



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

Health Co-benefits of Investing in climate

IFMSA Policy Brief

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Climate and health are largely interconnected despite the usual paradigm. If we manage to invest wisely in mitigation and adaptation response to climate change, we will be able to both be on the path to reach the 1.5C target as well as improve public health. There are numerous examples of the so-called health co-benefits such as active transportation, which will reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes and coronary heart disease, and clean energy in households, which will reduce respiratory disease and infant mortality.
⇒ **2 for 1**: One investment in our climate can give your population good health in addition.

Natural disasters, crop failure and widespread of infectious diseases, are all examples of complications that are already causing serious damage to our health, as well as the planet. These outcomes will not only continue, but amplify rapidly if climate action is not taken. Furthermore, the impacts of climate change will affect the world's most disadvantaged populations earlier and more severely than more resourceful populations, and will exacerbate inequity and undermine the social determinants of health and the last half century's advances in development and global health.
⇒ **2 for none**: if no investment is made, the health of our planet and of its inhabitants are largely at stake.

How to invest?

The future costs associated with climate change must be shared fairly between nations, seeing the different national circumstances. This should take into account equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC).

In light of the above stances and recent events, the IFMSA calls Governments to:

1. Engage in a fair international negotiation process under the UNFCCC, in which the rights of every country and their people are respected and represented equally.
2. Invest time, effort and finances into developing mechanisms, from countries and for-profit sectors, to achieve measurable carbon reduction, create jobs and contribute to a more sustainable world.
3. Develop partnerships to mobilize and guide investment in climate change and health; building a donor-focused community of practice, assessing the status of financing of national and international health goals and commitments, and by providing support in developing strategies and facilitating access to climate change finance. It may also include development of new financing mechanisms, e.g national trust funds.
4. Provide a strong mechanism to address loss and damages supported by financial means that are not in competition with climate finance for mitigation and adaptation, as well as an adequate valuation of non-economic losses which include health and human life.

Long-term cost of "none" is higher than investing now

Climate change will affect the basic elements of life for people around the world - access to water, food production, health, and the environment. The overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5% of global GDP each year, now and forever. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change can be limited to around 1% of global GDP each year.

The Stern Review - The Economics of Climate Change 2006



Invest 2 for 1, for better health and climate!

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