



## Over 40 million health professionals demand bold health and climate action at COP28

**2 December 2023 - Dubai** - On the first-ever Health Day at a COP, more than 40 million health professionals from around the globe joined the call to action by the World Health Organization (WHO) and civil society organizations, to prioritize health in climate negotiations at COP28.

Climate inaction is costing lives and impacting health every single day. Health workers demand immediate and bold action to phase out fossil fuels, transition to clean energy, build resilience and to support people and communities most vulnerable to impacts of the changing climate. They press for no more delays, no more excuses; urging action and justice now, for a healthy future for all.

“In the face of the urgent challenges posed by health and climate change, health professionals stand united in every effort to improve health outcomes and address the climate crises,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “This inspires us all to contribute to a healthier, more resilient world for generations to come.”

The year 2023 has witnessed an alarming surge in climate-related disasters, including wildfires, heatwaves and droughts, leading to the displacement of populations, agricultural losses and heightened air pollution. The ongoing climate crisis has significantly increased the risk of life-threatening diseases such as cholera, malaria and dengue.

### Unprecedented global health mobilization at COP28

WHO and over 40 million health professionals call on governments to meet the commitments they have already made, deliver on the Paris Agreement, accelerate the phasing out of fossil fuels and to raise their ambition for a healthier, fairer and greener future for humanity.

Strong and resilient health systems are indispensable to protecting the population from the negative impacts of climate change on their health. Building climate-resilient, low-carbon health systems as protection for current and future lives must be seen as one of the priorities in local, national and global climate action and financing.

Health Ministers from around the world endorsed the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, supported by 120 countries. This highlights the severe health implications of climate change, emphasizes the critical role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, and underscores the urgent need to work collaboratively to confront the connections between climate change and health. It reflects a shared understanding of the urgency of climate action for health and raises hope of a greater global commitment to a healthier and more resilient future for all.

## **The urgency of financing climate-resilient health systems**

The commitment to a healthier planet requires a commitment to financing mechanisms that support climate-resilient health systems and sustainable initiatives. It is critical to discuss the urgency of action but also ensure that financial commitments match the scale of the challenge.

Currently receiving a mere 0.5% of global climate financing, the health sector demands a substantial increase in resources. Boosting financial support is not just warranted but essential to effectively tackle ongoing health crises and an evolving global health landscape.

With the health sector facing unprecedented challenges, urgent action is needed to bridge the stark financial gap. By multiplying funding, we strengthen the sector's capacity to innovate, adapt and deliver optimal care, ensuring a resilient healthcare infrastructure for today's challenges and the uncertainties of tomorrow.

## **WHO's commitment on climate and health**

WHO welcomes the efforts of the COP28 Presidency to highlight the health emergency and provide a high-level platform for climate and health at this conference, including through the inaugural Health Day, and the climate and health ministerial. WHO is dedicated to working alongside partners and donors to ensure effective implementation of priorities outlined in the Declaration.

The WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH) is a global platform that brings together more than 75 countries that have committed to initiatives on climate-resilient and low carbon sustainable health systems (promoted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as President of COP26), along with partners, bilateral donors and researchers. WHO will ensure that ATACH embraces the priorities included in the Declaration and supports its effective implementation.

Furthermore, WHO commits to strengthening its climate change and health portfolio by integrating climate change as a priority for all WHO programmes through its core functions of leadership, evidence and, most importantly, country implementation.

WHO affirms its commitment to global health and climate action, pledging its support to ministries of health worldwide.

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