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EHSC 4400 – Environmental Issues of the Developing World

Response to “Meeting Report: Development of Environmental Health Indicators in Brazil and Other Countries in the Americas” by: *Fernando F. Carneiro,1 Mara Lúcia C. Oliveira,2 Guilherme F. Netto,1 Luis A.C. Galvão,3 Jacira A. Cancio,2,4 Estela M. Bonini,1 Carlos F. Corvalan,5 and the Participants in the International Symposium on the Development of Indicators for Environmental Health Integrated Management*

The Ministry of Health in Brazil continually monitors the environmental health concerns of the country and surrounding countries. The article I read highlighted a yearly meeting report which works to tackle the most currently pressing issues the country is facing. This meeting focused on 3 different environmental health organizations and the work they are doing in their respective regions of Brazil, Cuba, and Canada. The organizations were working to figure out ways they can be more collaborative to create sustainable solutions in their efforts to determine which environmental health indicators are most pressing.

The organizations came up with the following solutions to increase collaboration through a clear set of health indicators. The indicators should be interdisciplinary and participatory which will focus not only on environmental health, but also economic and social concerns. They should be built based on priorities and listening to the communities at hand. Determining their needs through community questioning to create an intersectional approach toward integrated management. Lastly, the participation of government decision makers in determining key indicators is essential for the future management of the environmental health concerns. Through these key steps, the three participating organizations have clearer lines to problem solving. The key topics that this conversation was focused around are water in Brazil, healthy residences in Cuba, and ultraviolet radiation in Canada.

While this article doesn't directly highlight a specific environmental health issue in Latin America, it does highlight the steps to policy change and action. As a student studying environmental economics, policy change really interests me. I have never taken an environmental health science class, so it has been interesting talking about these health concerns, but I have always wondered how the problems are actually solved. I worry that researchers go into the towns and identify the concerns without actually talking to the community members. This article was reassuring in that it is clear that these concerned organizations work to take an

intersectional and comprehensive approach to reassure the longevity of the projects they are working on. Sustainable solutions are key in solving environmental health concerns.

On the other hand of policy implementation, the indicators that were outlined for Brazil specifically have to do with water quality. These indicators are per capita consumption, water bacteriologic quality, residual chlorine, water supply services coverage, and water supply regularity. These are in the indicators that will hopefully highlight an area of concern so policy makers and researchers can create a sustainable solution. I hadn't put much thought in how problems were indicated as *problems* and this article clearly outlined that process. The comprehensive detail and care that goes into decision making ensures the safety and security of all communities involved and I appreciate that.