



## Tackling the twin threats of climate change and the global health gap

**Student and professional health leaders to offer a Prescription for a Healthy Planet - emphasizing the twinned opportunity decision-makers have to tackle climate change, AND to narrow the global health gap between rich and poor.**

**What:** 5-10 health professionals take action on climate change in COP15 conference centre.

**When:** 3pm Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Hall B near ICT Centre in Bella Centre UNFCCC Conference, Copenhagen

Climate change is the most serious health issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Health professionals from around the world have gathered in Copenhagen in recognition of the need to build a binding treaty to not only protect the environment, but also to protect public health. Dramatically reducing global greenhouse gas emissions whilst supporting low-income countries in their adaptation efforts can bring a host of health co-benefits.

Participants will assemble for a **mock 'ward round'** where they will diagnose the health impacts of climate change, and suggest a remedy for the condition of the climate - a **'Prescription for a Healthy Planet'** which has been endorsed by leading health organizations representing millions of health professionals from more than 120 countries.

The action will be supported by voices from the Global South, representing those countries where health will first and foremost suffer as a result of climate change.

Health professionals in Copenhagen are asking world leaders to:

- 1) Recognise that climate change is a **key health issue**, and this should be reflected in any global agreement;
- 2) View adaptation and mitigation support to developing countries as **an opportunity** to tackle "diseases of poverty" which climate change will exacerbate, undermining further efforts to meet Millennium Development Goals;
- 3) Mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to preserve our environment, and also yield many **co-benefits on health** through improvements to agriculture, transport, and energy production. These benefits make mitigation an investment in creating a healthy and economically active population.

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### Notes to Editors:

**Medsin-UK** is a network of students with an interest in global health, based at universities across the UK. Medsin aims to promote health as well as to act upon and educate students about health inequalities in their local and global communities. [www.medsin.org](http://www.medsin.org)

**Health Care and Environmental Alliance** aims to raise awareness of how environmental protection improves health. It achieves this by creating opportunities for better representation of citizens' and health experts' perspectives in the environment and health-related European policy-making. [www.env-health.org](http://www.env-health.org)

**Health Care Without Harm** is an international coalition of 470 organisations in more than 52 countries, working to transform the health care sector so it is no longer a source of harm to people and the environment. [www.noharm.org](http://www.noharm.org)

**Climate and Health Council** is a UK-based charity, which aims to mobilise health professionals to tackle climate change. It is running a pledge-based campaign, which has sign-ups from health professionals in 125 countries [www.climateandhealth.org](http://www.climateandhealth.org)

**The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)** is an independent, non-governmental and non-political federation of medical students' associations throughout the world. The IFMSA represents over 1.2 million medical students from 91 countries across the globe. Our mission is to offer future physicians a comprehensive introduction to global health issues. [www.ifmsa.org/](http://www.ifmsa.org/)

### Quote from Nick Watts, Mori Mansouri, Guppi Bola and Jonny Currie, UK & Australian students:

*"As future leaders in health and in light of the recent developments at COP15, we strongly affirm our belief in the relationship between climate change and individual and population health. Climate change presents a major threat to global public health and equity. Without immediate action, catastrophic impacts will worsen the state of health in many countries of the global south, widening the health gaps between global rich and poor.*

*Yet, the **opportunity** at hand in creating a new, brighter and cleaner environment for our communities makes efforts to tackle climate change pivotal to improving the health of our world. The relationship between health and climate change makes it crucial that health is placed at the centre of the UNFCCC Global Deal this December. We call for the immediate reduction of global carbon emissions to stabilise them at 350 ppm as well as support for international institutions advocating for the health community to bring positive change to our climate."*