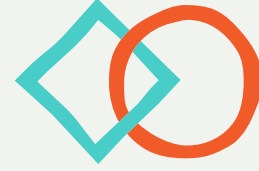




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HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT
AND CLIMATE
TURKEY

Background Document:

Recommendations from the Health Sector in Turkey on Climate Action and COP 26



HEAL
HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT
ALLIANCE



Health and medical organisations and individuals have become increasingly concerned about the health impacts of climate change and voicing their concern. For the past couple of years, the Lancet Countdown on Climate Change and Health has tracked developments on climate and health across 40 indicators in a unique interdisciplinary collaboration.

Ahead of this year's COP26, which is one of the most important ones in the UN's history, more than 400 organisations representing at least 45 million doctors and health professionals worldwide, together with over 3,400 individuals from 102 different countries called on the leaders of every country and their representatives at COP26 to avert the impending health catastrophe by limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and to make human health and equity central to all climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.

In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the COP26 Special Report on Climate Change and Health on 11 October 2021. WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus underlined that the COVID-19 pandemic had shone a light on the intimate and delicate links between humans, animals and our environment. The same unsustainable choices that were killing our planet were killing people. WHO called on all countries to commit to decisive action at COP26 to limit global warming to 1.5°C – not just because it was the right thing to do, but because it was in our own interests.

WHO put forward 10 recommendations in the report to propose a set of priority actions from the global health community to governments and policy makers, calling on them to act with urgency on the current climate and health crises. The recommendations were developed in consultation with over 150 organisations and 400 experts and health professionals.



**10 recommendations
of WHO for climate
action at global
scale:**

1. Commit to a healthy, green and just recovery from COVID-19.
2. Place health and social justice at the heart of the UN climate talks.
3. Prioritise those climate interventions with the largest health, social and economic gains.
4. Build climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health systems and facilities and support health adaptation and resilience across sectors.
5. Guide a just and inclusive transition to renewable energy to save lives from air pollution, particularly from coal combustion. End energy poverty in households and health care facilities.
6. Promote sustainable, healthy urban design and transport systems, with improved land-use, access to green and blue public space, and priority for walking, cycling and public transport.
7. Protect and restore natural systems, the foundations for healthy lives, sustainable food systems and livelihoods.
8. Promote sustainable and resilient food production and more affordable, nutritious diets that deliver on both climate and health outcomes.
9. Transition towards a wellbeing economy.
10. Mobilise and support the health community on climate action.¹

Some of these recommendations can be supported by the health community in Turkey. Turkey announced that it will be a part of the Paris Climate Agreement on 10th November 2021 and also announced the net zero target by 2053.

With wildfires, droughts, extreme rainfalls and declining agricultural yield, climate change has become more visible than ever in Turkey.



**As ÇİSİP,
we suggest the global
recommendations of
WHO to be adopted
to Turkey as follows:**

- The health sector in Turkey is dealing with the workload created by COVID-19 as well as violence against health workers. The climate crisis is aggravating this already heavy workload. Take into consideration the heavy burden on health workers and take urgent and reasonable measures for climate action. Starting with health associations that reflect the common views of the health sector, consult with the health sector and include their views in parliamentary discussions, action plans and policy papers.
- Prioritize public health and social justice during climate negotiations. Act wisely by considering that climate change is threatening millions of lives in Turkey and that some actions could have larger health, social and economic outcomes for the citizens.
- Turkey's ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement is an initial step in taking ambitious climate actions. Follow the example of other countries and define a roadmap to deliver on the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the "net zero emissions by 2053" target.

- To save lives from climate change and air pollution, particularly from coal combustion, begin by defining a coal phase out date. In Turkey, the main air pollutants emitted by large coal-fired power plants are estimated to cause about 5,000 premature deaths every year. The yearly economic cost from loss of life and other health burdens caused by air pollution from large coal-fired power plants are estimated at 5.20 - 10.9 billion Euros for the region and at 2.86 - 5.88 billion Euros in Turkey alone.²
- End energy poverty in households, and taking into consideration the already warmer summer months and the increase in energy prices globally, consider distributed clean energy generation.
- Globally, economies are moving away from fossil fuel financing and operations such as coal mining, oil and natural gas exploration. Enable a smooth and just transition in coal regions and for relevant professions.

About the Project

The Environment, Climate and Health Cooperation Project (ÇİSİP in Turkish) was launched by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), HASUDER (Association of Public Health Professionals-Turkey) and Kocaeli University Department of Public Health in April 2020. Funded by the European Union, ÇİSİP aims to bring together all environmental health actors in Turkey and to support health professionals in the fields of environmental and climate policies.

The Environment, Climate and Health Cooperation Project will continue until April 2023 and aims to:

- Establish a collaborative platform on the environment and climate change for all health professionals.
- Organize online trainings, provide mobile training seminars and courses for medical students on the environment and climate change with a public health perspective.
- Create a dialogue between health professionals in Turkey, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations and think tanks in Europe.
- Produce environmental, climate change and health content, briefs and training materials directed to health professionals.



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