



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION BELFAST CONFERENCE SETS AGENDA FOR HEALTHY CITIES

1800hrs, 4th October, Belfast

More than 500 delegates from 200 cities gathered in Belfast this week and mapped out the guiding principles of the future work of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network. The mayors and political leaders of cities in the European Region of the WHO European Region agreed the 'Belfast Charter' which affirms their commitment to the values and principles of the Healthy Cities movement. The Belfast Charter was signed by Lord Mayor Cllr Deirdre Hargey.

The outcome of this week's conference is that the next phase of the work of the Healthy Cities Network will be based on the six themes: People, Place, Participation, Prosperity, Peace and Planet.

Belfast Healthy Cities has been a member of the WHO Network since 1988 and successfully bid to host the conference.

Joan Devlin, Chief Executive of Belfast Healthy Cities reflected on a successful conference.

"We are delighted with the conference which attracted so many people from more than 200 cities, and with the conference outcomes. Belfast has been at the heart of WHO discussions for the last 4 days as delegates shared their knowledge and experience and also took in multiple site visits to health related projects across the city.

"We were determined that our visitors would experience the real Belfast by getting out to projects in north, south, east and west Belfast. We have had fantastic support from all of our delivery partners in Belfast City Council, the Belfast Trust, Queen's University, the Public Health Agency and NI Housing Executive and others."

The Conference Chair, Monika Kosinska, Regional Focal Point for Healthy Cities in WHO Regional Office in Europe said,

"The themes which have been incorporated into the Belfast Charter are very significant and they map out the work of the Healthy Cities Network going forward. The themes and priorities have evolved through intensive discussions over many months and they have been agreed here today. For many of our cities the Charter opens up new streams of work and I think it is especially appropriate that Peace has been included as one of our core themes, here in Belfast where so much has been achieved in recent years, and where we heard this week, challenges still remain.

"This has been a momentous conference for the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and we are grateful to our friends and colleagues in Belfast."

Pictured, Belfast Lord Mayor Cllr Deirdre Hargey, Pirooska Östlin, Director, Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being, WHO Regional Office for Europe, sign the Belfast Charter at the conclusion of the WHO Healthy Cities International Conference in Belfast today.

