**Hosted by WHO, 14th November 2023 at UNOG Room XVII**

**(Hybrid, webcast meeting)**

**Facing the Future: human health and climate change**

**OBJECTIVES**

* To explore the interrelatedness of human health and climate change
* To improve understanding of existing and emerging priorities and approaches for meeting human health care needs due to the impact of climate change
* To explore how the Trilateral cooperation can support countries to address health challenges arising as a result of climate change
* To provide a forum for the exchange of multiple stakeholders’ views.
* To provide useful contributions to the health and trade related events at The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28)

**CONTEXT**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the interconnected global challenges we face and recognize that action in one area affects outcomes in others. There is an alarming stagnation in progress towards achieving SDG-related health outcomes, including Universal Health Coverage (UHC), with over 30% of the global population – or 2.4 billion people – unable to access a basic package of health services and over two billion people suffering extreme financial hardship in seeking access to health care.

Progress in achieving global health goals is hampered by an increasingly complex environment due to accelerating changes in demographics, disease patterns, physical environment, economy, science and technology. All countries face a rise in aging populations, a growing prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, and threats from drug resistance and epidemic and pandemic-prone pathogens. Many countries are also faced with ongoing challenges of malnutrition and communicable diseases, while migration and humanitarian crises affect others.

Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter for people around the globe. It has profound implications for health, wellbeing and healthcare systems everywhere.

Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity, it is also driven by human activity and the resulting environmental degradation. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress alone. The direct damage costs to health are estimated to be between US$ 2–4 billion per year by 2030. The climate crisis threatens to undo the progress made over the last fifty years in development, global health, and poverty reduction, while further widening existing health inequalities between and within populations. It severely jeopardizes the realization of UHC in various ways, including by compounding the existing burden of disease and by exacerbating existing barriers to accessing health services.

As a result of the climate crisis, the demand for health services and products is increasing, underscoring the imperative need for stronger and resilient health systems to address ongoing issues and pre-empt and prevent future crisis. As made evident by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing sustainable and equitable access to life-saving medical care is a fundamental necessity for all those affected. Substantially strengthening preparedness and responsiveness of the health care architecture everywhere could also be a means to address the growing incidence of humanitarian crises caused by climate change, with a record of more than 340 million people requiring assistance in 2023 across every WHO Region.

**The three organizations’ contributions to the topic**

The impact of climate change on human health, especially among the world’s most marginalized populations, is a devastating reality that warrants urgent and unified action. The three collaborating agencies aim to assist Members in making effective use of health, trade and intellectual property tools to mitigate and adapt to climate change and address its impacts on human health.

WHO’s Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW14) (2024-2028) plans for a dramatically different world and the imperative to address the profound implications for health due to climate change and other demographic, environmental, epidemiological, and economic changes. WHO’s priorities include not only addressing climate change and health and the related determinates and root cause of ill health, but also providing health in the face of changing global political priorities. WHO’s work addresses the deep interconnectedness between climate change, biodiversity, and health. WHO supports countries in building climate-resilient health systems and tracking national progress in protecting health from climate change, as well as in assessing the health gains that would result from the implementation of the existing Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement, and the potential for larger gains from more ambitious climate action.

WIPO’s mission to develop a balanced and inclusive global intellectual property (IP) ecosystem to promote innovation and creativity for a better and more sustainable future for all guides its activities in promoting IP as a catalyst of innovation and access. Specialized programs and initiatives at WIPO, such as WIPO [GREEN](https://www3.wipo.int/wipogreen/en/) (an online platform for green technology exchange), ongoing work on patent information and landscaping, technical assistance for Member States, as well as WIPO’s alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism are relevant to addressing challenges at the intersection of climate change and human health. In addition, WIPO’s work on IP frontier technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, is also relevant.  By promoting innovation, creativity and access, WIPO aims to ensure that stakeholders have the necessary tools to understand the role of the IP system in addressing global challenges.

The WTO’s mission is to help its members use trade as a means to raise living standards, create jobs and improve livelihoods, based on the sustainable use of resources and preservation of the environment. Many, if not most, WTO agreements thus provide Members with a framework under which health and climate change-related issues can be addressed. Trade and its rules are inextricably linked to the effects of climate change. This is underpinned by the ongoing work in a number of WTO bodies. The 2022 [World Trade Report](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/wtr22_e.htm) as well as the 2023 [Public Forum](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news23_e/pf23_31aug23_e.htm) explore how trade rules can contribute to addressing climate change.

The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, as provided by the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), provides a balanced framework for innovation and diffusion of climate adaptation technologies. A couple of WTO bodies, including the Committee on Agriculture, as well as the ongoing negotiations on updating the WTO's rulebook on agricultural trade, serve as fora for discussions of the impact of climate change on food and agricultural production, trade, and consumption patterns around the world, as well as the required adjustments in policies and regulations to help ensure food safety, food security and nutrition. At the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference, WTO Members agreed a landmark [Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity](https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/MIN22/28.pdf&Open=True). At the same conference, the [Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Declaration](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi3m-nw2f-AAxXp7rsIHb7LDooQFnoECBYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.wto.org%2Fdol2fe%2FPages%2FSS%2Fdirectdoc.aspx%3Ffilename%3Dq%3A%2FWT%2FMIN22%2F27.pdf%26Open%3DTrue&usg=AOvVaw1_BIXcwOHQrboaktGO9xjb&opi=89978449) launched a work programme addressing inter alia the effect of climate change on food production, shifting pest- and disease pressures, and the role of innovation in tools and technologies. The SPS Committee is due to present a report and recommendations to the WTO’s 13*th* Ministerial Conference in February 2024. To explore how climate change is altering and increasing the challenges faced in food production, the Standards and Trade Development Facility organized a series of [webinars](https://iconnect.wto.org/,DanaInfo=standardsfacility.org,SSL+exploring-impact-climate-change-global-food-system) in 2022. Among other things, they addressed the impact of climate change on food systems, emergence and transmission of animal diseases and pest outbreaks, which are intrinsically related to human health. Under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the TBT Committee regularly discusses climate-related regulations and standards to mitigate the impact on human health.

**Who can attend?**

Participation is open to all interested individuals, government delegations and organizations. In-person attendance is subject to availability of space. Registered participants without United Nations accreditation must present an official and valid form of identification.  The symposium will be held in English only; no interpretation will be available.

**TENTATIVE AGENDA**

**10:00- 10:30: Informal preparatory meeting**

Directors-General of the WHO, WIPO and the WTO.

Venue: Palais (tbd)

**SESSION I: OPENING**

**11:00 – 11:30**

**Opening remarks by the three Directors-General (10 minutes each)**

*General views of the three organizations and main calls to action*

* Convey the message that the three agencies, in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, provide a forum that can assist Members in making effective use of health, trade and intellectual property tools to mitigate climate change and address its impacts on human health.
* Outline each organization’s possible contribution, as well as the critical need to pull their expertise and resources together to support Members.
* Review lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and assess how they may be applied to climate change.

**11.30 – 11.55**

**Keynote speaker: climate change**

*20 minutes, 5 minutes Q&A*

First option: Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary UNFCCC

Second option: Prof. Zhong Ping, Chair Technology Executive Committee UNFCCC or Vice-Chair Ambrosio Yobanolo

**11:55 – 12:20**

**Keynote speaker: health impact of climate change**

*20 minutes, 5 minutes Q&A*

Sir Andy Haines, LSHTM[[1]](#footnote-2)

**LUNCH BREAK**

**12:20 -13:00**

**SESSION II:   
THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN HEALTH**

13:00 – 14:00

**Speakers (4)**

**Moderator:** Representative from the Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change or **trilateral official?**

**IGO**: Vanessa Kerry (WHO Director-General Special Envoy for Climate Change and Health) or Dr. Maria Neira, WHO’s Director of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health

**Government**: Muhammad Irfan Aslam, Minister for Water Resources and Climate Change, Pakistan

**Academic**: Prof Dubrow, Yale School of Public Health and James Hospedales, EarthMedic and EarthNurse; Caribbean Research for Action Agenda on Climate Change and Health in the Caribbean

**Communities: I**ndigenous Communities (from Canada, Alaska, Tuvalu) Inter-tribal Council Alaska

* Noting the challenges caused by climate change in relation to human health, share a vision as regards the way forward to limit its impact on human health.
* Provide an overview of major challenges in meeting the health care needs according to the changing priorities caused by climate change
* Identify health care needs to prevent additional morbidity and mortality resulting from change in disease patterns and ensure every country is fully prepared to mitigate and respond to acute health risks, due to infectious and other hazards, like climate change and loss of biodiversity.
* Exchange experts’ views on ensuring access to health interventions and technologies and how to meet the rising cost of health care. To address critical gaps in expanding access to of essential medical products and tackling out-of-pocket expenditures especially for the vulnerable.
* Discuss policies that help to limit disease, stabilize the climate to preserve biodiversity and secure well-functioning ecosystems to provide goods and services essential for human health. These include nutrition and food security, clean air and fresh water, protection from coastal storms and inland floodings.
* Consider how to better integrate health, climate, biodiversity and ecosystem management into holistic approaches in order to target a broader spectrum of issues threatening health outcomes.

**SESSION III:   
THE ROLE OF IP FOR INNOVATION AND ACCESS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1400 - 1500

**Moderator**: trilateral official?

**Health policy:** Michelle Childs, Head of Policy and Advocacy, DNDi or Prof. Samuel Kariuki , DNDi Eastern Africa Director

**Government**: Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) Canadian Government. HealthADAPT/ Guillerme Patriota, Brazil

**CSO:** Vicente Paolo Yu, Senior Legal Adviser with the Third World Network, Visiting Research Fellow at the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

**Industry**: Rich Lesser, Global Chair BCG and Chief Advisor, Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders

* Discuss how different types of technology can assist in addressing human health and climate change issues at various levels (for instance, prevention, detection, and treatment of diseases).
* Present IP policies, practices and strategies and their role in addressing climate change impacts on human health.
* Present stakeholders’ views and actions on how to integrate different areas to address climate change impacts on human health and which are the IP challenges and opportunities to bring innovations to the market.
* Consider lessons learnt from past experiences to promote innovation of and access to needed technologies.
* Evaluate the potential of new and open R&D models to drive innovation in this area and how they vary in their IP strategy.
* Discuss how a broader approach to the intersection of human health and climate change can accelerate the global response, and the importance of leveraging resources/initiatives like WIPO GREEN.

**SESSION IV:**

**CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN HEALTH AND TRADE**

15:00 – 16:00

**Moderator**: Trilateral official Or UNCTAD: Richard Kozul-Wright; Rashmi Banga

**Trade and sustainability expert:**

Renata Clarke, Climate and food expert, FAO regional office, Caribbean

Or Rashid Kaukab, Senior Specialist, Trade and Sustainable Development

or Ludmila Azo, Country Manager, International Trade Centre

**Scientist**: Delia Grace, Professor Food Safety Systems, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich and Joint appointed scientist, Animal and Human Health Program, International Livestock Research Institute

**Or IGO:** Maximo Torero, Chief Economist and Assistant Director-General of the Economic and Social Development Department, Food and Agriculture Organization – (Peru)

**Academia:** Dr. Carolyn Deere Birkbeck. Executive Director, Forum on Trade, Environment, & the SDGs (TESS), Geneva Graduate Institute

* Discuss how trade, trade policies and rules could help countries enhance their capacity to adapt and improve key infrastructure and emergency response systems to react to extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change and lessen their related negative impacts on health. This could include, for instance, access to more advance, efficient, and cost-effective cooling solutions, flood control systems, new biotechnologies and access to key disaster relief systems and products.
* Discuss how policies affecting trade and markets impact on the food security and nutrition dimension of human health, in the context of climate change.
* Discuss governments' ability to manage the impact of climate change related health risks, including through science based Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures. Explore how to build capacity to enable national agencies to conduct surveillance, build early warning and assess risks.

**SESSION V**

**CLOSING OVERVIEW: TAKEAWAYS FOR TRILATERAL COOPERATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

16:00 – 16:15

**First option**: Senior trilateral official (WHO?)

Or

**Second option:** Representative from the Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change

Or

**Fourth option:** Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, ITC.

Or

**Fifth option**: Dan Esty, Centre for International Environmental Law

1. see his lecture on "The Imperative of Climate Action for Health" at: https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/events/pumphandle-lecture-2022-sir-andy-haines [↑](#footnote-ref-2)