

Beat: Health

UN Climate Change and World Health Organization Team Up to Protect Health

COP23 Bonn

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USPA NEWS - The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC) signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to renew the two institutions' joint commitment to tackle public health challenges emerging from rising temperatures and to help countries boost the efficiency of their response to climate change. The agreement coincides with the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) in Bonn, and the need to ensure that countries with weak or inadequate health infrastructure receive support to protect human health and build climate resilience to respond to such threats.

The signing of this MoU recognizes that the protection and enhancement of health is an essential pillar of sustainable development, requiring the widest possible cooperation by all countries and other relevant stakeholders.-----

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, said: "I am delighted that our two institutions are evolving our relationship to both a higher and more action-oriented level. The Paris Climate Change Agreement needs all hands on deck if we are to ensure a healthy world and healthy citizens now and into the future"².-----

"Many people experience climate change through the impacts on their health, from air pollution and heatwaves to the contamination of drinking water from extreme weather events" "if together and with many partners we can realize the world's climate goals we can also play our role in providing a major health boost to billions of people," she said.-----

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) said: "Climate change is one of the most pressing public health threats of our time. The health of future generations everywhere depends on all of us working together to take concrete action today."²-----

The collaboration takes place at a time when climate change poses a significant threat to public health " " extreme weather events and variable climate affect clean air, safe drinking water, food security and secure shelter " " and could cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from heat stress, malnutrition, diarrhea and malaria, between 2030 and 2050. The agreement will ensure that health is represented in the global climate change agenda, allowing both institutions to adopt a more integrated and inter-sectoral approach to improving global health and contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The MoU will provide a joint framework for strategic collaboration between WHO and UNFCCC to support capacity building, particularly in the developing world, and help countries reduce health vulnerability to climate change by: Providing guidance on health risks from climate change and benefits from mitigation policies

Improving countries' capacity to address health in National Climate Action Plans and National Adaptation Plans

Supporting the integration of climate risks into WHO support to health policy and programmes, including in environment health, health system strengthening, and disaster preparedness-----

Informing climate and health policy makers, practitioners, civil society and the wider public in communicating and preventing climate risks Tracking and reporting of the scale and nature of investments in protecting health from climate risks, and in development that both promotes health, reduces carbon emissions and increases resilience to climate change impacts

Measuring the progress that countries are making in protecting health from climate change. Source : UNFCCC

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