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Scientists Urge Greater Precaution and Independent Research, to Protect Health from Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields

A group of scientists are urging people to take sensible precautions against potential health risks related to exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF). They also call for a full and independent review of the scientific evidence that points to hazards from current EMF exposure conditions world-wide, and for an independent, publicly managed research program to investigate critical issues of health and safety. At a meeting held in Benevento, Italy in last February, 2006, these scientists reviewed current scientific evidence on potential health effects related to EMF exposure in the extremely-low frequency (ELF) and radiofrequency (RF) band of the electromagnetic spectrum (0-300GHz). Energies of these frequencies, called non-ionizing, are used in electrical transmission, distribution and electrical use by the public, by radio and television broadcasts, cellular transmissions, wireless internet access and more. These scientists believe that exposure to even the weak fields emitted by these technologies can affect biological systems.

After several months of debate, thirty-one scientists, just signed a consensus statement, called the "Benevento Resolution" to advise the public and the scientific community of their strong belief that there are adverse health effects from current EMF exposure conditions. They urge more prudent use of all EMF-emitting products and services. They specifically advise children and young teenagers be guided to limit use of cellular and cordless phones and that marketing campaigns to them should be banned.

Dr. Sandro D'Allessandro, a physician and Mayor of Benevento from 2001-2006, at the time the City of Benevento sponsored the February 2006 meeting, states, "Public opposition to two high power transmission lines that went through a nearby village, Contrada San Vitale, led to their removal. As a physician, and as the mayor of Benevento, I share public concern about electromagnetic safety. We sponsored this workshop in response to public interest in knowing more about the science on bioelectromagnetics."

The 3-day workshop, entitled, "Precautionary EMF Approach: Rationale, Legislation and Implementation", began on February 22, 2006. The organizer was the International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety (ICEMS), who invited participants from 12 different countries – Brazil, Canada, China, Israel, Italy, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. The Benevento Resolution of 2006 affirms the Catania Resolution, adopted in 2002, that conveyed a similar scientific position. These resolutions apply the Precautionary Principle¹ to encourage more protective safety measures be employed in the design, manufacture, and standard-setting process for all EMF emitting technologies, calling for health assessments of current EMF exposure conditions for the general public and for workers.

Prof. Livio Guiliani, ICEMS Spokesman, who directs research programs for the "Istituto Superiore per la Prevenzione e la Sicurezza del Lavoro" (ISPESL), the Italian Health Ministry's worker safety and protection program, stated, "why is it taking so long to get these concerns addressed? Scientific controversy about EMF and this meeting provide new reasons to reach an agreement on increased public health and worker safety protection. The criticisms of some scientists who ignore the epidemiological findings are effectively challenged as new experimental results were presented that indicate mechanisms of electromagnetic field non-thermal bio-interaction."

The International Commission on Electromagnetic Safety, is a not-for-profit group of concerned scientists.

The Benevento Resolution may be viewed online at www.icems.eu

¹ The Precautionary Principle states "when there is uncertainty concerning possible adverse effects from an exposure, the risks from inaction may be much greater than the risks of action to control these exposures, and the burden of proof is shifted from those suspecting the risk to those who deny it."