

Item 18E: Climate change and health

Background

May 1998. WHA51 considers a report ([A51/21](#)) on climate change and health focusing on WHO participation in the interagency climate agenda, and adopted resolution WHA51.29 on the protection of human health from risks related to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion.

May 2008. WHA61 considers [WHA61/14](#) and adopts [WHA61.19](#)

[WHA61/14](#) provides a brief overview of the health issues associated with global warming including: threats to public health security; disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations; health benefits of mitigation action; need for adaptation as well as mitigation. A series of actions are proposed:

- raise awareness of the need to ensure public health security from action on climate change
- strengthen public health systems to cope with the threats posed by climate change
- enhance capacity to deal with public health emergencies
- promote health development
- enhance applied research on health protection from climate change
- monitor and evaluate delivery
- foster cross disciplinary partnerships

Resolution [WHA61.19](#) recognises the science and the work of the IPCC and urges member states to

- to develop health measures and integrate them into plans for adaptation to climate change as appropriate;
- to enhance the capability 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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 change;

The resolution further requests the DG to work to raise awareness; engage with the UNFCCC process; promote the health risks with other UN bodies and the need to help developing countries; cooperate with MSs, UN bodies, etc to develop capacity to assess risks and implement effective measures through research and pilot projects; consult with MSs towards a workplan to be considered at EB124.

Jan 2009. EB124 considers a draft workplan on climate change and health prepared by the Secretariat ([EB124/11](#)) and adopts Resolution [EB124.R5](#) in which the EB endorses the proposed workplan on climate change and health and requests the Secretariat to implement the workplan and to report annually (from 2010) on progress in implementation.

The [workplan](#) has four objectives with actions under each. the objectives are:

- Advocacy and awareness raising (2 actions)
- Intersectoral advocacy around health issues (3 actions)
- Promote and support the generation of scientific evidence (7 actions)
- Strengthen health systems (6 actions)

Jan 2013. EB132 reviewed progress report ([EB132/42 Add.1](#)) on EB124.R5 and WHA61.19. When this was discussed at the [fifteenth meeting of EB132](#) (Item E) the only speaker to mention climate change was China who urged that "the Secretariat should: develop a work plan for 2014–2019 to identify priorities and objectives; promote the application of the resulting outcome document; encourage information exchange; extend additional support to Member States for development, implementation and technical training during projects; and support the general development of Member States."

WHA66 deliberations

May 2013. WHA66 (7th Meeting of Committee B) reviewed progress report ([A66/27E](#)) on progress in implementing [EB124.R5](#) and [WHA61.19](#) on climate change.

Monaco, Bhutan, Lithuania, UK, Indonesia, China, Maldives, USA, Pakistan, Philippines all noted the importance of this issue and commended WHO for its work in this area

Bhutan, Barbados, Lithuania and UK emphasised that the workplan on climate change should continue but needed to be adapted to the GPW12.

Several countries who spoke about their own responses to global warming including Bhutan (has a health adaptation study under way); Barbados (from a region which is very vulnerable to climate change); Bangladesh (studies underway; also very vulnerable); Indonesia (appreciates assistance rec'd from WHO in this area); Maldives and Philippines (reported policy development and capacity building) and Iraq (regional collaboration and capacity building).

China commended WHO for its work in this area, underlining the importance of strengthening health systems. The Chinese government attaches great importance this issue and has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to climate change. In terms of response, adaptation is more realistic, important and more meaningful to developing countries. WHO takes approach of shared but differentiated development principle that helps out developing countries.

USA urged collaboration under the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).

The World Meteorological Organization representative reported that a global framework for climate services had been discussed over years and that an implementation plan had been adopted. WMO is planning a climate and health project office. One project is to support health and nutrition in Africa. Acknowledges importance of collaboration between WMO and WHO.

Churches Action for Health emphasised the importance of a rights-based approach in addressing climate change. WHO must show stronger leadership, work within and outside organization; work to bring member states' attention to health related consequences of climate change, take international action necessary to address adverse effects of climate change on health.

Finally Dr Fukuda from the Secretariat noted that the Secretariat would be happy to extend workplan beyond 2013. Are seriously considering working with CCAC on pollutants. Welcome the development of national and regional plans and intersectoral workplans.

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