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CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH
SYSTEM SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

The Western Pacific Region faces an escalating climate and health crisis. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events and environmental degradation are amplifying health risks, disproportionately affecting populations with vulnerabilities and straining national health systems. Small island developing states are on the front lines, facing the most drastic impacts of climate change despite their negligible role in generating global greenhouse gas emissions.

Considering the Western Pacific context and priorities, this draft regional implementation plan for climate change and health system safety and resilience was developed to operationalize the WHO *Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health*. The implementation plan also forms part of the Region's vision for WHO work with Member States and partners: *Weaving Health for Families, Communities and Societies in the Western Pacific Region (2025–2029)*. The regional implementation plan was disseminated and presented at a four-day virtual consultation in March 2025. Member State representatives shared feedback and expressed broad support for the plan. WHO is already working to accelerate the health sector response to climate change, proposing priority actions and targets to make health facilities more resilient and sustainable across the Region.

The WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific is requested to consider for endorsement the draft *Implementation of the Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health in the Western Pacific Region*.

DRAFT
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN
ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH
IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

1. BACKGROUND

No country, no matter how wealthy, is fully prepared for the impact of climate change on health. Climate change is a fundamental threat to health. An average of 43 000 people die in storms, floods and landslides each year in the Asia Pacific region, according to [United Nations Development Programme](#) statistics. The increasing frequency, unpredictability and pervasiveness of extreme climate events have weakened economic, social and health systems and reversed hard-won health gains in the Western Pacific Region. Disproportionally prone to outbreaks and emergencies, the Region's diversity makes it more susceptible to a wider range of disastrous climate events.

Every year, entire communities are displaced by typhoons, floods and droughts, extreme temperatures, wildfires, rising sea levels, air pollution and landslides, among other threats. Climate conditions not only directly affect the health of people; they also affect other organisms – such as mosquitoes, ticks, fleas and flies – that transmit disease to people.

By 2050, sea levels are predicted to rise by 15 to 30 centimetres globally, putting health facilities in coastal areas at risk. The problem is more acute in the Pacific, where 62% of facilities evaluated in 14 Pacific island countries were within 500 metres of the coast.

Health sector's accountability to reduce its carbon footprint

Although its mission is essential, the health sector produces approximately 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Of those emissions, 71% are primarily from the health-care supply chain through the production, transport and disposal of goods and services, such as pharmaceuticals and other chemicals, food and agricultural products, medical devices, and hospital equipment and instruments, according to a [2019 report](#) from Health Care Without Harm and Arup, a nongovernmental organization and a consulting firm, respectively. In all, the health sector globally produces emissions equivalent to 514 coal-fired power plants.

The health sector is taking steps to reduce its emissions. Simple cost-effective interventions, such as alternative clean energy sources, help reduce the emissions. In addition, the Region's health workforce is increasingly trained in ways to promote environmentally sustainable practices that do not

compromise the quality of care while improving climate-informed health surveillance and early warning systems.

Safe and climate-resilient facilities as a starting point

Health facilities are the heart of service delivery, protecting health and saving lives. Most health facilities in the Western Pacific Region are not climate resilient or environmentally sustainable. Worldwide, one in four health-care facilities lacks basic water services, according to an [October 2024 report](#) by WHO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). During extreme climate events – which often create floods and power outages, for example – most health facilities suspend operations or deliver substandard care to vulnerable and displaced communities. To deliver more consistent support and services – even under adverse conditions – the Region is working to make all health facilities climate resilient and safe.

WHO response

In response to the 2024 World Health Assembly resolution on [Climate change and health](#) (WHA77.14), the WHO [Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#) was developed. The World Health Assembly in May 2025 adopted the Action Plan to provide a strategic framework to guide Member States, the WHO Secretariat and other stakeholders in developing climate-resilient, low-carbon health systems; enhancing surveillance and early warning systems; protecting vulnerable groups such as children, older people and those living in high-risk areas; and integrating health into climate policy and financing mechanisms.

Building on global efforts, the Western Pacific Region continues to prioritize health in the face of environmental challenges, focusing on cross-sectoral country-level action and capacity-building. The Region’s vision, [Weaving Health for Families, Communities and Societies in the Western Pacific Region \(2025–2029\)](#), prioritizes accelerated actions to strengthen and build climate-resilient health systems for all.

2. PLAN OF WORK

2.1 Priority actions

Entry points on the ground

1. Develop climate-resilient and safe health-care facilities using a phased approach that prioritizes primary, secondary and tertiary facilities at high risk for climate events. Retrofitting can be conducted in phases, based on health-care facility assessments.

2. Build capacity of health workers to maintain installations that make facilities safer and more climate resilient – such as solar panels and other alternative energy sources, sustainable water supply systems, waste management and natural ventilation – while improving preparations to meet the needs of people affected by climate events.
3. Undertake exercises to track and predict health issues that may arise due to vector-borne and waterborne diseases (during floods) and respiratory diseases (associated with acute and chronic exposure to pollution).
4. Establish food systems, where feasible, around hospitals to ensure a steady food supply in the event of supply chain disruptions. For example, root crops can be planted in open spaces of hospitals and vegetable gardens on elevated areas of health facilities, as long as there is sufficient water and soil free of contaminants.
5. Design retrofitting measures especially for urban health facilities in crowded areas.
6. Relocate health facilities away from coastal areas, where possible.

Ensuring sustainable action: Policy and governance

1. Establish or strengthen high-level national mechanisms on climate change and health to drive policy coherence, promote health co-benefits and ensure continuous engagement between the health, environment and other sectors to inform decision-making.
2. Integrate health into national adaptation plans, nationally determined contributions and long-term low-emission development strategies under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), engaging ministries and sectors beyond health, such as finance, infrastructure, environment, energy, agriculture and transportation.
3. Incorporate the One Health approach into national climate change policies or integrate climate adaptation interventions into national One Health action plans to effectively address the impacts of climate change.
4. Develop innovative financing partnerships, leveraging public–private collaborations, philanthropic contributions and multilateral development bank support to expand resources for health benefits from mitigation and adaptation initiatives.
5. Improve predictive and forecasting capacity of information systems, including early warning and response systems.

2.2 Opportunities to accelerate work in the Western Pacific Region

Member States are encouraged to design and implement projects to scale up climate action in the health sector, as prioritized for acceleration in the Region's vision for WHO work with Member States and other stakeholders.

1. Accelerate climate adaptation and mitigation in the health sector by joining the WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH) and using global guidance and tools for climate-resilient health systems.
2. Ensure provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as sound management of health-care waste in all health facilities to meet the targets set in the Region's vision.
3. Develop and implement national action plans for health that align with national climate resilience frameworks or ensure that national action plans, nationally determined contributions and long-term low-emission development strategies integrate health considerations.
4. Promote and adopt a One Health approach for addressing interconnected health crises amplified by climate change.
5. Enhance national data and surveillance systems to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and climate-related trends, improving detection and response to health emergencies linked to climate.
6. Strengthen public health education on climate and health for health workers and for policy-makers on climate adaptation and mitigation, expanding training to include climate-health leadership development and technical skills enhancement.
7. Increase access to financing mechanisms for climate change and health, including climate adaptation and mitigation in the health sector.
8. Promote urban health resilience by working through the Healthy Cities networks.
9. Promote education on climate and health through Health Promoting Schools networks.
10. Promote community action on climate and health through Healthy Islands networks.

Resources:

- **Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change**

A WHO initiative, this informal voluntary network allows participants to exchange views and share information, fostering technical and political cooperation. This community of practice builds connections between countries working to fulfil commitments to build climate-resilient and sustainable health systems with various resources, including a specialized library, partner lists and country contact information for networking. The Alliance also provides guidance and examples of [Health National Adaptation Plans](#) and [Net zero health systems](#).

- **Climate Change and Health portal**

This WHO portal contains guidance and tools to support countries and areas in protecting human health from the impacts of climate change, including:

- [Building climate-resilient health systems](#), which is generally structured under 10 components outlined in the WHO [Operational framework for building climate resilient and low carbon health systems](#)
- Guidance and information on [Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment](#), and [Quality criteria for integrating health into Nationally Determined Contributions](#) to the Paris Agreement
- [Integrated surveillance and climate-informed health early warning systems](#)
- [Climate change and health toolkit](#)
- [Health and Climate Change Country Profiles](#).

- **WASH FIT portal**

WASH FIT (Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool) is a risk-based management tool for health-care facilities, covering key aspects of water, sanitation, hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, health-care waste management, and aspects of energy, building and facility management. This portal includes WASH FIT resources and other information, such as the latest data and highlights, guides, technical fact sheets, training manual and modules, and a link to videos and tutorials on WASH FIT.

2.3 Core indicators, progress milestones and targets in the Western Pacific Region

Activity	Indicator	2025 baseline	Midterm milestones (2027)	2030 targets
Action domain: entry points on the ground				
Accelerate climate adaptation and mitigation in the health sector through ATACH	Number of countries that joined ATACH	9	> 15	> 20
	Regional partnership for ATACH established	No	Regional partnership established and operational	Partnership scaled up and work sustained
Build and sustain climate resilience and environmental sustainability in health systems and facilities in a phased way	Percentage of health facilities that are more climate resilient and lower carbon	Region-wide baseline data not available	10%	20%
Improve provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and sound management of health-care waste in health facilities	Percentage of health facilities with at least basic water services	Insufficient number of countries in the Western Pacific Region reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to the WHO/ UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Sanitation and Hygiene	More than 14 countries reporting on SDG 6 through the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Sanitation and Hygiene	Greater than 80% have basic water services
	Percentage of health facilities with at least basic sanitation services			Greater than 60% have basic sanitation services
	Percentage of health-care facilities with basic waste management			Greater than 60% have basic waste management
Improve knowledge and skills of health workers on climate resilience and environmental sustainability	Number of health workers trained and empowered for climate and health actions in health-care facilities	Region-wide baseline data not available	More than 2500	More than 5000
Ensuring sustainable action: policy and governance				
Conduct climate change and health vulnerability and adaptation assessments (V&As) and develop the health component of Health National Adaptation Plans (HNAPs)	Number of countries that have conducted a V&A and developed the health component of HNAPs	10 countries	14 countries	18 countries

Activity	Indicator	2025 baseline	Midterm milestones (2027)	2030 targets
Improve surveillance systems, including early warning systems	Number of countries that integrate meteorological information into surveillance and response systems for at least one climate-sensitive health risk (such as extreme heat or climate-sensitive infectious disease)	5 countries	9 countries	12 countries

3. THE ROLE OF WHO

Through the WHO Asia-Pacific Centre for Environment and Health in the Western Pacific Region and WHO country offices, WHO will work with Member States to:

- Establish regionalized partnership networks for ATACH, enabling increased membership and participation among countries and areas across the Western Pacific Region.
- Facilitate access to international climate funds, ensuring that health is a priority in climate financing discussions and that dedicated funding streams are available for health-related climate adaptation and mitigation projects.
- Support Member States to mainstream health and climate change policies, in particular provide practical guidance, tools and training packages for identifying and prioritizing health risks and specific response actions in the national adaptation plans and nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.
- Facilitate pooled procurement and implementation support to Member States in developing and building healthy, safe, low-carbon and environmentally sustainable infrastructure, including climate-resilient health-care facilities aligned with global best practices and sustainability goals.
- Support the establishment of a global research commission on sea-level rise and health, providing technical expertise, evidence synthesis and policy recommendations to inform decision-making nationally and globally.

- Provide Secretariat support for a new global legal instrument focused on sea-level rise and health within relevant international processes, such as the UNFCCC, ensuring alignment with climate and health frameworks and initiatives.
- Advocate for high-level commitment and action on climate change and health at regional and global multilateral forums, such as the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum on Global Health, the Alliance for Healthy Cities and the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, fostering collaboration across sectors and highlighting best practices and lessons learnt from adaptation and mitigation initiatives.
- Promote innovative approaches, such as the appropriate use of artificial intelligence and digital technology.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress will be periodically reported to the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. To track progress, WHO will support Member States in implementing a monitoring framework aligned with:

- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, including:
 - SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
 - SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
 - SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- The global WHO Fourteenth General Programme of Work impact measurement outcomes and proposed indicators: health-care sector greenhouse gas emissions, national climate change and health capacity, and improved resilience of health systems.
- WHO Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health targets.
- Regional targets and indicators in the vision, *Weaving Health for Families, Communities and Societies in the Western Pacific Region (2025–2029)*.
- Priorities detailed in WHO country and multi-country cooperation strategies in the Western Pacific Region.

Regular monitoring and reporting of national health sector responses to climate change are tracked through the WHO [Health and climate change global survey report](#). Member States complete a [survey questionnaire](#) focused on: national health and climate change policies and plans; vulnerability and adaptation assessments; implementation; capacity-building; finance; and decarbonization and sustainability of health systems. The global survey is conducted every three years.

Survey data provide a snapshot of progress made by governments and ongoing challenges in achieving health adaptation and mitigation priorities. In addition to tracking global progress, national data are presented in the update of the [Health and Climate Change Country Profiles](#). The profiles summarize evidence of the climate hazards and health risks facing countries, track national progress in addressing health threats from climate change and provide an overview of key action areas.

Member States are encouraged to establish national reporting mechanisms and routinely participate in the global monitoring process.

5. CONCLUSION

Every country and area can take action to save lives and improve aspects of health threatened by climate change. Despite obstacles, many countries are making significant efforts, and their investments are already starting to pay dividends.

WHO seeks to create more opportunities for sharing experiences and information and cooperatively building capacity and increasing access to financing, supplies and equipment, as well as infrastructure enhancements for health-care facilities across the Region.

Every country and area in the Region can contribute to the growing body of knowledge on what must be done to address this threat to humanity.