



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.