



## UNFCCC SB56 Statement - Closing Plenary

This statement is on behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA), YOUNGO Health Working Group, **International Federation for Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)**, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), the World Medical Association, the Health and Climate Network, and the wider public health stakeholder community.

The Paris Agreement – an environmental agreement – is also a public health agreement.

Stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations is essential for a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.<sup>1</sup> It is also a point of intergenerational equity, as environmental changes disproportionately impact the health and development of children.<sup>2</sup>

Strong outcomes at COP 27 will promote health and wellbeing and are important to reducing the global burden of disease caused or exacerbated by climate change.

We note with emphasis 1) the close relationship between elevated greenhouse gases and the prevalence of and exposure to air pollution worldwide,<sup>3,4</sup> 2) the links between climate change, extreme weather events, and global food and water insecurity,<sup>5</sup> and 3) the heavy carbon and material footprint of the current food system design and its linkages to the global crisis of malnutrition in all its forms.<sup>6</sup> We also highlight that by protecting and promoting health co-benefits, climate action yields extensive cost savings.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IPCC AR6 WGII Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, See <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

<sup>2</sup> UN Human Rights Council 2017 [A/HRC/35/13], See <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/110/91/PDF/G1711091.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>3</sup> Lelieveld et al. (2019). Effects of fossil fuel and total anthropogenic emission removal on public health and climate, See <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1819989116>

<sup>4</sup> WHO Air Pollution Factsheet, See [https://www.who.int/health-topics/air-pollution#tab=tab\\_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/air-pollution#tab=tab_2)

<sup>5</sup> IPCC SR1.5, Chapter 3, See [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15\\_Chapter3\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15_Chapter3_Low_Res.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Independent Expert Group 2021 Global Nutrition Report: the state of global nutrition, See <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/2021-global-nutrition-report/>

<sup>7</sup> The 2021 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: code red for a healthy future. See: [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)01787-6](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01787-6)

How can COP 27 promote health and prevent disease related to climate change? Our recommendations are as follows:

First, fossil fuels and fossil fuel subsidies should be phased out immediately as a public health imperative, with attention to a just transition. Emissions reduction strategies should also include short lived climate pollutants.<sup>8</sup>

Second, the Global Goal on Adaptation should aim to protect the health of populations, reduce inequalities, avoid maladaptation, and maximise health co-benefits. Health national adaptation plans (HNAPs), supported by the WHO, could be incorporated into party-driven work communicated to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Third, on agriculture, agreement to host a new and permanent discussion on food systems under the UNFCCC - spanning *both* mitigation and adaptation - is essential to emissions reduction, health resilience, and food system transformation.

Fourth, the Global Stocktake should assess health benefits and co-benefits of climate mitigation and adaptation across sectors, monitor health-related loss and damage, and review HNAPs. To fast track implementation, we recommend defining a role for health stakeholders to inform indicators, such as through inter-agency collaboration with UN health agencies.

We encourage countries to join the COP26 Health Programme to commit to climate resilient, sustainable and low carbon health systems.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, we encourage parties to the UNFCCC to recognize, in a COP27 outcome, that stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations will promote health and positive health outcomes for people and the planet.

**END**

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<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on 1.5. Online (accessed 13 June 2022), available [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization, 2022. COP26 Health Commitments. Online (accessed 4 June 2022), available [here](#).