



Proposal from IFMSA on Draft Elements under ADP (Nov. 2014) – Health Elements

Within Article 1. of the UNFCCC, "Adverse effects of climate change" are defined as "changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on [...] human health and welfare".

Climate change is said to be the biggest threat to global health of the 21st century. The impacts of climate change on human health and social wellbeing are varied. Climate change is already directly changing the distribution of vector-borne diseases, and taking more lives through extreme weather events. Through food and water insecurity, mass migration, and increased violence and conflict, climate change further threatens health indirectly by undermining the social and economic determinants of health. Every year, we lose millions of lives due to both the causes and consequences of climate change, and the numbers are only expected to grow. Despite this, climate change should be seen as our biggest opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of populations around the world.

As representatives of the world's future medical profession, we advocate for the greater inclusion of health within UNFCCC negotiations. There are many mitigation and adaptation strategies that have added benefits in improving human health. Inclusion of these co-benefits in assessments of mitigation and adaptation strategies not only safeguards the health of populations, but also offers substantial economic benefits through cost savings for governments in the health care sector and improved workforce productivity. In many cases inclusion of health co-benefits in mitigation and adaptation strategy calculations can substantially offset the costs of transition to a low carbon economy. To this end, we recommend Parties to advocate for the following amendments to the Draft Text on Advancing the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action:

1) Amendment to the Draft Text on ADP Article 30 (a).

Original text

30. (a) Undertake a technical examination of opportunities for actions with high mitigation potential in relevant thematic areas, including those with adaptation and sustainable development co-benefits;

Suggested amendment

...including those with adaptation, sustainable development and health co-benefits;

2) Amendment to the Draft Text on the ADP Article 31 (d)

Original Motion

31. (d) Assesses mitigation benefits, co-benefits, including adaptation and sustainable development co-benefits, costs of and other barriers to the implementation of policy options;

Suggested amendment

...including adaptation, sustainable development, and health co-benefits, costs of and other barriers to the implementation of policy options;

We further encourage Parties to advocate for the establishment by the secretariat of a technical expert meeting on the health co-benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation in 2015 under article 31 of the Draft Text on ADP (Draft of November 2014).