

## **Climate change and health**

The Sixty-first World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on climate change and health;<sup>1</sup>

Recalling resolution WHA51.29 on the protection of human health from risks related to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion and acknowledging and welcoming the work carried out so far by WHO in pursuit of it;

Recognizing that, in the interim, the scientific evidence of the effect of the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, and of the potential consequences for human health, has considerably improved;

Noting with concern the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the effects of temperature increases on some aspects of human health are already being observed; that the net global effect of projected climate change on human health is expected to be negative, especially in developing countries, small island developing States and vulnerable local communities which have the least capacity to prepare for and adapt to such change, and that exposure to projected climate change could affect the health status of millions of people, through increases in malnutrition, in death, disease and injury due to extreme weather events, in the burden of diarrhoeal disease, in the frequency of cardiorespiratory diseases, and through altered distribution of some infectious disease vectors;

Noting further that climate change could jeopardize achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the health-related Goals, and undermine the efforts of the Secretariat and Member States to improve public health and reduce health inequalities globally;

Recognizing the importance of addressing in a timely fashion the health impacts resulting from climate change due to the cumulative effects of emissions of greenhouse gases, and further recognizing that solutions to the health impacts of climate change should be seen as a joint responsibility of all States and that developed countries should assist developing countries in this regard;

Recognizing the need to assist Member States in assessing the implications of climate change for health and health systems in their country, in identifying appropriate and comprehensive strategies and measures for addressing these implications, in building capacity in the health sector to do so and

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<sup>1</sup> Document A61/14.

in working with government and nongovernmental partners to raise awareness of the health impacts of climate change in their country and take action to address them;

Further recognizing that strengthening health systems to enable them to deal with both gradual changes and sudden shocks is a fundamental priority in terms of addressing the direct and indirect effects of climate change for health,

1. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to continue to draw to the attention of the public and policy-makers the serious risk of climate change to global health and to the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, and to work with FAO, WMO, UNDP, UNEP, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, and other appropriate organizations of the United Nations, in the context of United Nations reform initiatives, and with national and international agencies, to ensure that these health impacts and their resource implications are understood and can be taken into account in further developing national and international responses to climate change;

(2) to engage actively in the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change, in order to ensure its relevance to the health sector, and to keep Member States informed about the work programme in order to facilitate their participation in it as appropriate and access to the benefits of its outputs;

(3) to work on promoting consideration of the health impacts of climate change by the relevant United Nations bodies in order to help developing countries to address the health impacts of climate change;

(4) to continue close cooperation with Member States and appropriate United Nations organizations, other agencies and funding bodies in order to develop capacity to assess the risks from climate change for human health and to implement effective response measures, by promoting further research and pilot projects in this area, including work on:

(a) health vulnerability to climate change and the scale and nature thereof;

(b) health protection strategies and measures relating to climate change and their effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness;

(c) the health impacts of potential adaptation and mitigation measures in other sectors such as marine life, water resources, land use, and transport, in particular where these could have positive benefits for health protection;

(d) decision-support and other tools, such as surveillance and monitoring, for assessing vulnerability and health impacts and targeting measures appropriately;

(e) assessment of the likely financial costs and other resources necessary for health protection from climate change;

(5) to consult Member States on the preparation of a workplan for scaling up WHO's technical support to Member States for assessing and addressing the implications of climate change for health and health systems, including practical tools and methodologies and

mechanisms for facilitating exchange of information and best practice and coordination between Member States, and to present a draft workplan to the Executive Board at its 124th session;

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to develop health measures and integrate them into plans for adaptation to climate change as appropriate;

(2) to build the capacity of public health leaders to be proactive in providing technical guidance on health issues, be competent in developing and implementing strategies for addressing the effects of, and adapting to, climate change, and show leadership in supporting the necessary rapid and comprehensive action;

(3) to strengthen the capacity of health systems for monitoring and minimizing the public health impacts of climate change through adequate preventive measures, preparedness, timely response and effective management of natural disasters;

(4) to promote effective engagement of the health sector and its collaboration with all related sectors, agencies and key partners at national and global levels in order to reduce the current and projected health risks from climate change;

(5) to express commitment to meeting the challenges posed to human health by climate change, and to provide clear directions for planning actions and investments at the national level in order to address the health effects of climate changes.

Eighth plenary meeting, 24 May 2008  
A61/VR/8

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