

**144th Session of the WHO Executive Board, 24 January – February 1st, 2019 Geneva**

***Agenda 5.6: Health, Environment and Climate Change***

Response to WHO Report EB144/15: [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB144/B144\\_15-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB144/B144_15-en.pdf)

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates:

WHF thanks WHO for its report, and commends the draft global strategy on health, environment and climate change.

The link between air pollution and heart health is commonly unknown. Did you know that nineteen percent of all cardiovascular diseases (CVD) deaths are caused by outdoor and household air pollution? That is the equivalent to more than 3 million deaths every year. 1.4 million people die from stroke and over 2 million from heart disease. Whilst you are unlikely to remember these figures by heart (forgive the pun), perhaps you will remember that air pollution is as big of a risk factor for CVD as tobacco.

We commend the leadership role that the WHO wishes to play as outlined in the strategy. We strongly support its role in fostering high-level political support, coordinating regional policy processes, stimulating urban governance to develop healthy and sustainable cities and ensuring that the “voice of health” is placed at the heart of all discussions.

We call on Ministries of Health to engage productively with the WHO as well as their colleagues in the Ministries of environment, transport and finance to implement this strategy. We pledged to do more to support you.

We will promote the need for further research on heart health and air quality so that you have more evidence to bring to your colleagues at your fingertips.

Finally, we have the power to reach up to 2 billion people on World Heart Day and we pledge to continue to raise awareness to reduce air pollution, promote physical activity, and active transport so that everyone can have a healthy heart.

We must work together to ensure that our children can grow up in healthier cities, breathe clean air and decrease their risk of heart disease and stroke. Time is running out.