

Medicus Mundi International

Meeting: Seventy-first World Health Assembly (A71/1)

Agenda Item: 11.4 Health, environment and climate change

Statement:

MMI takes this opportunity to address agenda 11.4. The statement is supported by PHM.

Recognising that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to global health, we support the commitment to action on climate change and other issues of environmental destabilisation and appreciate the decision to develop an Action Plan and Global Strategy on the environment and climate change. We commend the WHO's move to take increasing responsibility for protecting and promoting health in response to climate change by reaffirming its mandate to "act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work" in this regard. Climate Change places an unacceptable burden on LMICs and the most vulnerable marginalised communities.

We are however, disheartened by the unwillingness of some of the largest contributors to global emissions to fulfil commitments to reducing their emissions. We urge the US to reconsider the decision to withdraw and cease implementation of the Paris Agreement. The WHO must recognize the polluter pays principle - most of the corporate sector and industries are in the global North, yet have relocated their polluting industries to the global South, thus hiding the real drivers of pollution.

We emphasise that the WHO must play a fundamental role in providing leadership in this area and hold countries and TNCs accountable by setting regulations, standards and by imposing green taxes. Further, it is necessary to utilise not only existing legally-binding multilateral environmental agreements - such as the UNFCCC - but also to initiate further frameworks, such as on Air Pollution, one of the most prevalent environmental problems, and to incorporate them into the Action Plan. An Action Plan and Global Strategy which fails to engage with these forces will have limited impact.