

WMA RESOLUTION ON PROTECTING THE FUTURE GENERATION'S RIGHT TO LIVE IN A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

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PREAMBLE

Exponential increase in the number of climate change related fires, hurricanes, ice meltdowns, heat waves and deforestation, especially of the rainforests, show that there is no time to waste. There is an urgent need to accelerate the efforts that will trigger the changes to be implemented by international and national policy and decision makers in order to stop as well as to adapt to the climate crisis.

Climate change and air pollution are closely connected, both have huge impacts on human health and result from anthropogenic emissions due to the combustion of fossil fuels. As it is mentioned by international bodies such as Clean Air Initiative founded by the UN, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC); all governments, researchers and non-governmental organisations should urgently start to tackle the air pollution and climate crisis together.

Considering the urgency and complexity of climate change, it is needed to create a global change to stop the causes of this crisis. Therefore, WMA calls on international, national, regional or provincial decision makers such as politicians, policy makers and judges to recognize the urgency, complexity, and interconnectedness of the essence of the climate crisis action and to take immediate action in order to protect the rights of future generations for the sake of climate justice.

Climate crisis causes a serious loss, damage or destruction of ecosystems and cultural damage, which has severe impacts on all inhabitants of the world. In order to ensure the right to live for the future generations, there is an imminent need for binding legal measures to be adopted and implemented at the national and international arena against the polluters causing emissions that cause especially climate crisis as well as air, water and soil pollution.

Health professionals have a duty to care, respect and protect the human life, as well as the right to live for future generations and all forms of the natural living world. WMA believes that all people, including future generations, have the right to the environmental, economic and social resources needed for healthy and productive lives; such as clean air, soil, water and food security. Therefore; WMA has a historical responsibility of acting proactively in order to initiate the necessary changes and solutions to struggle with the climate crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WMA proposes the following recommendations to its members and other related organizations:

1. Urge to ask its members to collaborate with relevant bodies in their countries in order to raise awareness about the necessity for legally binding sanctions and policies at the national and international level for the polluters that threaten the right to live for the future generations by emitting gases which are proven to cause climate crisis and air, soil and water pollution.
2. Urge all national governments, policy makers, researchers and health professionals to mobilize in order to develop and implement comprehensive policies to struggle with the problems due to the use of fossil fuels by industry as well as the individuals that lead to problems such as climate crisis air, water and soil pollution.
3. Urge all medical professionals, media, governmental and non – governmental institutions to refer climate change as 'climate crisis' and calls the leaders of national, state or provincial, regional, city, and local governments to declare a climate emergency in order to initiate a society-wide action. Moreover, encourage the media to promote the concept and meaning of the right to live for future generations.
4. Update the curriculum at medical schools and add compulsory sections on environmental health in order to educate health professionals that are able to think critically about the health impacts of the environmental problems, are aware of the reasons, impacts/dimensions of the climate crisis and able to offer solutions designed to protect the rights and health of future generations.

5. Advocate and organize interdisciplinary campaigns in order to stop the new permissions from being given to the industrial facilities using fossil fuels that cause climate crisis and pollution.
6. Urge national governments and international bodies such as WHO to adopt stricter regulations on environmental protection and evaluation, permission, monitoring and control procedures of new industrial facilities to limit the health impact resulting from their emissions.
7. Advocate actively for policies that will maximize health benefits by reducing air pollutants (such as ground ozone and particulate matter etc.) and carbon emissions, increase walking, cycling, and use of public transport, and consumption of nutritious, plant-rich diets to ensure climate justice. Urge international, national, state or provincial, regional, city, and local governments to adopt and implement air quality and climate change policies that will achieve the WHO Ambient Air Quality Guideline values.
8. Urge national, state or provincial, regional, city, and local governments through public campaigns and advocacy to cut subsidies given to fossil fuel industries and to direct these subsidies to support just transition, energy efficiency measures, green energy resources and public welfare.
9. Urge governments and private sector to invest in policies that support a just transition for workers and communities adversely impacted by the move to a low-carbon economy and to build social protection through investment in and transition to green jobs.
10. Urge national, state or provincial, regional, city, and local governments to act on other causes of climate crisis such as industrial agriculture, animal husbandry and deforestation, to promote legal trade and financing policies that prioritize and enable sustainable agro-ecological practices, end deforestation for the expansion of industrial agriculture and to reduce reliance on industrial animal-based agriculture and environmentally damaging agricultural and fisheries practices.
11. Urge national, state or provincial, regional, city, and local governments to invest in human capacity and knowledge infrastructure to spread regenerative agriculture solutions that can produce the change needed while providing myriad co-benefits to farmers and consumers, providing a global support network – on the ground – for farmers and capturing carbon in the soil. Emphasize building resilient and regenerative local food systems that can reduce carbon emissions, support the livelihoods of agricultural communities and provide food security for future generations.
12. Urge national governments, together with the involvement of health sector, to develop national adaptation plans and to conduct national assessments of climate crisis impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation for health.