

Climate and health are inextricably linked

Anyone following the news recently will have seen that heat records continue to tumble across the globe. According to the World Meteorological Organization, as of July, global average temperatures [set new month by month records](#) for at least the last 13 months. If that doesn't concern you, it should.

It certainly concerns us, not least because it is abundantly clear that our warming climate is bad news for global health. Study after study has shown that the frequency of extreme weather events, whether it be heat, drought or flooding to name just a few, related to climate change raise [the risk of the spread](#) of a number of deadly diseases, including cholera, malaria and acute respiratory tract infections.

As we too often see, those most at risk are those already vulnerable, particularly people living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) with struggling, overstretched and underfunded health systems. But the health threats of climate change are not limited to LMICs, they are being felt right on the doorstep of high-income countries. And who will feel the brunt most severely in those countries? Women and marginalised groups: the [Lancet's 2024 Europe report](#) on climate suggests that "heat-related mortality was twice as high in women compared with men".

This is not a problem for the future, it is a problem that must be tackled now. And we, as civil society, have a major role to play in ensuring that adequate mitigation strategies are in place (and are fully implemented) to avoid the worst consequences for the health of planet and people. Health Action International takes its role in this very seriously, recognising climate change as a major threat to global health as part of our mission statement, and updating our [statutes](#) as a foundation to ensure we are constitutionally equipped to work on the issue.

While positive steps in this area have been taken, and donors are increasingly recognising the link between climate and health, there is a long way to go to seeing the level of change that is required. We can applaud, for example, the passing of a [Climate and Health resolution](#) at the 77th World Health Assembly earlier this year, but if countries fail to make good on the commitments made, then none of us will be any better off.

That is why we are determined to use our skills, experience and expertise in research, advocacy, communications and multistakeholder engagement to make a difference. Part of this will be working to ensure governments fulfil their climate commitments and promises of environmentally sustainable health systems, including through decarbonisation. Alongside this, it is of vital importance that governments and other stakeholders fully integrate health concerns into their climate agendas. It is here that through our longstanding work to improve equitable access to medicines, vaccines and other health technologies in the face of

the health threats exacerbated by climate change, we will make another essential contribution.

Working with our global network of like-minded organisations, we can play our part to ensure that we limit the harmful impact of climate change for the health of the planet and for the health of people all over the world.