



71st World Health Assembly

Agenda item:

11.4 Health, environment and climate change

May 2018

I speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses, supported by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), representing over 31 million physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and physical therapists.

Healthcare professionals (HCPs) have a professional and ethical duty to contribute to the mitigation of the risks that climate change impose and to support people and communities to adapt to its impacts. We are committed to contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation through implementation of environmental policies and strengthening our sustainable practices.

We welcome the focus of the report on the links between health and biodiversity – consideration of these links is required to achieve the SDGs, in which our professions play an essential role. Furthermore, it is noted that the unsustainable management of biodiversity *may have negative effects on human and animal health*. We urge that these links be considered in the related strategies and policies.

We call for increased investment in the health workforce as the impact of climate change, coupled with an ageing population, will further increase the demand for well-educated HCPs.

Dedicated to promoting health and preventing illness, our professions are committed to adopt sustainable public health practices through empowering and supporting individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices, thereby decreasing the impact on the planet and its finite resources.

We believe that building climate change resilience cannot occur without addressing the full spectrum of social and environmental determinants of health, with a special attention to populations particularly exposed to disease and injury. Our professions are committed to engaging holistically to fully address these. We encourage MS and WHO to advocate for the inclusion of our professions in policy decisions at all levels and in the drafting of the comprehensive global strategy on health, environment and climate change.

(298 words)