

Statement by WHO at GST Closing Plenary of SB58

WHO and members of the global health community at SB58 would like to highlight that the links between health and climate change are unquestionable and supported by scientific evidence. In order to safeguard the human right to health and to a healthy environment, the global health community emphatically stresses that health should be explicitly integrated into the GST.

We have been pleased to hear Parties articulating health links within the GST roundtables in the past weeks.

A holistic approach to health and climate action as part of the GST is essential considering that the majority (91%) of NDCs now incorporate health considerations, including health co-benefits of mitigation, health adaptation and resilience, and climate and health finance.

Without urgent mitigation action, we will rapidly exceed the limits of adaptation in all countries, resulting in widespread health losses and damages. A just and equitable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, in line with the need to reduce emissions by at least 43% by 2030 compared to 2019, will prevent these health harms, but also maximise the health co-benefits of mitigation action, including among else the reduction of air pollution responsible for 4.2 million deaths annually.

With regard to adaptation, it should be noted that two thirds (60%) of NDCs identify the health sector as vulnerable to climate change. However, only close to a third (29%) of NDCs allocates climate finance to health actions and one in ten (11%) NDCs includes unconditional finance targets for their health actions and plans, while the flows of international finance on climate and health remain critically low.

In 2021, WHO and the health community with support from the UK government raised their voices to emphasize the unquestionable effects of climate change to health through the launch of the COP26 Health programme on building climate resilient and sustainable low carbon sustainable health systems, now monitored through the **Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH)** supported by the UK and Egyptian governments, and leading to 69 countries having so far committed globally.

The COP28 is critical for resolving pending issues on finance, driving system transformations, strengthening support on adaptation and resilience, and protecting the most vulnerable communities. With the opportunity of the first ever Health Day to be held at COP28, the impacts of climate change and health should be explicitly reflected within the negotiations texts and outcomes accompanied by responsible decisionmaking and implementation action for safeguarding the health of the population.

The health sector and health community stand ready to support in this endeavor repeating the simple and common sense argument that the climate crisis is a health crisis.