



COP28
UAE

Invitation to Comment on COP28 proposed Declaration on Climate and Health

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is honoured to serve as Presidency of the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) / CMP18 / CMA5. During our preparations, we have heard from across governments that human health should be placed at the heart of climate action.

In response to this call, we are introducing the first-ever Health Day in the COP process, as well as hosting its first climate-health ministerial. Through this note, we are sharing with you the zero-draft declaration of this ministerial – developed through consultations with parties this year – acknowledging the critical importance of policy and investment to address the burden of climate change on health systems, as well as raising our populations' health and well-being through the implementation of all pillars of the Paris Agreement.

We will be co-hosting a number of virtual briefing sessions with the World Health Organization on the attached draft and welcome your comments, which can be submitted to health@cop28.com by 25 October, 2023. Having incorporated all inputs received, we will preview the declaration during the World Health Summit in Berlin on 15 October 2023 and circulate the final version on 1 November, 2023.

We look forward to hearing back from you and welcoming your delegations to the UAE and COP28 and appreciate your support.

Please find enclosed:

- 1) COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, Draft Zero dated 26 September 2023
- 2) FAQs

COP28 Presidency

COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health

We, on the occasion of the first Health Day at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), express our grave concern about the adverse impacts that climate change is having on public health, and stress the importance of addressing the interactions between climate change and human health and wellbeing in the context of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.ⁱ

We recognise the urgency of taking action on climate change – including through deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions across sectors, and urgent efforts to implement adaptation actions and build resilience – which in turn can deliver extraordinary benefits for public health, wellbeing, lives and livelihoods.ⁱⁱ

In this year of the first Global Stocktake, and given the COVID-19 pandemic has strained all health systems and further widened inequities in access to health services, we are committed to the strengthening of health systems, and to better preparing communities and the most vulnerable populations in the face of accelerating climate change.

In order to work towards ensuring the transformation of health systems to be climate-resilient, carbon-neutral, sustainable and equitableⁱⁱⁱ, and better prepare communities for the impacts of climate change, we commit to pursuing the following common objectives:

- Promoting steps to curb emissions and reduce waste in the health sector, such as by assessing the greenhouse gas emissions of health systems, and developing action plans and nationally determined decarbonization targets for the health sector.
- Improving the ability to anticipate, and implement adaptation interventions against, climate-sensitive disease and health risks, including by bolstering climate-health information services, surveillance, early warning and response.
- Combating inequalities within and among countries, and pursuing policies that stem the tide of rising inequality, including through social protection systems, universal health coverage, food security and improved nutrition, safe drinking water, and sanitation and hygiene for all.
- Strengthening collaboration, sharing of best practices, and monitoring of progress, including through initiatives such as the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH).^{iv}

Furthermore, recognizing that finance flows through both the health sector and other climate-related sectors, as well as the challenges faced by health actors, in particular in low- and middle-income countries, in accessing finance for health and climate change activities^v, we underscore the need to better leverage synergies at the intersection of climate change and health in order to more efficiently and effectively advance climate and health goals.

In this context, we intend to strengthen our respective and shared efforts to:

- Encourage the scaling up of investments in climate and health from domestic budgets, multilateral development banks, multilateral climate funds, health financing institutions, philanthropies, bilateral development agencies, and private sector actors.
- Encourage international finance providers, including development banks, to strengthen the synergies between their climate and health portfolios, and enhance their support for country-led projects and programs at the health-climate nexus.
- Share learnings and best practices on financing and implementing climate-health interventions, and develop a common understanding of existing needs for climate-health finance, grounded in country priorities and needs. We welcome ongoing efforts in this regard, including by the COP28 presidency, the ATACH finance working group, and the joint Development Bank working group for climate-health financing.^{vi,vii}

Zero-draft declaration for open consultation. Version 25 September 2023.

- Improve monitoring, transparency and evaluation efforts of climate finance, as relevant, including for climate-health initiatives, in order to strengthen common understanding of its efficiency and effectiveness, and to maximise the delivery of positive health outcomes.

To achieve these aims – according to our common but differentiated responsibilities and our national circumstances – we commit to expedite the better integration of health considerations into our climate policy processes, and of climate considerations across our health policy agendas, including by:

- Incorporating health considerations in relevant Paris Agreement and UNFCCC processes, and mainstreaming climate considerations in global health work programmes, including those of the World Health Organization, where relevant and appropriate.
- Taking health into account, as appropriate, in designing the next round of nationally determined contributions, long Term strategies, and national adaptation plans.^{viii}
- Strengthening the development and implementation of climate and health policies, in order to maximise the health gains from mitigation and adaptation actions and prevent worsening health impacts from climate change, including through the better tracking of progress and effectiveness of policies, and through cross-sectoral collaboration and close partnerships with local communities, Indigenous people, women and girls, healthcare workers and practitioners, and the populations most vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change.
- Facilitating collaboration on human, animal, environment and climate health challenges, such as by: implementing a One Health approach; addressing the environmental determinants of health; strengthening research on the links between climatic factors and antimicrobial resistance; intensifying efforts for the early detection of zoonotic spill overs; and by promoting trans-disciplinary research.^{ix}

We will convene regularly with diverse line-ministries and stakeholders to foster synergies and strengthen multilateral collaboration on climate change and health, including through the ATACH initiative. We will plan to review our collective progress at future UN Climate Change Conference

Sources (not part of declaration)

ⁱ COP26 special report on climate change and health.

www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240036727

ⁱⁱ Synthesis report of the IPCC sixth assessment report.

https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syrr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ As already committed by over 70 countries as part of the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH). www.who.int/initiatives/alliance-for-transformative-action-on-climate-and-health

^{iv} These objectives build on the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which calls to "*Enhance the resilience of health systems and support development of climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems in collaboration with MDBs, and support the work of the WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH).*"

www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf

^v 2021 WHO Health and Climate Change Survey Report.

www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240038509

^{vi} ATACH finance working group. www.who.int/initiatives/alliance-for-transformative-action-on-climate-and-health/working-groups

^{vii} The joint Development Bank working group for climate-health financing was established in July 2023. It is hosted by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Climate Investment Funds (CIF). The COP28 presidency is an observer to the group. The group's purpose is to facilitate collaboration among development banks around climate and health activities.

^{viii} According to a 2023 WHO review, over 90% of Nationally Determined Contributions already include health considerations to some degree. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372276>

^{ix} The One Health approach has been supported by the 2023 G7 Nagasaki Health Ministers' Communiqué (<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10500000/001096403.pdf>) and the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf)

COP28 proposed Declaration on Climate and Health Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the objective of this declaration?

Based on a series of consultations the incoming COP28 Presidency has been running since March 2022 and the High-Level Dialogue on Climate and Health at this years' World Health Assembly, parties and non-state actors have repeatedly raised the need to elevate the political visibility of the climate-health nexus and for COP28 to convene a moment and mechanism to capture collective concern and commitments around climate and health. The declaration seeks to be the mechanism – as part of the COP28 Action Agenda (non-negotiated outcome track) – as is a non-binding, non-negotiated call to action and collective commitment that reflects the concerns and common position of countries on the importance of health within climate discourse and in the COP process – it begins to articulate how climate-health is defined and how parties come together to address the urgent need for integrating climate and health. The declaration is intended to serve as a political statement, call to action and joint vision for parties to convene and collaborate around that can be taken forward to and serve as a foundation for the upcoming World Health Summit Resolution and future COPs. Endorsement of the declaration will be significant and symbolic in showing country consensus around the importance of integrating climate and health and the impact of climate change on human health.

How was this draft declaration developed?

This draft declaration on climate change and health was developed by the incoming COP28 Presidency, the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) of the United Arab Emirates, and the World Health Organization (WHO), in close partnership with a contact group of “champion countries”. The group of champion countries include: Brazil, Kenya, Fiji, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Egypt, India, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, and Sierra Leone. The COP28 Presidency has held a series of 5 consultations with the champion group of countries and other parties and stakeholders to develop the zero-draft of the declaration. In addition, the COP28 health Steering Committee was consulted on various occasions.

The engagement of champion countries in the development of this draft declaration does not necessarily imply their full or final endorsement. Country endorsement will depend on the final version of the declaration and will be at the discretion of each country.

What is the legal status of this document?

The declaration is not a legally binding document. It sits outside of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and is not a negotiated document. It is a voluntary, non-binding political declaration meant to galvanise support for action on climate change and health. The COP28 Presidency aims to be as consultative as possible in the development of this declaration, in order for it to adequately reflect country priorities and needs.

What does the consultation and endorsement process look like?

The COP28 Presidency intends to host a series of consultations on the declaration, in partnership with WHO. Consultation dates will be communicated through the appropriate channels, including via the Permanent Missions to the UN in Geneva and via the regional and national focal points of WHO.

Tentative dates for further consultation process include the following:

- Sept 26: Zero-draft declaration is shared with the Permanent Missions in Geneva and with focal points at Ministries of Foreign Affairs.
- Sept 28: WHO Member State Information Session on “Health and Climate at the upcoming COP28”: 11 – 12.30 CET
- Regional consultation:
 - Oct 2: Regional consultation in WHO EMRO: 2pm - 4pm Cairo
 - Oct 2: Regional consultation in WHO EURO: 10am - 12pm CET
 - Oct 3: Regional consultation in WHO PAHO: 10am - 12pm DC
 - Oct3: Regional consultation in WHO AFRO: 10am - 12pm Congo Brazzaville
 - Oct 5: South-East Asia: 11:30am - 1:30pm Delhi
 - Oct 6: Regional consultation in WHO WPRO: 1pm - 3pm Manila
- Oct 9: Draft declaration is re-circulated, with country feedback incorporated.
- Oct 15: Preview of draft declaration at World Health Summit, Berlin.
- Oct 25: Deadline for written feedback on draft declaration.

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- **Oct 30: Final declaration is circulated to all Parties for endorsement.**
 - Dec 3: Deadline for endorsement of declaration. The COP28 declaration on climate and health is presented on Health Day.

How can I submit feedback on the draft declaration?

We welcome your comments on health@cop28.com by 25 October, 2023. Having incorporated all inputs received, we will preview the draft declaration during the World Health Summit in Berlin on 15 October 2023 and circulate the final version on 30 October, 2023.

Who should endorse the declaration?

We welcome the endorsement of both Ministers of Health, and of government representatives on behalf of their respective country.

How can Ministers of Health participate in Health Day?

The COP28 declaration on climate and health will be launched on 3 December as part of the first-ever Health Day and the first-ever climate-health ministerial at a COP. The ministerial is scheduled for the late afternoon, followed by an evening reception. Throughout Health Day, and ahead of the ministerial, various high-level events will provide opportunities for various ministers to speak and interact with peers and the COP28 audience. The office of the COP28 presidency stands ready to assist Ministers of Health to identify speaking opportunities throughout Health Day.

Are countries expected to make announcements on climate and health?

Yes, Ministers of Health and their counterparts in other line ministries are warmly invited to attend Health Day and showcase their commitment to, and progress on, climate and health. The COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health will be supplemented with an overview of country commitments, best practices, and country progress made on climate and health.

Will travel support be provided to Ministers of Health?

We are expecting member countries to support travel and participation of ministers of health to COP28 to attend the first-ever climate health ministerial on 3 December 2023. However, on a case-by-case basis, requests can be raised to the COP28 team on health@cop28.com or WHO where support is needed; the teams will raise to partners and sponsors who could potentially support.