

## A view from the Secretariat

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Dear PHM Friends,

Greetings from People's Health Movement Global Secretariat!

We are starting this communication initiative from the secretariat to share with all of you a 'grand stand' view of the growing People's Health Movement all over the world. As the hub of the PHM wheel, which has spokes reaching to all the country and regional circles, issue circles and PHM partners all over the world, we receive daily through email, post, and visitors and other means of communication a very special view of the PHM activities all over the world. We are starting this new column in the PHM Exchange with an overview of July 2004.

This is not a comprehensive report. It is just a communication of some highlights since nowadays, there are too many to include. We hope it inspires you to join, support and do likewise. Please keep the secretariat informed of any PHM related activity that you or others initiate. And thanks to those all over the world, whose commitment has inspired this communication.

Best wishes from the PHM Secretariat Team

PHM Global Secretariat Team

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July 2004 has been a significant month for the People's Health Movement. 44 months beyond the first People's Health Assembly at GK Savar, Bangladesh (December 2000), the movement is beginning to evolve into a multi-dimensional initiative at various levels - local, national, regional and international level. Small and not so small events and processes are taking place all over the world indicating that the PHM has come to stay and is growing.

### Thailand

The People's Charter for HIV / AIDS bringing together the voices and concerns of a large number of PHM members and people living with or tackling the HIV / AIDS epidemic was released at the end of the XV International AIDS Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004. The Charter had been finalized at a special discussion at a satellite symposium attended by delegates and AIDS activists from many parts of the world and PHM activists from Ecuador, Germany, India, Iran, Philippines, Palestine, Thailand, USA, UK, Zimbabwe etc., An Asian People's Alliance for Combating HIV & AIDS (**APACHA**) was formed to take this activity further. ([hiv@phmovement.org](mailto:hiv@phmovement.org))

### India

The first Regional Public Hearing on the Denials of Right to Health Care was held in Bhopal, facilitated by Jana Swasthya Abhiyan (PHM India) in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission. 50 documented cases of denial were presented. This was part of the Right to Health Care campaign, a major initiative launched by PHM India in 2004. (for more details visit [www.phmovement.org/india](http://www.phmovement.org/india) under section 'Campaign')

### Pakistan

PHM Circle in Pakistan was reinvigorated and launched through a week's tour of Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore by the PHM Global Coordinator and the PHM India National Convener. A series of meetings and dialogue were held with civil society, academics and policy makers, media

and the community. The People's Health Charter translated into Urdu and Sindhi were distributed (for more details visit [www.thenetwork.org.pk/phm.htm](http://www.thenetwork.org.pk/phm.htm)).

## USA

The US Health Care system was put on trial at the Boston Social Forum held in July. PHM joined a host of organizations, who organized the health track of the forum on the Theme 'Making Health a Human Right'. Dr. Balasubramanian (Sri Lanka), a key PHM Steering group member was on the International Jury representing PHM. The workshop topics included Racial and Ethnic inequities; Health care workers' struggle; Immigrant access to health care; Global Trade – Democracy and Health; Pharmaceutical Apartheid in the African AIDS programs; Liberation Medicine; Health consequences of WTO, among others. Significantly the flyer of the Health Track mentioned that it was based on the preamble to the People's Charter "Achieving optimal Health for All means that powerful interests have to be challenged that corporate globalization has to be opposed and that political and economical priorities have to be drastically changed. [For more details write to Denise Zwahlen of Doctors for Global Health, PHM at [denisezwahlen@yahoo.com](mailto:denisezwahlen@yahoo.com) and visit [www.bostonsocialforum.org](http://www.bostonsocialforum.org)].

## Latin America

It has become the focus of a lot of PHM Global initiatives in the year to come. Ecuador as host of the Second People's Health Assembly in July 2005, will host the first International PHA – II Advisory committee meeting to start the detailed planning process in September 2004.

In Mexico City in November 2004, PHM has been invited to facilitate a special dialogue on role of Civil Society on Health Research linked to the next Global Forum for Health Research Forum 8 (contact: David Sanders at [lmartin@uwc.ac.za](mailto:lmartin@uwc.ac.za))

In January 2005, the next **International Health Forum in Defense of People's Health** will take place at Porto Alegre, Brazil, before the World Social Forum (contact Armando - [armandon@portoweb.com.br](mailto:armandon@portoweb.com.br))

In July 2005, **the second People's Health Assembly** will be hosted by the National Front for the Health of the People (Frente Nacional Por la salud de los Pueblos) in collaboration with fraternal networks and organizations. The first announcement for this has been made and the same can be accessed on our website at the following weblink <http://www.phmovement.org/pha-II>. You could write to the PHA-II secretariat at [phaII@phmovement.org](mailto:phaII@phmovement.org)

## Evaluation of the People's Health Movement

A report entitled '**Keeping the promise: The People's response to Health For All**' (arising out of the evaluation of the process that led to the People's Health Assembly 2000 and the development of the PHM in the last four years) has identified learning experiences and challenges for this movement.

Some of the highlights of the report are:

*"Now in mid 2004, it is safe to begin to describe PHM as a young, strong and growing movement, one that is drawing on a wealth of wisdom, knowledge and experience from around the world and one that offers hope that social change to improve people's health can be more of a reality"*

*“There is now increasing dialogue and communication among key movement focal points. Externally, there is a great visibility of the PHM in some arenas and fora”.*

*“There is more clarity and transparency on how activities are funded, how funds are being shared and made to work more effectively is combination and with complementarity”.*

*“There has been some enhanced cooperation. Links that are evolving with the World Social Forum, the strengthened connections with WHO and PAHO, the development of working relationships with the Global Equity Gauge and Medact around a global health watch process are simply a few of the most visible positive trends.”*

*“Enabling dialogue and discussion in a number of forums is increasing, but there is scope for more. The Secretariat is demonstrating leadership in this, as are some national groups. The Alma Ata-related meetings throughout 2003 are good examples.”*

*“Communication strategies and practices – both internal and external – are improving. Again the Secretariat is demonstrating leadership, but the response of many participants in the movement to share information is becoming more evident.”*

*“Enhanced cooperation is important so that the PHM is visibly seen as a pro-active, inclusive and welcoming movement and is a platform that enables people to participate, without them having to convert to a particular belief, ideology or approach”.*

*“Above all, the pictures they drew were a celebration of diversity and it is that diversity that is the main strength of the PHM. Sustaining and maintaining a diverse, flexible and effective movement that serves as a platform for social change is the challenge that now faces the PHM”.*

Best wishes

The PHM Secretariat Team