

“Protecting Climate and Promoting Health in Asia”

Seoul Declaration on Climate and Health

We, representatives of Asian hospitals and health systems, express our deep concern over the effects of climate change on human health. We therefore call on the entire healthcare sector in the region to come together and act as one in mitigating climate change and adapting to its ill impacts on both human health and the environment.

Asia is home to many developing countries that also happen to be the most vulnerable to climate change. From fatalities resulting from extreme weather conditions to the spread of climate-sensitive infectious diseases, the health impacts of climate change can no longer be ignored.

Meanwhile, combustion of fossil fuels, the greatest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, is also a significant contributor to air pollution, which routinely exceeds WHO standards by significant amounts in many cities across Asia. Indeed, exposure to unhealthy air is extensive and expanding across the region bringing with it serious public health and economic implications.

While it is the health sector’s duty to “do no harm”, we recognize that we also contribute to both air pollution and increasing greenhouse gas emissions through our reliance on coal and other fossil fuels for our electricity needs, our use of anesthetics that are potent greenhouse gasses, and our procurement of carbon intensive products. It is imperative that we lead by example and transition from products and practices that are harmful to both human and environmental health, and instead invest in clean, sustainable, and healthy systems and technologies.

Hence, we stand together to call on our colleagues in the health sector in the region, as well as our respective governments, to protect public health from climate change.

We implore our governments to:

- 1) Push for urgent and ambitious climate solutions that protect public health and are fair and beneficial to all countries, particularly those most threatened by climate change, as part of the new treaty that will be negotiated during the upcoming 21st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris
- 2) Support the rapid phase out of coal and other fossil fuels and investment in clean, renewable energy.
- 3) Fast-track domestic actions, including legislation and implementation of policies and laws, that mitigate climate change and protect human health from its diverse impacts

As healthcare leaders and workers, we commit to:

- 1) Promote sustainable, climate friendly healthcare practices such as the use of clean, renewable energy, green procurement, and sustainable healthcare waste management.
- 2) Invest in building health care facilities that are resilient in the face of extreme weather and other climate impacts.
- 3) Set goals and strategies for the progressive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in our healthcare facilities and join the Global Green and Healthy Hospital Network's 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge
- 4) Take on a leadership role in influencing and educating both policy makers and the communities that we serve, so they can better mitigate and adapt to the health impacts of climate change

Protecting public health and protecting our planet's climatic stability go hand in hand. Through this declaration we commit to work for a future of healthy hospitals, healthy people and a healthy planet.

Agreed upon, 30th of October, 2015 during the 2015 Global Green and Healthy Hospitals Asia Regional Conference in Seoul, South Korea.