

mechanisms and inter-organizational have the necessary expertise and political support to fully engage across all aspects of climate change and sustainable development.

- **Enhanced collaboration between sectors is required in order to ensure a comprehensive response to climate change.** A siloed approach to protecting human health from climate change will not work. Mechanisms that facilitate inter-sectoral policy development and implementation at the global level are needed.



Briefing for the global health community

coverage (UHC) will be won or lost depending on how quickly the world can comprehensively respond to climate change. **Integrating commitment to climate change across all departments and sectors in global health institutions will help build the necessary health expertise and capacity needed to respond to climate change.**

address climate change. Delivering opportunities with mutual benefits, including poverty eradication, improved health, universal education, better food and energy security, underlines the case for intersectoral action.

Many mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change are 'no-regret' options. Although this does not make a strong global agreement automatic or easy, **through serious multilateral processes and actions climate change can be tackled whilst simultaneously contributing to the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We can turn the greatest threat into the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century,** but only if we act quickly, collectively and for the long term.

2. **Support and encourage an international agreement on climate change, which protects public health.** Whilst the international climate negotiations are very complex, their goals are very simple: agree on ambitious and enforceable global mitigation targets, on adaptation finance to protect countries' rights to sustainable development, and on the policies and mechanisms that enable these measures. In line with WHO recommendations, this should include additional financing to strengthen health systems and health adaptation, and early prioritisation for mitigation technologies having the potential to improve public health.
3. **Invest in climate change and public health research, monitoring and surveillance** to ensure a better understanding of the adaptation needs and potential co-benefits of climate mitigation. National policymakers require locally relevant data to support decision-making, an effort which should be supported by and driven in collaboration with the global health community.
4. **Strengthen health systems as a priority area for adaptation to climate change.** Additional international finance is required to ensure that health systems are equipped to respond to the worst effects of climate change and can protect the most vulnerable in society. With adequate investment, health systems and healthcare facilities could act as anchors of community resilience, reducing poverty and improving health equity.
5. **Communicate the links between climate change and global health** to ensure that the risks and opportunities are understood by the general public and all parts of the health profession globally. Public awareness of the health risks of climate change, even from heatwaves and other extreme weather events, is currently low. Innovative media strategies are needed to enhance awareness of such risks and improve public uptake. **Public health leaders, including those from intergenerational boards, are in a strong position**

agreement will depend on an equitable consensus on achieving these goals, for which global health organisations should advocate.

Conclusion

The 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change suggests that promoting a health agenda may help accelerate responses to climate change, in the process significantly benefiting the health and wellbeing of our families, communities and countries.

Leveraging this opportunity and rapidly implementing actions will ensure that gaps in prosperity - which would otherwise threaten national, global, and planetary stability - are bridged. In the spirit of shared responsibility, smart investments in climate action today will yield high returns, and serve as a pathway to sustainable development.

Noting that global health equity, sustainable development and the international response to climate change are inseparable, simultaneously addressing these will help to realise the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century.

2015 LANCET COMMISSION ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Commission is an international, independent collaboration of academic experts, formed to map out justification for policy responses to climate change. It exists as a collaboration between European and Chinese climate scientists, geographers, social and environmental scientists.