advancement of environmental health issues at the national, regional and international levels.

After receiving a doctorate degree in natural sciences from the University in Heidelberg, Germany, and researching effects of social and environmental determinants of health as a research fellow at the University of Dortmund, Germany, Dr. Kreisel embarked on a path of achievement at WHO in 1977. He served as Adviser for Environmental Health in the Republic of Korea, which was coping with the deterioration of environmental quality in the wake of industrialization. The six years he dedicated to the Republic were spent improving environmental health in terms of legislative, regulatory, institutional and scientific programs. With respect to international work, these were his formative years that established the trajectory of the rest of his career. Reflecting on years past, Dr. Kreisel now formulates the essence of the enriching environmental health experience in Korea as "the apprenticeship and the consecration for higher duties."

Continuing abroad, he led critical advisory functions in Malaysia at the WHO Western Pacific Regional Centre for the Promotion of Environmental Planning and Applied Studies (PEPAS), and subsequently in the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines. After spending nearly a decade in the Western Pacific region, he was assigned to WHO headquarters in Geneva, where he became the successor to the then Director of the Division of Environment Health, Bernd Dieterich. In this capacity, Dr. Kreisel was responsible for planning, developing and

implementing global policies and programmes in environmental health, including water supply and sanitation, air quality management, chemical safety and radiation protection.

These were challenging times full of new opportunities. The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development had been published in 1987, and presented at the World Health Assembly in 1988 stating that ultimately, the entire report was about health. This evolved to include preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

It was in this context that Dr. Kreisel made one his most outstanding contributions during his long and distinguished environmental health career with WHO: the formulation of a completely new Health and Environment Strategy for the WHO, which incorporated the revolutionary thinking on sustainable development that emerged from UNCED. His full commitment to the preparation of that Conference ensured that human health was addressed in a special chapter of Agenda 21 and in the preamble of the Rio Declaration. This anchored the key environmental health issues in ensuing actions for sustainable development, both nationally and internationally.

The WHO Strategy on Health and Environment set the scene for National Environmental Health Action Plans, which are still a major spearhead for renewed environmental health policies and programmes in many of the WHO Member States. By creating the Health and Environment framework, Dr. Kreisel effectively orchestrated a paradigm shift away from traditional, operations-oriented thinking in environmental health related to the physical environment towards a stronger regulatory emphasis of EH programmes that cut across

all public sectors and to ultimately enlist other sectors to contribute to health. Thus, environmental health became a strategic issue on the international development agenda, laying the foundation for such innovative developments as health impact assessments of development projects and the application of the healthy settings approach that seeks local solutions for local problems. Until this day, the Health and Environment Strategy continues to stand as one of the main pillars of WHO's global programme.

"For me, the follow-up to UNCED was the apotheosis of the renewed interest in environmental health, in a modern framework, that started to be constructed following the appearance of the WCED report," says Kreisel now.

Dr. Kreisel has a clear understanding of the limitations of environmental health programmes in the confines of the health sector, which in most developing countries in particular is dominated by medical doctors. His vigilance opened up the concept of partnerships long before it became more widely popular. He strengthened ties with other UN agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). He presented these collaborations at the UN level as an example for Member States to follow within their national government structures to establish a framework for the support of environmental health. These same principles strengthened key linkages within WHO as well - particularly with the health promotion community.

He considers environmental health and health promotion as two sides of the same coin and wants to develop the synergies between them. Finally, he also managed to give environmental health a higher profile with the bilateral donor agencies and the multilateral development banks. In 1998, Dr. Kreisel took the position of the Director-General's representative with the European Union as an active promoter of EH issues in the context of international development.

Now formally retired from the WHO, Dr. Kreisel maintains a strong bond with the WHO and the Department of Public Health and Environment under its current Director, Dr. Maria Neira, who states, "Dr. Kreisel will remain a key figure in the history of WHO's work in the area of health and the environment. Even today, the Health and Environment Strategy continues to stand as one of the main pillars of WHO's global programme."

Nelson Fabian, Executive Director of NEHA noted that "it is rare that one gets an opportunity to see a career that is so extensive, so accomplished and so impressive on the world stage. What an honor for us to even consider him for the prestigious Snyder Award."

"Dr. Kreisel is a long time friend of NEHA. This year will mark the second time that he has given the keynote address at the NEHA AEC (the first time being in Seattle in 1989). NEHA is particularly excited with this year's keynote inasmuch as it will give conference attendees the opportunity to hear essentially the same presentation that was recently made at the Technical Briefing to the World Assembly of WHO - which is the 193 nation member policy making body of that organization," added Nelson Fabian.

"Dr. Kreisel's pioneering principles of partnership are consistent with the model for NSF's development and ultimately our organization's work as a WHO Collaborating Centre," said NSF International President and CEO Kevan P. Lawlor. "For his vision and achievements in public health, he is a most deserving selection as the 2007 recipient of the Snyder Award."

Past Recipients of the Walter F. Snyder Award

1971 Callis A. Atkins	1985 William G. Walter	1993 Amer El-Ahraf
1972 Ralph C. Pickard	1986 Albert H. Brunwasser	1994 Nelson E. Fabian
1973 William A. Broadway	1987 George A. Kupfer	1995 Leonard F. Rice
1974 James J. Jump	1988 Mark D. Hollis	1996 Robert M. Brown
1975 Charles L. Senn	1989 Boyd T. Marsh	1997 J. Roy Hickman
1977 Charles C. Johnson, Jr.	1990 Harvey F. Collins	1998 Chris J. Wiant
1978 Larry J. Gordon	1991 Trenton G. Davis	1999 Khalil H. Nancy
1979 John G. Todd	1992 Robert Galvan	2000 Friedrich K. Kaeferstain
1980 Ray B. Watts		2001 Robert W. Powitz
1981 Charles H. Gillham		2002 Gayle J. Smith
1982 Emil T. Chanlett		2004 Peter D. Thornton
1983 John R. Bagby, Jr.		2005 John B. Conway
1984 William Nix Anderson		2006 Arthur L. Banks

