



This press release relates to an offsite COP21 side event in Paris taking place 9.30-12.30 on 4 December 2015 – journalists who want to attend should contact Diana Smith, 06 33 04 2943. They will have an opportunity to interview speakers at the end of the event.

PRESS RELEASE

Doctors around the globe tackle climate change and fossil fuels

Paris, 4 December 2015 - Public health advocates from five continents will today share success stories on energy choices that protect health and mitigate climate change and air pollution.

Taking place in Paris during the COP21 climate talks, the event is entitled “Health professionals in action for Healthy Energy and Climate” (1). It is organised by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) in collaboration with the Conseil National de l’Ordre des Médecins (CNOM), the World Medical Association and the International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations, which represent millions of doctors worldwide.

The French medical council, Conseil National de l’Ordre des Médecins (CNOM), has recently issued a webzine on health and climate change (2) to its 280,000 members. Its leaders are concerned about the risks to health from climate change and want to promote the positive effects that reducing emissions - from coal powered electricity generation, private cars in cities and fossil fuel use in heating and cooking – can have on health from cleaner air. Air quality in France is responsible for 43,000 premature deaths per year. (3)

Dr Patrick Bouet, CNOM President says: “Climate change is above all a question of public health. Doctors are in the front-line in responding to the harm from climate turmoil. We have a privileged position and a moral duty to protect and promote the population’s health. An imperative is to appeal to professional medical organizations to call on local politicians to limit emissions in our towns.”

The World Medical Association has shown consistently strong leadership in promoting the involvement of physicians in climate action since 2009. It supports the recent WHO Call to Action on climate and health (4), the Paris Platform for Healthy Energy (5) and is an important partner in the “Our Climate, Our Health” campaign, (6).

Dr Xavier Deau, Immediate Past President of the World Medical Association (WMA) says: “Thanks to the many physicians who are taking up their responsibility as leaders on climate action, health is moving up the agenda. But it is not yet in the central place that must be achieved. Governments should be hearing more from us on the health and humanitarian disaster that is looming and about the policies needed to protect and promote the health of all our patients.”

The International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA) represents a group of young people who will feel the full impact of climate change. “We are calling for more ambition in the Paris agreement and national actions to address health co-benefits,” says Skander Essafi, IFMSA Liaison Officer for Public Health Issues. “The health sector organisations should divest from the fossil fuel industry – just as they did from the tobacco industry in previous years,”

Representatives from many powerful international and national medical bodies around the world are taking part in the meeting. Their healthy energy testimonies will be web-streamed and shared via social media. Genon Jensen, Executive Director of Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) says:

“The Health and Environment Alliance calls for the swift decarbonisation of our economies and energy systems to tackle climate change, reduce pollution and boost health. (7) Energy choices are a key driver for better health and for dealing with the challenge of climate change. By sharing the convincing arguments on an equitable transition to cleaner forms of energy - in Paris and with national governments, in their clinics and hospitals when they go home - doctors can bring health closer to the top of the climate agenda.”

Notes to journalists

1. See full details and programme at http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/27112015_agenda_4_dec_event_healthy_energy_and_climate_final.pdf
2. https://www.conseil-national.medecin.fr/sites/default/files/cn_webzine/2015-12/www/index.php#/intro
3. European Environment Agency, 'Air quality in Europe — 2015 report' The report provides [estimates of premature deaths at country level](#).
4. World Health Organization - Our climate, our health: It's time for all health professionals to take action, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/commentaries/climate-change-conference/en/>
5. Paris Platform for Healthy Energy <http://www.healthyenergyinitiative.org/get-involved/platform/>
6. Our Climate, Our Health campaign is coordinated by Global Climate and Health Alliance. <http://www.climateandhealthalliance.org/>
7. HEAL is calling for “a 100% phase out of fossil fuels and a 100% phase in of renewables by 2050 at the latest” see http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/151120_heal_message_for_cop21_final.pdf

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*The **Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of more than 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Our broad alliance of international, Europe-wide, national and local members represent health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, scientists, patients and citizens. Website: www.env-health.org. Follow HEAL on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter @HealthandEnv](#)*

*The **World Medical Association (WMA)** is the global federation of National Medical Associations representing millions of physicians worldwide. Acting on behalf of patients and physicians, the WMA endeavours to achieve the highest possible standards of medical care, ethics, education and health-related human rights for all people.*

*The **International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)** envisions a world in which medical students unite for global health and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to take on health leadership roles locally and globally. Founded in 1951, it is one of the world's oldest and largest student-run organizations. It represents, connects and engages every day with an inspiring and engaging network of 1.3 million medical students from 129 national member organizations in 121 countries around the globe.*

*The **French Medical Council (CNOM)** is a private body entrusted with a public service mission representing all doctors. “At the service of doctors in the interest of patients”: this is the commitment of the Medical Council in its everyday activities, and in conjunction with all the health system actors. The French Medical Council compulsorily brings together all doctors entitled to practice, it ensures compliance with ethical and competence standards. It carries out its duties through Departmental and Regional Councils and the National one.*