



**SUBMISSION BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION TO THE CHAIRS OF  
THE JOINT SBI/SBSTA FORUM ON THE IMPACT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF RESPONSE MEASURES**

TO BE HELD AT THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY  
BODIES INFORMATION NOTE BY THE CHAIRS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomes the opportunity to submit views on the elements of a possible forum.

In particular, we would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Chairs of the Subsidiary body to the UNFCCC commitment to avoid adverse impacts on "*human health and welfare*", as specified in Article 1, Paragraph 1, of the Convention, as well as the affirmation "*that responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development*".

Climate change, and climate policies, will profoundly affect some of the most fundamental determinants of health (i.e food, air and water). Comprehensive long-term cooperative actions are needed to formulate clear responses in order to protect and enhance human health and well-being. Climate strategies and response measures, including mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology, should therefore properly address the health consequences of climate change.

There is emerging evidence that poorly-designed climate mitigation policies can potentially pose significant risks to socioeconomic development, health and welfare, for example, via food prices and food security. Full consideration of human health consequences is therefore essential to proper risk management of response measures.

Greater appreciation of human health dimensions is also a positive opportunity for climate policy. As indicated in the UNFCCC, climate mitigation efforts and new technologies should be deployed in such a way as to be socially beneficial. The most recent report of the IPCC indicates that well-designed mitigation measures could bring very large health cobenefits, repaying much of the cost of many mitigation interventions. Health co-benefits are also usually immediate, and local, helping to mobilize political and public engagement.

For example, improving household energy access for poor populations could significantly reduce the large warming contribution of black carbon, and reduce the two million premature deaths each year from indoor air pollution. Other important sectors are power generation (reduced local air pollution), and transport (reduced ambient air pollution, traffic-related injury and death, and obesity rates)<sup>1,2</sup>.

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1. Haines et al. Public health benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions: overview and implications for policy makers. *Lancet* 2009; 374:2104-14.
  2. WHO. Health in the Green Economy, 2010. Summary of initial findings [http://www.who.int/hia/green\\_economy/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hia/green_economy/en/index.html).

Management of health risks, and achievement of health cobenefits are currently not considered in the implementation mechanisms for international support for mitigation. They could, however, potentially be assessed and quantified in a results-based approach, through the commitment in Article 4.1. (f) of the UNFCCC - i.e. "*All Parties...shall: ...f. Take climate change considerations into account, to the extent feasible, in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ appropriate methods, for example impact assessments, formulated and determined nationally, with a view to minimizing adverse effects on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment, of projects and measures undertaken by them to mitigate or adapt to climate change;*".

Application of the conditions in Article 4.1 f would help to ensure that mitigation efforts support, rather than compete with, other sustainable development objectives.

WHO would therefore encourage parties to prioritize and support response measures that also improve health. We would also like to restate our commitment to help achieve the goals of the UNFCCC, and to lend all available technical support for health protection from climate change, under the structures finally agreed by Member States.

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