

HEAL at the Marrakesh UN climate change negotiations COP22 for health

As the world still rejoiced over the strong COP21 Paris climate agreement, HEAL and its delegation engaged with the health community to keep up the strong call for health in climate negotiations at COP22 in Marrakesh.

28 November 2016 - Almost 500 Heads of States, Governments and Ministers attended this year's UNFCCC COP ('Conference of the Parties'), which took place in Marrakesh from 7 to 18 November. HEAL participated with a delegation from India, Turkey, Belgium, France and Morocco who worked closely with global and regional organisations from the health and environment community to put healthy energy on the agenda of the climate negotiations.



Photo caption: The HEAL delegation together with various public health actors incl. WHO representatives during a health sector gathering

TAKE ACTION: Sign on to the Declaration for Health, Environment and Climate Change

Gathering at the COP22 climate meeting in Marrakech, over two dozen Ministers and high level officials from both the health and environment sectors signed up to the **Declaration for Health, Environment and Climate Change**. The goal is to reduce the annual 12.6 million deaths caused by environmental pollution, including the estimated 6.5 million deaths a year attributable to air pollution, via a new global initiative to promote better management of environmental and climate risks to health. Organisations & individuals can sign this declaration at:

<http://www.who.int/globalchange/mediacentre/events/sign-form/en/>

The Paris Agreement

This year's COP witnessed the very first session of the "Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement" (CMA1) bringing together countries to discuss the steps following the ratification of the Paris Agreement. So far, 112 out of 197 Parties have ratified to the Agreement which [entered into force on 4 November 2016](#).

Although the Paris Agreement attracted new signatories just days before COP22 started, according to the former UN climate chief Christiania Figueres, only 15 countries mention health in their national climate action plans. This year's COP therefore proved an opportunity for the health and medical community to showcase their expertise, knowledge, initiatives, lesson learned and political commitments on health, environment and climate, to make sure that climate action benefits health worldwide.

HEAL activities at COP22

Building on the much-welcomed climate agreement of the previous year, HEAL used COP22 as an opportunity to continue to raise awareness on how healthy energy helps governments around the world to reach the goals set in the Paris Agreement and how it greatly improves health. During various activities taking place in Marrakesh, the official HEAL delegation amplified the voice of medical and health professionals, working closely with medical associations around the world and the WHO.



Health Action Day, 11th November 2016

It was the first time in the history of COP, that the role of health in the climate debate was acknowledged with its own official “action day”.

The Health Action Day, organised under the leadership of the Climate Champions Laurence Tubiana, French Ambassador for Climate Change, and Hakima El Haité, Minister Delegate in charge of the Environment to the Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and the Environment of Morocco together with the World Health Organization (WHO), provided participants with an update on the Health Action Agenda approved at the Second Global Conference on Health and Climate, (7-8 November 2016, Paris). More importantly, it provided an overview of actions that the global public health community

is undertaking to ensure support for health and climate, address health risks and opportunities arising from climate change and measure country progress.

HEALs head of delegation, Vijoleta Gordeljevic gave a presentation on the climate movement's new champions: doctors and other health professionals active around climate mitigation by influencing local energy decisions in countries worldwide and hence, decreasing air pollution while contributing to the Paris Agreement.



Health-related events and outcomes at COP22

Next to the official Health Action Day, several other health-related events caught the attention of COP attendees and helped convey why a concern for good health needs to guide climate change negotiations:

Ministerial Meeting on Health and Climate Change, 15 November



The Ministerial Meeting on Health and Climate Change hosted by the WHO brought together Ministers of Environment and selected Ministers of Health attending COP22, with the aim of gathering endorsements for the so-called [Marrakech declaration](#) on Health, Environment and Climate Change and identify ways and means for a potential future coalition on Health, Environment and Climate Change.

The meeting was opened by WHO Director General Margaret Chan, who stressed the interconnection between a healthy environment and good health. The event resulted in very enthusiastic statements made by dozens of ministers, highlighting the risks that climate change poses to their nation's health and endorsing the declaration as an opportunity to achieve better public health worldwide. The declaration will be circulated and the WHO in partnership with UN Environment will follow up for specific next steps.

10th Focal Point Forum of the Nairobi Work Programme: Health and Adaptation, 9 November

The Nairobi Forum focused on the topic of [health and adaptation](#), in accordance with the outcomes of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).

Ahead of the Forum, parties, partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders submitted contributions including topics such as changes in the geographical distribution of diseases due to climate change, new and emerging diseases and their impacts on social and economic structures, effects of climate change on health and productivity in the workplace. Emerging concerns based on submissions by countries include: vector borne diseases, waterborne diseases; diarrheal diseases and malnutrition related to flooding and drought. Concerns are not only focused on the physical impact of climate change but also on the risks it poses to health systems.

Dr. Pablo Suarez, Associate Director for Research and Innovation at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre facilitated the session, where participants creatively discussed what actions are needed to progress adaptation to climate change. Solutions were presented either in the form of a group drawings or a stage performances. HEAL delegation members joined parties and researchers from various countries to come up with a variety of ideas for action: from tailored educational programs for health professionals, over using technology and video to convey the urgency for climate action, to concrete ideas around medical professionals acting for better air quality.



Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change, 14 November

The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change hosted a press conference to mark the official launch of this landmark international, multi-disciplinary research collaboration.

HEAL supports the Lancet Countdown, which brings together leading experts to track and analyse the impacts of climate change on public health. It follows on from the work of the 2015 Lancet Commission, which concluded that “tackling climate change

could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century”. Reporting annually in *The Lancet*, the Countdown will follow a series of indicators, demonstrating that this transition is possible, that it has already begun, but that more work is needed. It will complement other initiatives, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its achievements for climate science.

After the launch in Marrakech, the Lancet Countdown held a London launch event on 16 November with a guest lecture by former UN Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres talking about the opportunity the Agreement presents for better health.

Climate and Health Care Conference – COP22, 14 November

This one-day conference at The Mohammed VI University Hospital of Marrakech, organized by Health Care Without Harm, brought together health sector representatives and experts from around the world to discuss the integral role of health care in global climate action. Speakers, including representatives from the government, private, and public sector of host country, Morocco, presented strategies and success stories on how health care can mitigate its climate impacts, develop low carbon models of care, and prepare to stand resilient in the face of a changing climate.

The conference focused on the role that the health sector can play in this global effort. From carbon mitigation strategies being implemented by CHU Niort (France), to approaches to reduce the carbon footprint of health care procurement from Region Skåne (Sweden) and the Sustainable Development Unit (UK), to regional climate resiliency planning measures undertaken by Assistance Publique – Hôpitaux de Paris (France).

UNFCCC Climate Studio Interview, 17 November



HEAL's Funda Gacal from Turkey was interviewed by the UNFCCC Studio on climate change, air pollution and public health. Funda highlighted that 92 percent of the global population is suffering from air pollution and people's health must be in the center of climate action.

Marie-Christine Dewolf from Belgium-based Hygiene Publique en Hainaut, and member of the HEAL delegation, has also met the UNFCCC for an interview to point to the importance environmental policies can have on public health.

Turkish Climate TV Interview, 9th November

Dr Kayihan Pala, HEAL delegate and representative of the Turkish Medical Association was interviewed by Turkish Climate TV on his views around health and climate. The interview took place a day after the US president-elect was announced and focused on what the election result would mean for the global climate community.

A more complete list of health-related events at COP22 can be found [here](#).



Photo caption: Dr Kayihan Pala from the Turkish Medical Association gives an interview for Turkish Climate TV

Other important outcomes from the climate negotiations



After the ratification of the Paris Agreement, issues such as adaptation of the agreement, funding mechanisms, long term plans, revision of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) with more ambitious plans were the main discussion topics of COP22.

As UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa said, *“During COP 22, the strength, the support for and the robustness of the Paris Agreement was furthered underlined, with nine more*

ratifications received at the UN in New York and the promise of many more to come. Nations reaffirmed that the agreement is in their national interests and a key catalyst to a better, more prosperous future for their citizens”.

The Marrakech Action Proclamation which was issued by heads of state and government was widely seen as a reaffirmation of global commitment to the Paris Agreement. Although COP22 moved slowly in that many opportunities for decision-making were not taken and issues were postponed for discussion in 2017 and 2018, a few key outcomes can be highlighted. For a detailed list of the official outcomes of the COP you can read the outcome documents provided on the UNFCCC website.

Further resources and useful information

- ▶ HEAL's work on climate and energy
 - ▶ HEAL is a partner in 'Our Climate, Our Health', a global campaign by GCHA of which HEAL is a member.
 - ▶ HEAL is a partner of the Global Climate and Health Alliance and the Healthy Energy Initiative, and an accredited civil society stakeholder in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- ▶ HEAL is part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Working Group on Health and Climate (HIC) HEAL Healthy Energy Paper [add once final and online]