

WHF Statement on Agenda Item 3(b) – climate change and health – a framework for action

Honourable chair, distinguished delegates,

The World Heart Federation welcomes the Committee's report, and its proposed framework for action on climate change and health.

We applaud the recommendations put forward in the framework to integrate interventions to tackle air pollution as part of the framework, which has a huge impact on national burdens of non-communicable diseases (or NCDs).

Globally, 8.2 million deaths from NCDs each year are linked to environmental causes.¹ Air pollution – though often overlooked as a cause of death and disability – is among the major contributors to this figure; indeed, air pollution and tobacco smoke combined account for 31% of the global burden of cardiovascular diseases (or 'CVDs').²

This impact is felt acutely in EMRO Member States. 34% of deaths from stroke and 27% from CVD in the region can be attributed to air pollution.³

Tackling NCDs and protecting the environment are among the defining challenges of this century. Both have the potential to reverse development gains achieved in recent decades if we do not address them, amidst competing public health priorities.

However governments can take meaningful and affordable actions to reduce the negative impact of air pollution on health.

To support Member States' progress on this issue, we suggest the following actions:

1. **Implement MPOWER⁴ measures at the national level to help reduce air pollution from second-hand smoke.** These affordable interventions are designed to help countries strengthen tobacco control policies.
2. **Include environmental health experts in NCD multi-stakeholder committees,** to ensure that air pollution is addressed as an NCD risk factor.
3. **Develop and join multisectoral partnerships to create healthier living environments,** such as the Partnership for Healthy Cities.⁵ Five of the ten proven interventions supported by this initiative reduce both air pollution and NCD risk.

We reiterate our support to Member States in their implementation of the framework for action. Thank you.

¹ Dr Maria Neira, (WHO Director, Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health); *WHO Technical Briefing – Health and the environment: Inheriting a Sustainable World*.

² WHO. Preventing disease through healthy environments: a global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks, Geneva, World Health Organization, 2016.

³ EMRO Committee Report on agenda item 2(d)

⁴ WHO. MPOWER in Action: http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/publications/mpower_2013.pdf

⁵ Partnership for Healthy Cities : <https://partnershipforhealthycities.bloomberg.org/>