

A WHO REVIEW

HEALTH in the Nationally Determined Contributions



**WHO ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ON HEALTH-PROMOTING NATIONALLY DETERMINED
CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS) TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

Health in National Determined Contributions (NDCs): a WHO review

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

H-NAP	The health component of a National Adaptation Plan (NAP)
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
SLCP	Short-lived Climate Pollutant
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
V&A	Climate Change and Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment
WHO	World Health Organization

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Introduction - NDCs and the Paris Agreement

To set the course for a future with net-zero emissions, the Paris Agreement established the international goal of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees C, and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees C. Every country that has ratified the Paris Agreement thereby also agrees to regularly prepare and communicate a **nationally determined contribution** (NDC) to reflect progress toward its highest possible national climate ambition. Five years after the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015, countries are now expected to submit updated NDCs by 2020 and on regular intervals thereafter.

Parties to the Paris Agreement are required to include a mitigation contribution in their NDC, and are welcome to add components on adaptation, financial support, capacity building, technology transfer, and transparency.

Ambitious national climate commitments have the potential to translate into significant health co-benefits, defined as additional public health benefits related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that are not directly related to the climate change actions taken, such as air quality improvement, reduced negative health impacts, and increased resilience of health infrastructure.

The opportunity for public health gains from mitigation actions subscribed into NDCs are immense. With the current burden of disease from air pollution - largely caused by the burning of fossil fuels - now accounting for 1 in 8 deaths worldwide, enhanced emission reductions will have immediate benefits to local populations and communities, as well as global public health benefits.

Countries can strengthen their NDCs by developing health-inclusive and health-promoting climate targets and policies. The inclusion of public health considerations in the NDCs provides an opportunity for increased ambition, for example through the consideration of the social co-benefits of climate action, the creation of climate-resilient health systems or through prioritized adaptation actions.

The scope of this paper is threefold. First, this paper provides a snapshot of where health is positioned in current NDCs - submitted up to COP25, in December 2019. The overview thereby outlines countries' current priorities and needs for ensuring healthy people and societies in a changing climate.

Second, this paper provides a set of WHO recommendations for the creation of robust and ambitious health-promoting NDCs, identifying a broad range of public health measures that can benefit national mitigation and, adaptation and implementation priorities and can contribute to increased climate ambition.

Lastly, the paper underscores the need for a tailored and equitable approach to NDC enhancement that is suited to a country's specific circumstances. Some examples from existing NDCs are included to highlight current best practices from nationally determined contributions that promote health.

Health in the NDCs: Key Findings from the WHO NDC Review

Public health considerations are already included in most NDCs. As of December 2019, 70% of NDCs submitted (129 out of 184) included health considerations.

Health Co-Benefits of Mitigation in the NDCs

The health co-benefits of climate policies are rarely reflected in current NDCs, with 10% of NDCs (18 out of 184) highlighting the health co-benefits of mitigation actions or policies and 3% of NDCs (5 out of 184) emphasizing the health co-benefits of adaptation actions. Most NDCs that mention health co-benefits refer to the health benefits of general mitigation or adaptation (13 NDCs), but a few NDCs do mention specific sectors, such as energy (3 NDCs), waste management (1 NDC), or forestry (1 NDC).

When health co-benefits of climate action are mentioned in NDCs, they are rarely measured. Out of the 18 NDCs that do mention health co-benefits, only 2 indicate they will quantify or monitor these benefits to inform decision making.

The reduction of air pollution and short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) is underrepresented in NDC mitigation actions. Only 18 NDCs cite the reduction of air pollution and/or SLCPs to be a priority mitigation action.

Health Impacts from Climate Change in the NDCs

The negative health impacts of climate change are recognized by close to half of all NDCs. Forty-seven percent (86 out of 184) of NDCs highlight the negative health impacts from climate change. References to the health impacts of climate-related health hazards (e.g. floods, storms etc.) show up in 24 NDCs.

Vector-borne diseases and food and nutrition insecurity are the negative health

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