

5 Key Actions for COP25 to Bolster Global Health

The 25th UN Climate Conference (COP25) will be a key moment to finalize the rulebook for the Paris Agreement on climate change. It will have a strong focus on increasing climate **ambition**, strengthening the **implementation** of climate policy, and dealing with the **climate change impacts** the world is already experiencing.

The World Health Organization and the global health community call on governments, businesses, institutions and financial actors to deliver an ambitious COP, and recommend 5 key actions that will both increase climate ambition and protect our health.

1. Commit to save lives, cut carbon emissions and clean air



Air pollution kills over seven million people a year, and 2/3 of outdoor air pollution is from burning fossil fuels. As a national or subnational government, you can achieve air quality that is safe for your citizens, and bring down the carbon emissions that are driving climate change.

Following the UN Climate Action summit in September 2019, over 50 national and 80 subnational governments representing over a billion people, have already joined the Clean Air Initiative, committing to achieve WHO Air Quality Guideline values, and align their climate and air quality policies, by 2030.

Act Now: Join the Clean Air Initiative

2. Commit to invest in climate action, public health and sustainable development



The global health benefits of strong climate mitigation outweigh the financial costs, and there are highly cost-effective health interventions to protect people from climate risks. However, less than 0.5% of multilateral climate finance goes to health protection. As a financial actor, you can commit to significantly scale up your investment in proven interventions for climate-resilient health systems, and in air quality monitoring and policy implementation.

*Following a call for financial health commitments at the UN Climate Action summit in September 2019, a new **philanthropic fund to tackle air pollution** was created. A great first step, but more climate finance still needs to be directed towards protecting public health in order to build a healthy, climate-resilient future.*

Act Now: Commit to invest in climate action and public health

3. Place health at the heart of the Paris Agreement



While 2/3rds of current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement mention health, and the health sector is among the five sectors most often described as vulnerable to climate change, this is often not followed through into health action. The health co-benefits of climate actions are rarely reflected, with only 1/5th of NDCs mentioning health in the context of mitigation and 1/10th of NDCs mentioning health co-benefits.

By systematically addressing the health impacts and health opportunities from climate actions in Nationally Determined Contributions – as well as National Adaptation Plans, climate finance pledges, and National Communications to the UNFCCC – the Paris Agreement could become the strongest international health agreement of the century.

Act Now: Learn more about the close connection of health and climate change, and how to reflect this in NDCs.

4. Implement and monitor national policies that protect the health of your citizens from climate change



In a WHO country survey of 101 governments, about half reported to have developed a national health and climate change strategy or plan. Only 53% of governments reported a high to moderate level of implementation of their strategies, and less than 10% indicated to have sufficient budget to fully cover their implementation costs.

For the Paris Agreement to be effective at protecting the world's most vulnerable, all levels of government need to prioritize the health impacts of climate change. This can be achieved by cross-ministerial collaboration to carry out health Vulnerability and Adaptation assessments (V&As), develop the health components of National Adaptation Plans (H-NAPS), invest in climate-resilient health systems, and track progress.

Act Now: Collaborate with WHO and the UNFCCC to monitor national progress on health and climate change, through the **Health and Climate Change Country Profiles**.

5. Evaluate and promote the health co-benefits from climate action



The value of **health gains from climate action** are about twice as large as the **cost of mitigation** policies at global level, and meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement could **save about a million lives a year** worldwide by 2050 through reductions in air pollution alone.

Quantifying the health co-benefits from taking climate actions allows for a more balanced cost-benefit analysis when designing policies, and offers a strong argument when gathering support for the transformative changes needed. Mobilizing the health community as trusted advocates, can transform public support for climate action.

Act Now: Quantify the health and economic consequences from domestic carbon reductions, e.g. by using WHO's **CarbonH tool**, and connect to the growing worldwide community of health advocates for climate action, for example through the WHO-Civil Society Working Group on Climate Change and Health.