

# **Commitments, responsibilities and opportunities to align climate change and health actions**

Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum,  
Climate change and health team,  
Public Health and Environment Department,  
World Health Organization

## Health as a central principle of the 1992 Rio conference and the UNFCCC:

**1992 RIO DECLARATION Article 1:** *"Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a **healthy** and productive life in harmony with nature."*

**UNFCCC Article 1:** *"Adverse effects of climate change" : changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on **human health and welfare**.*

## UNFCCC commitment to consider health effects of mitigation and adaptation measures:

**UNFCCC Article 4.1 (f):** *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;*

## Responsibility to ensure that climate responses do not worsen existing burdens

Sectors assessed for adaptation support (World Bank 2009)	Annual deaths linked to selected related risks (WHO 2008, 2009)
Agriculture, forest & fisheries	3.5 million undernutrition
Infrastructure	3.2 million physical inactivity
Water supply	1.9 million water/ sanitation
Health	140,000 climate change
Coastal zones	30,000- 60,000 extreme weather
Extreme weather	

## Opportunity to reduce existing health burdens through well-planned mitigation measures

<b>Main GHG emitting sectors</b> (IPCC, 2007)	<b>Annual deaths linked to selected related risks</b> (WHO 2008, 2009)
Industry	1 million occupational risks
Energy supply and conversion	1.1 million outdoor air pollution
Buildings	1.9 million indoor air pollution
Agriculture	2.8 million overweight/obese
Transport	1.3 million road traffic accidents

# Potential for development, economic and health gains from climate change responses

- "*Health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions... may offset a substantial fraction of mitigation costs*" – IPCC, 2007.
- Air pollution co-benefits valued at \$2-196/tCO<sub>2</sub> (mean \$49): depending on intervention choice.
- New opportunities: 280 million improved stoves in LAC, SSA, India, could reduce black carbon and CH<sub>4</sub> - and save 3 million lives in ten years.
- Bad design can seriously harm health, from food insecurity, to unregulated new technologies.

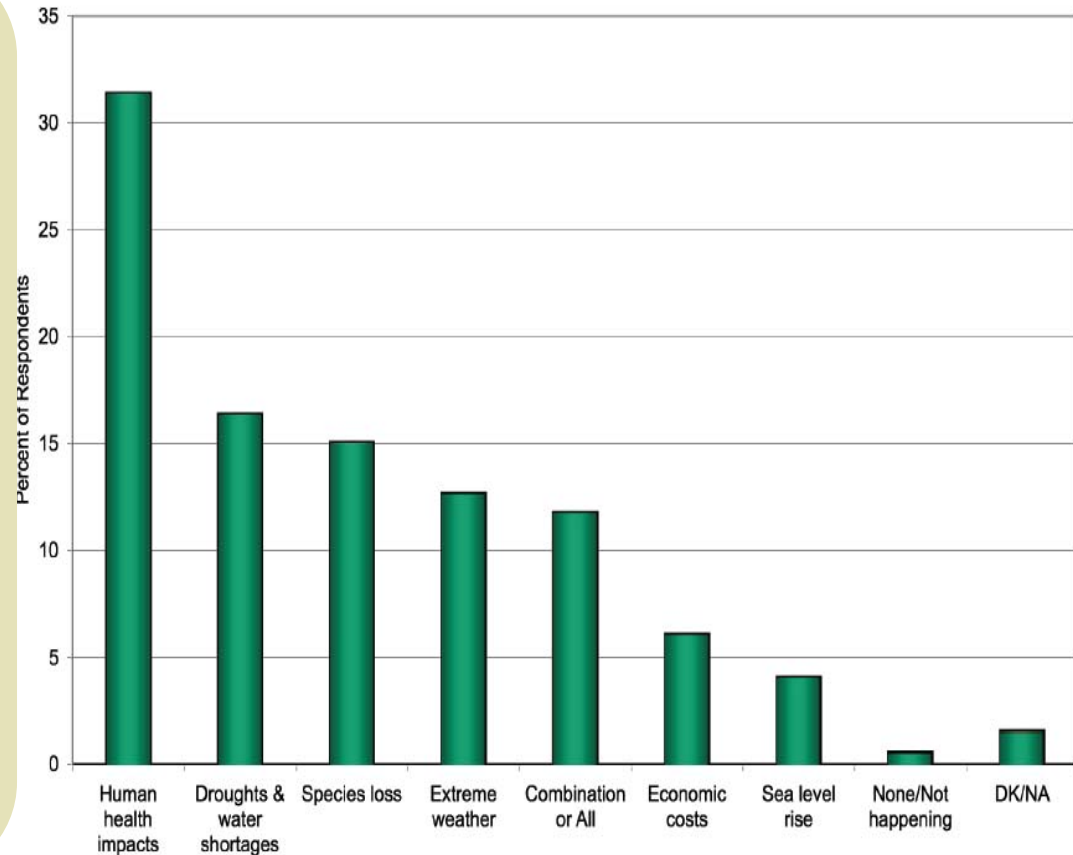


# Possibility to link more closely to public concerns

## Globescan poll in 30 countries

(UNDP 2007):

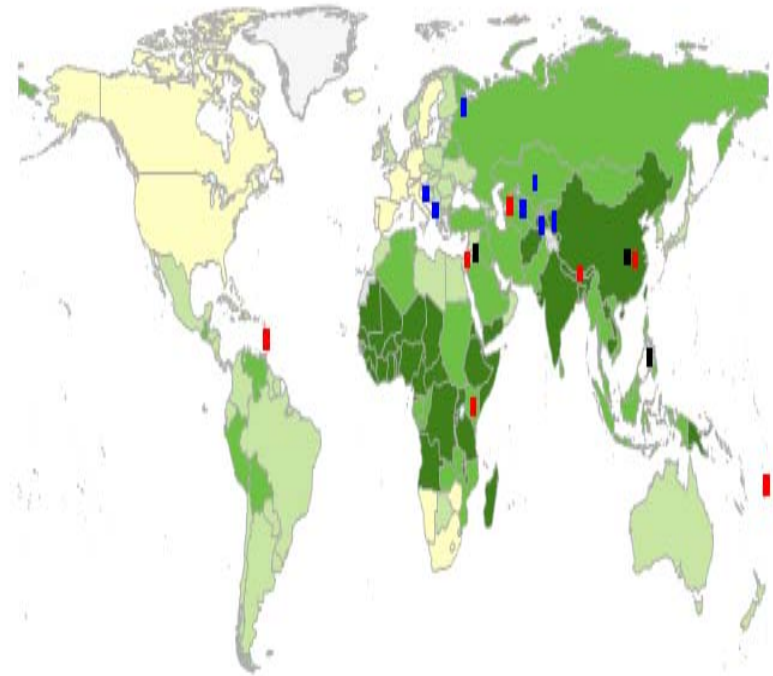
“Now I would like to ask you some questions about climate change, which is sometimes referred to as global warming or the greenhouse effect. Which ONE of the following possible impacts most concerns you personally, if any?”



# Conclusions

- Commitments, evidence, and public opinion support stronger consideration of health in climate responses.
- Climate change responses will have large health effects - careful choice and design can ensure these are positive.
- Additional policy, technical, and capacity building support is necessary, but can build on existing institutions and expertise.

Climate change and health projects supported by WHO and partners





# Thank you for your attention



[campbellendrumd@who.int](mailto:campbellendrumd@who.int)

<http://www.who.int/globalchange/en>