



## Climate change and human health

### WHO calls for urgent action to protect health from climate change – Sign the call

Climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century.

Health professionals have a duty of care to current and future generations. You are on the front line in protecting people from climate impacts - from more heat-waves and other extreme weather events; from outbreaks of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue and cholera; from the effects of malnutrition; as well as treating people that are affected by cancer, respiratory, cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases caused by environmental pollution.

“The evidence is overwhelming: climate change endangers human health. Solutions exist and we need to act decisively to change this trajectory.”

**Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General**

Already the hottest year on record, 2015 will see nations attempt to reach a global agreement to address climate change at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) in Paris in December. This may be the most important health agreement of the century: an opportunity not only to reduce climate change and its consequences, but to promote actions that can yield large and immediate health benefits, and reduce costs to health systems and communities.



**WHO calls on the global health community to add its voice to the call for a strong and effective climate agreement, that will save lives, both now and in the future.**

**We call** for a climate change agreement that promotes:

- Strong and effective action to limit climate change, and avoid unacceptable risks to global health.
- Scaling up of financing for adaptation to climate change: including public health measures to reduce the risks from extreme weather events, infectious disease, diminishing water supplies, and food insecurity.
- Actions that both reduce climate change and improve health, including reducing the number of deaths from cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases that are caused by air pollution (currently over 7 million each year).

**We commit to** leading by example, by:

- Raising awareness of the health effects of climate change and the potential health co-benefits of low carbon pathways, among health professionals and the general public;
- Contributing to the development and implementation of measures to limit climate change and protect our countries, workplaces, and communities;
- Working to minimize the environmental impacts of our own health systems, at the same time as improving health services.

#### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION NOW**

**Sign the call and pass it on...**

...to fellow health professionals and your wider networks. Our collective voice will be spotlighted at COP-21 as a clarion call for the critical contribution of health to more meaningful climate action.