

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH (resolution EB124.R5)

At its 132nd session in January 2013, the Executive Board noted an earlier version of this progress report¹.

Advocacy and awareness raising. The Secretariat has worked with Member States to emphasize the importance of health in climate change and sustainable development policy. The Secretariat in collaboration with WMO has produced an “Atlas of Health and Climate”, which was launched by the Director-General and the Secretary-General of WMO at the WMO’s Extraordinary Congress (Geneva, 29–31 October 2012). It also published, in June 2012, a discussion paper entitled “Our planet, our health, our future – human health and the Rio Conventions: Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Desertification” in collaboration with the respective convention secretariats. The Organization has recently coordinated a six-part global “webinar” series on health and climate change.

Partnership with organizations of the United Nations system and other parties. WHO has contributed the health perspective to the following United Nations’ bodies dealing with climate change: the Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its High-Level Committee on Programmes, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its associated policy and technical meetings, and the High-Level Committee on Programmes Task Team.

The Organization is working with the Framework Convention’s secretariat and least developed countries expert group to prepare new guidance on developing the health components of national adaptation plans. The Secretariat has updated an audit of the carbon footprint of selected WHO offices, as part of the United Nations “Greening the Blue” initiative.

Promoting and supporting the generation of scientific evidence. Secretariat staff members are contributing as authors and reviewers of the forthcoming Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Assessment continues of the likely health benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with new reports on the health sector (in preparation) and the health effects of black carbon² which is both an important pollutant and strong warming agent. WHO has collaborated with WMO at global and regional levels to design the health implementation plan for a new global framework for climate services³.

Strengthening health systems to protect populations from the adverse impacts of climate change on health. The Secretariat has defined a new operational framework for health protection from climate change in the South-East Asia Region, and monitored and supported the implementation of existing frameworks in WHO’s other five regions. The Secretariat has completed assessments of health vulnerability and consequent adaptation needs in more than 30 countries, across all regions. It has completed the second year of a seven-country global pilot project on health adaptation to climate change (in Barbados, Bhutan, China, Fiji, Jordan, Kenya and Uzbekistan), the third and final year of regional projects in Central Asia and eastern Europe (covering Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Uzbekistan), and United Nations country team projects in China, Jordan and the Philippines. Projects on climate change and infectious disease are entering their second year in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea. The Secretariat supports these activities through a capacity-building programme including training materials, a database of national expertise, guidance on access to funding sources, and a clearinghouse of existing public health systems’ adaptation projects.

¹ See summary record of the fifteenth meeting of the Executive Board at its 132nd session, section 2.

² Janssen NAH, Gerlofs-Nijland ME, Lanki T et al. *Health effects of carbon black*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012

³ http://www.wmo.int/pages/gfcs/index_en.php.

Continuing progress

At a high-level side event at the 18th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (held in Doha, 26 November–7 December 2012) potential institutional arrangements to further broaden and deepen the engagement of actors on climate change and health were discussed.

As WHO's current workplan on climate change and health was to be implemented within the time frame of the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, Member States may wish to provide guidance on developing a workplan for the period 2014–2019.