World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR South-East Asia

Malé Declaration

Building health systems resilience to climate change

We, the Health Ministers of Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region, participating in the Seventieth session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia in Malé, Maldives,

Recognizing the increasing body of evidence on the direct and indirect adverse impacts of climate change on human health and health systems, which pose a serious burden to sustainable socioeconomic development,

Concerned that extreme weather events, which are increasing in frequency and intensity in the Region, can overwhelm the already overstretched health sector's capacity to respond and pose health threats to the vulnerable populations in the Region,

Reaffirming the commitment made to World Health Assembly resolution WHA61.19, and Regional Committee resolution SEA/RC62/R2 on climate change and health; the Parliamentarians' call for action on protecting human health from climate change in the South-East Asia Region[1], and the Dhaka Declaration on South-East Asia Regional Health Concerns for Climate Change Negotiations[2],

Recalling the reference to the right to health in the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change[3], the Sustainable Development Goal 13 that calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[4],

Acknowledging the efforts being made by Member States in the WHO South-East Asia Region and development partners to address the challenges posed by climate change,

Recognizing the need to strengthen the capacity and efficiency of health systems to be responsive, reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience to climate change and extreme weather events,

Noting the WHO Operational Framework on building health systems resilience to climate change[5],

1. Endorse the Framework for Action on Building Health Systems Resilience to Climate Change in WHO South-East Asia Region 2017–2022, as annexed to this Declaration, as the operational reference in implementing this Malé Declaration;

1 http://www.searo.who.int/entity/climate_change/documents/sea_eh_571/en/
2 http://www.searo.who.int/entity/climate_change/documents/sea_eh_572/en/
3 http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf
4 http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf
5 http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/building-climate-resilient-health-systems/en/

2. Call upon UN agencies and other international organizations, development partners, philanthropic agencies, academic and civil society organizations to support the implementation of this Declaration, and to mobilize human, financial and technical resources for this purpose;

3. Agree at national level to:

   3.1 continue to raise public and policy awareness on the health impacts of climate change across the entire societies, and encourage the leading role of the health sector in addressing such impacts of climate change;

   3.2 advocate and intensify work with health-determining sectors[6] to encourage climate-sensitive health concerns and risks are taken into account and integrated in their respective policies and programmes;

   3.3 develop and/or strengthen health national adaptation plans (HNAPs) as an integral part of national adaptation plans in order to encourage that climate risks are integrated into health policy, climate-sensitive disease (CSD) programmes and health systems, as appropriate;

   3.4 strengthen national capacity in building health systems resilience to climate change, including establishing and/or strengthening national institutions for training the health workforce;

   3.5 enhance health sector preparedness to climate change, particularly in promoting climate-resilient health-care facilities to encourage that these are able to withstand any climatic event, and that essential services such as water, sanitation, waste management and electricity are functional during such events;

   3.6 initiate the greening of the health sector by adopting environment-friendly technologies, and using energy-efficient services;

   3.7 establish and strengthen climate change and health information systems and research, and promote the dissemination of evidence, including in the operational areas of health vulnerability assessment to climate change, health risk mapping, and CSD surveillance systems;

   3.8 encourage that climate change risks are integrated in national disaster risk management, including emergency risk reduction and response;

   3.9 mobilize domestic and external resources, including through advocacy for a better share to the health sector of climate change funding mechanisms; and

6 Water and sanitation, environment, agriculture, energy, transport and disaster management sectors

3.10 designate a national focal point in the Ministry of Health to coordinate and monitor implementation of this Declaration,

4. Request the WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia to:

4.1 raise awareness and advocate for international attention to, and support Member States of the South-East Asia Region in mobilizing resources to address the health impacts of climate change;

4.2 promote knowledge- and experience-sharing mechanisms, including through establishing regional research networks and centers of excellence in climate change and health for collaborative research;

4.3 provide technical support to, and strengthen the technical capacity of, Member States in implementing the Malé Declaration, including through monitoring and tracking progress in addressing climate change and health, and relevant SDG targets;

4.4 report on the progress of implementing this Malé Declaration at the Seventy-fifth session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia in 2022.

Malé, Maldives
7 September 2017