



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

To strengthen National Health Policies in the Paris Agreement Implementation IFMSA Policy Brief UNFCCC Conference of Parties 22, 7-18 November 2016 Marrakech, Morocco

Climate change is the 21st century's most pressing health issue. Yet in current climate negotiations, health is still being treated as peripheral despite its overarching relevance to many central issues. Although climate change has tremendous impacts on health, this nexus is poorly reflected in the Paris Agreement; the impending decisions about the implementation of the agreement in Morocco at COP22 make this an issue of great urgency.

Every year, millions of people die due to the causes and consequences of climate change. The impacts of climate change on human health and well-being are varied: we are already seeing direct effects such as the changing distribution of vector-borne diseases, and increasing loss of life due to extreme weather events. Through food and water insecurity, mass migration, and increased violence and conflict, climate change further threatens health by undermining the social and economic determinants of health. Despite this, climate change is our biggest opportunity to improve the health and well-being of populations around the world.

Medical Students worldwide believe that taking climate action will not only have a direct impact on the quality of human life, but is also accompanied by significant co-benefits to health: active transportation will reduce risk of obesity, diabetes and coronary heart disease; clean energy in households will reduce respiratory disease and infant mortality; renewable energy will decrease cases of asthma, and so on.

To be able to maximize these co-benefits, we believe that **it is imperative for health professionals to be actively involved in the dialogue of climate change action.** As such, health co-benefits of climate action, including substantial economic benefits, must be considered when planning implementation of the Paris Agreement.

At local and national levels, this implementation must be carried out in collaboration with community planners, as, in the long run, a sustainable environment that keeps with the health necessities of the population is more likely to be beneficial to mankind. This includes more efficient city-planning with energy efficient buildings, green spaces, enhanced surveillance systems and policies for better management of waste.

Additionally, **the implementation of the Paris Agreement must take into consideration the value of intergenerational mobility**, as an important implementation tool. It is vital we include all generations because of the principle of climate justice and its temporal association; that we do not inherit this earth from our ancestors, but rather borrow from our children.

Youth of today have innovative ideas for mitigation and adaptation that deserve a place in our national policies. Involve us now, together we stand stronger!

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