Health and environment ministers pledge climate actions to reduce 12.6 million environment-related deaths

Ministers and senior officials responsible for health and environment committed to reducing the annual 12.6 million deaths caused by environmental pollution. The gathering at COP22 climate meeting in Marrakech, over two dozen high level officials from both sectors signed up to the Declaration for Health, Environment and Climate Change on 15 November 2016. The goal is to reduce environment-related deaths via a new global initiative to promote better management of environmental risks to health and climate. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that some 12.6 million deaths a year are associated with environmental pollution. Of these, an estimated 6.5 million deaths (11.6% of all global deaths) were associated with air pollution, from household and outdoor sources. The declaration encourages cooperation among the health and environment sectors to exchange experiences, technical expertise and best practices to enhance health and protect the environment, noting that a global comprehensive set of linkages between these two pillars does not yet exist. Click here to read the full web story.

During COP22 over 22 health related events took place, including for the first time ever a “Health Action Day” demonstrating the range and the strength of the work that the health community is carrying out, and the promise of further scale up. Click here to access all the information.

WHO to release Innov8 approach for reviewing national health programmes to leave no one behind

Innov8 is a new WHO resource to support operationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), progressive realization of universal health coverage and the right to health. It is an eight-step analytic process undertaken by a multi-disciplinary review team to identify ways to take concrete, meaningful and evidence-based action to leave no one behind in health programmes. It provides recommendations for specific entry points and actions to make the health programme equity-oriented, rights-based and gender responsive, while addressing critical social determinants of health influencing programme effectiveness and outcomes.

The Innov8 approach for reviewing national health programmes to leave no one behind will be launched on 22 November 2016 and will be available here.

Mark World Toilet Day with WHO – a day to think and to take management action

Today, 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation. In many countries, children fall sick as a result of open defecation, flooded latrines and untreated wastewater. Each year, there are millions of preventable deaths, morbidity and disability caused by diarrhoea and neglected tropical diseases. Learn more about World Toilet Day and access resources to organize your event here.

WHO has updated its water, sanitation and hygiene website with technical resources on sanitation safety planning, monitoring progress on safely managed sanitation and wastewater treatment and investments in sanitation under the SDGs. You can find further information on the lack of access to sanitation in health facilities and how it is a critical element in the fight against antimicrobial-resistance, one of the key highlights of the World Antibiotic Awareness Week.
Open consultations: global monitoring of action on the social determinants of health: a proposed framework

WHO invites Member States and organizations or individuals to contribute their feedback on a proposed monitoring framework for action on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) and its indicators, as presented in the consultation document. The framework and its indicators reflect pledges made in the Rio Political Declaration on the Social Determinants of Health that was endorsed by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in WHA resolution 65.8.

The vision of SDH-focused monitoring is to support sharing of country experiences and the strengthening of national monitoring capacities. This involves developing practical information resources on current monitoring systems and international norms and standards related to SDH-focused monitoring systems.

For more information regarding the consultation click here. For more on monitoring progress on SDH and health equity click here.

Addressing urban health equity through slum upgrading

During the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), WHO organized a technical meeting to address urban health equity through slum upgrading. The meeting focused on how health-enhancing urban interventions in slums need to deal with informal rules and discussed elements to support greater inclusivity and a more holistic vision on the part of cities. New reflections about how cities need to be shaped in order to address the needs of the entire population, including people living in slums and informal settlements, were also presented.

As a follow up to the meeting, WHO in collaboration with partners, will aim to provide further evidence on major health risks in slums. It will also look into: the health benefits of upgrading key interventions and examples of good practice; enhancing monitoring practices of health-related indicators in slums; exploring national and local implementation projects; and creating more opportunities for cross-sectoral dialogue at local and national levels.

The technical meeting was held from 13 to 14 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. For further information on WHO work on housing and health click here.

WHO strengthens capacity building on children’s health

A growing number of diseases in children from rural and urban areas are linked to unsafe, degraded environments. However, many health-care providers are unable to recognize, assess and manage environment-related diseases in children. In order to address this issue, WHO and collaborators have produced a training package for health care providers on Children's Environmental Health (CEH), a collection of 30 train-the-trainer modules with internationally harmonized information and peer-reviewed materials. During a working meeting in Sansepolcro, Italy from 26–27 October 2016, a three-year roadmap to reach new audiences using electronic communication and interactive scenarios was developed with the aim of providing innovative and more personalized training opportunities. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the International Society of Doctors for the Environment and WHO Collaborating Centres on CEH.

To access the WHO training package click here.

SELECTED HEALTH TOPICS FROM WHO’S PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT WEB SITES
- Climate change and human health
- Air pollution and health
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Social determinants of health

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT LINKS
- WHO Regional Office for Africa
- WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
- WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
- WHO Regional Office for the Americas
- WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- WHO Regional Office for Europe

NEW PUBLICATIONS AND VIDEOS
- Ministerial Declaration on Health, Environment and Climate Change
- Health as the pulse of the new urban agenda: United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development, Quito, October 2016
- BREATHE LIFE VIDEOS

Facts and Figures

Climate change and health
- Climate change affects social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.
- Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.
- The direct damage costs to health (i.e. excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation), is estimated to be US$ 2–4 billion per year by 2030.
- Areas with weak health infrastructure – mostly in developing countries – will be the least able to cope without assistance to prepare and respond.
- Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transport, food and energy-use choices can result in improved health, particularly through reduced air pollution.

For more information, please click here.

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