

WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION on

# Health and Environment on a Changing Planet





# **Western Pacific Regional Framework for Action on Health and Environment on a Changing Planet**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>COP21</b>	United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties Twenty-first session
<b>DALYs</b>	Disability-adjusted life years
<b>EHIA</b>	environmental health impact assessment
<b>HIA</b>	health impact assessment
<b>HIC</b>	high-income countries
<b>LMIC</b>	low- and middle-income countries
<b>POPS</b>	persistent organic pollutants
<b>UNEO</b>	United Nations Environment Organization
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>WASH</b>	water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UHC</b>	universal health coverage
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# FOREWORD

Environmental risk factors such as unsafe water, poor sanitation, air pollution, hazardous chemicals and poisons, occupational hazards and extreme weather are some of the most serious health threats globally. WHO recently reported that 23% of all global deaths are linked to the environment. That is roughly 12.6 million deaths a year.

Nowhere is this more true than in our Region. The most lethal example: indoor and outdoor air pollution cause an estimated 2.8 million deaths each year in the Western Pacific Region, a disproportionate 41% of the global burden. There are also significant disparities in the impacts of air pollution on high- and low-income countries. Addressing these challenges requires strong regional and national health and environment programmes and committed leadership across the health and environment sectors.

In late 2015, the international community reached two significant agreements. One was the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, setting the global development agenda out to 2030. This document sets out clearly the extent to which achieving the entire sustainable development agenda relies on improving environmental health.

The other was the Paris Agreement on climate change, committing all countries to mitigate emissions to stop global warming of more than 2 °C. The clear and present danger to low-lying Pacific island nations prompted countries to further commit to efforts to prevent global warming of more than 1.5 °C.

The vulnerabilities of Asia and the Pacific underline the urgent need for WHO to redouble support on these issues to our Member States. The *Western Pacific Regional Framework for Action on Health and Environment on a Changing Planet*, endorsed by health ministers in October 2016, is the first comprehensive articulation of WHO's environmental health vision for the Western Pacific since 1994. It establishes the direction of and identifies the priorities for action for WHO programme on health and the environment with practical strategies for countries to enhance their health and environment programmes in terms of governance and capacity, networking, communication and financing.

It suggests ways the health sector can work with others to mitigate upstream health determinants for the people of our Region, whether they reside on a low-lying atoll, on the edge of a shrinking rainforest, on a banana plantation, in a small town or in a bustling metropolis.



It even calls for the health sector to bolster its environmental leadership and credibility by asking us to shine a light on our own practices. Let us now work together to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for all.



Shin Young-soo, MD, Ph.D.  
Regional Director

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