



The exposures are never to single metals and due considerations has to be given to the presence and absence of other metals which act synergistically or have protective influence. Areas for further research include the effect of arsenic on children, reproductive health outcomes and food safety of arsenic contaminated foods. The best way forward could be to start networking through a web-based portal for the exchange and dissemination of information on norms, guidelines, modules and tools. The WHO website can be used for this.

7. Reports of Group Discussions

All four working groups presented the results of their discussions in the shape of action plans. Details are given in Annex 5.

At the plenary, the participants discussed overlapping issues such as the urgent need for:

- identification of preventive approaches;
- implementation of risk assessment methods;
- creating more efficient links between research and policy for health;
- aiming priority health interventions at the most vulnerable groups (children, women, workers);
- ensuring higher standards of validation and quality control of laboratories;
- engaging industry to develop cost-effective alternatives;
- stronger role and involvement of public interest NGOs and academia;
- calling for a global regulatory instrument for toxic metals;
- networking at national, regional and global levels, and
- a stronger commitment from WHO.

The organizers thanked all presenters and participant alike. The workshop was closed thereafter.

