

International Traditional Healers Exchange & Conference on Promotion of “Traditional Medicine for Sustainable Healthcare”

**8th to 20th November 2009
Bangalore, India**

Traditional medicine (TM) plays an important role in meeting demands of primary health care in many developing countries and thus occupies a key space in contemporary community health education. TM is becoming increasingly popular in many developed countries as well and functions under the title of “complementary” or “alternative” medicine. In a recent World Health Organisation (WHO) Congress in Beijing (November 2008), WHO called on member countries:

- To integrate traditional medicine into their national health systems
- To share experience and information related to national policy, regulation, research, education and practice.
- To establish systems for the qualification, accreditation or licensing of TM practitioners and upgrade their knowledge and skills based on national requirements.

In this backdrop, an **International Healers Exchange and Conference on Traditional Medicine and Sustainable Healthcare** is being held in Bangalore, India from 8th to 20th November 2009.

Around 50 healers from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Americas are expected to participate in the exchange program. Healers will visit various centers of excellence in traditional medicine in India from 8th to 17th of November. The conference (19th and 20th Nov) will include around 100 participants including other interested stakeholders such as academicians, researchers, NGOs and policy makers apart from healers.

Objectives

- To have an intercultural exchange between folk healers practicing traditional medicine from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and specifically to learn from the Indian experience of community knowledge in folk healing traditions in comparison with folk healing traditions from other continents.
- To deliberate on epistemological aspects with respect to knowledge preservation, transmission, and enhancement according to the highest contextual standards of the tradition. This will include intercultural challenges in relation to a modern globalized context.
- To compare government recognition of folk healers from various countries, to recommend strategies for government recognition of folk healers (as a part of policy dialogue strategies in Compas and Community Knowledge Service Networks), and to formulate plans to create national level bodies for systematic approach to standardized training, professional development and accreditation of folk healers.

- To assess how natural resource conservation strategies, i.e. medicinal plants that are linked to folk healing practices can be supported including bio-prospecting and IPR related issues of folk knowledge in healthcare.
- To assess how folk healers and their practices can contribute to the public health programs in terms of management of common ailments, health education and management of major conditions for which medicines are not available or not accessible and to specifically deliberate on how traditional medicine could contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The conference is being jointly organized and co-sponsored by a group of organizations including the UNDP Equator Initiative (www.equatorinitiative.org); ETC-COMPAS (www.compasnet.org); FRLHT (www.frlht.org); Ecoagriculture Partners (www.ecoagriculturepartners.org); the Institute of Advanced Studies; and United Nations University (www.ias-unu.org); with partial financial support from the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy of the Government of India, New Delhi.

For more information, please contact:

- G. Hariramamurthi - g.hari@frlht.org
- Wim Hiemstra - w.hiemstra@etcnl.nl