

Child Health and Nutrition Research (CHNR) in Asia and the Pacific assesses research priorities and research institutions

The Child Health and Nutrition Research (CHNR) in Asia and the Pacific is a component of the new CHNR Initiative of the Global Forum for Health Research. It aims to use available data and resources to describe the progress that has been made in child health and nutrition status and how research has contributed to this condition. Research gaps and potential strategies to address them will also be undertaken. This work, one of the collaborations between INCLEN and the GFHR, is also being done in Africa and Latin America (details in the July 2002 issue of the *INCLEN News*).

Participating countries were selected based on the UNDP Human Development Index and the WHO Health Systems Performance. China, India, Indonesia and the Philippines were selected to provide case studies that would illustrate how research priorities are selected and addressed. In addition, surveys will be done on sentinel conditions in these countries. This will provide an initial database for regional institutions and actors in CHNR. The surveys will also be done in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Papua New Guinea.

Dr. Pilar Ramos-Jimenez presented a preliminary report at the GFHR Forum 6 in Arusha, Tanzania in November 2002. The literature review shows that most of the available information about the CHN status has been collected by multilateral agencies, the UN, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and other donor groups. The data confirm wide disparities within the region in terms of child health and nutrition status and of the other sectors that influence or interact with health. Inequitable distribution of resources has had unfavorable effects on the population's health and nutritional status. The desired targets to improve the health and nutritional status of children indicated in the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit for Children have yet to be met, especially in many developing Asia-Pacific countries. A regional website is being developed to track project progress and provide access to the database. Consultation and comparison across the region will be undertaken to assess current regional capacity to conduct CHNR and to identify the challenges for the next decade.

Dr. Cecilia Santos-Acuin, project coordinator, works with the following co-investigators and country coordinators: Dr. Pilar Ramos-Jimenez - Philippines; Dr. Shally Awasthi and Dr. Hadi Pratomo - India; Dr. Wang Yi - China; Dr. Tudor Silva - Sri Lanka; Dr. David Sack - Bangladesh; Dr. B. B. Boupha - Lao PDR; and Dr. Ruth Starke - Papua New Guinea. Support for the project comes from the Global Forum for Health Research.