



CPHP

Centre for
Planetary Health
Policy



A stronger role for the World Health Organization in addressing climate and health justice?

Public Discussion – CoP Climate and Health Justice – 25 April 2024

Remco van de Pas - Remco.van.de.pas@cphp-berlin.de

www.cphp-berlin.de - @Rvandepas

Concept Note: WHA77 Resolution on Climate Change and Health

Introduction

In the 15 years since the last World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on climate change and health, understanding of the links between climate and health has advanced significantly. There is however currently a piecemeal approach to mitigation, adaptation and responding to loss and damage, threatening to leave many of the most vulnerable individuals and communities behind. This civil society coalition calls on World Health Organization (WHO) Member States to respond to this with an updated resolution to be adopted at the 77th session of WHA (WHA77) to draw together existing initiatives, tools and resources, better align and support the work of key global actors, and set new ambitions for Governments and the WHO.

This concept note presents notable international policy developments on climate change and health and provides a brief overview of the complex interlinkages between climate change and health. Building on this, it maps out some of the key issues a resolution could consider, including a core set of recommendations for action by the WHO Secretariat and Member States.

This note has been co-developed by a broad coalition of civil society organisations, academia and philanthropies which are actively committed to supporting Governments and the WHO to take comprehensive action on climate and health. It seeks to provide a summary of the key issues facing communities and a set of potential actions to help support and inform Member State negotiations on a resolution. The list of organisations supporting the content of this document can be found on the final pages. As additional organisations sign on to this concept note, the latest iterations with up to date co-signatories is available below.

For further information, please feel free to contact the colleague who sent you this concept note, or to reach out to members of the Global Climate and Health Alliance Team: rosie.tasker@climateandhealthalliance.org, jess.beagley@climateandhealthalliance.org and jennifer.kuhl@climateandhealthalliance.org.

https://climateandhealthalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/November-2023_Civil-Society-Concept-Note_A-WHA-Resolution-on-Climate-Change-and-Health.pdf

Issues:

- Alignment of international agreements & focus on adaptation, mitigation and CBDR principles
- Health impacts of climate change
- Adaptation for health
- Health co-benefits of mitigation
- Just transition
- Comprehensive approach; climate change, One Health & Planetary Health
- Potential actions for WHO secretariat and member states



EXECUTIVE BOARD
154th session
Agenda item 22

EB154/CONF./12
25 January 2024

Climate change and health

Draft decision proposed by Barbados, Fiji, Kenya, Monaco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Peru, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Key points:

- Health, environmental, climate change
- Climate-resilient and sustainable health systems
- Emissions by health systems itself (?)
- Limited finance obstacle
- Link with UNFCC & CoP, One Health

Actions MS:

- V&A, NAPs, disaggregation of data
- Work with ATACH
- Finance and intersectoral action

Actions WHO:

- Global Plan of Action – Link with UNFCC processes (?)
- Global leader climate and health
- Capacity building for MS and wider UN system

Draft fourteenth general programme of work, 2025–2028

Advancing health equity and health systems resilience in a turbulent world: a global health agenda for 2025–2028

Promoting, providing and protecting health and well-being for all

IMPACT:

More people, everywhere, attain the highest possible standard of health and well-being.

DRAFT GPW 14 OVERARCHING GOAL:

To promote, provide and protect health and well-being for all people, everywhere.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND JOINT OUTCOMES:

Respond to climate change, an escalating health threat in the 21st century.

Address health determinants and root causes of ill health in key policies across sectors.

Advance the PHC approach and essential health system capacities for universal health coverage.

Improve health service coverage and financial protection to address inequity and gender inequalities.

Prevent, mitigate and prepare for risks to health from all hazards.

Rapidly detect and sustain an effective response to all health emergencies.

Joint Outcome 1.1. More climate-resilient health systems are addressing health risks and impacts

Climate-related risks to health systems and health and nutritional outcomes will be systematically assessed and addressed, in line with the drive for universal health coverage, a scaled-up primary health care approach and the wider societal goal of climate adaptation.

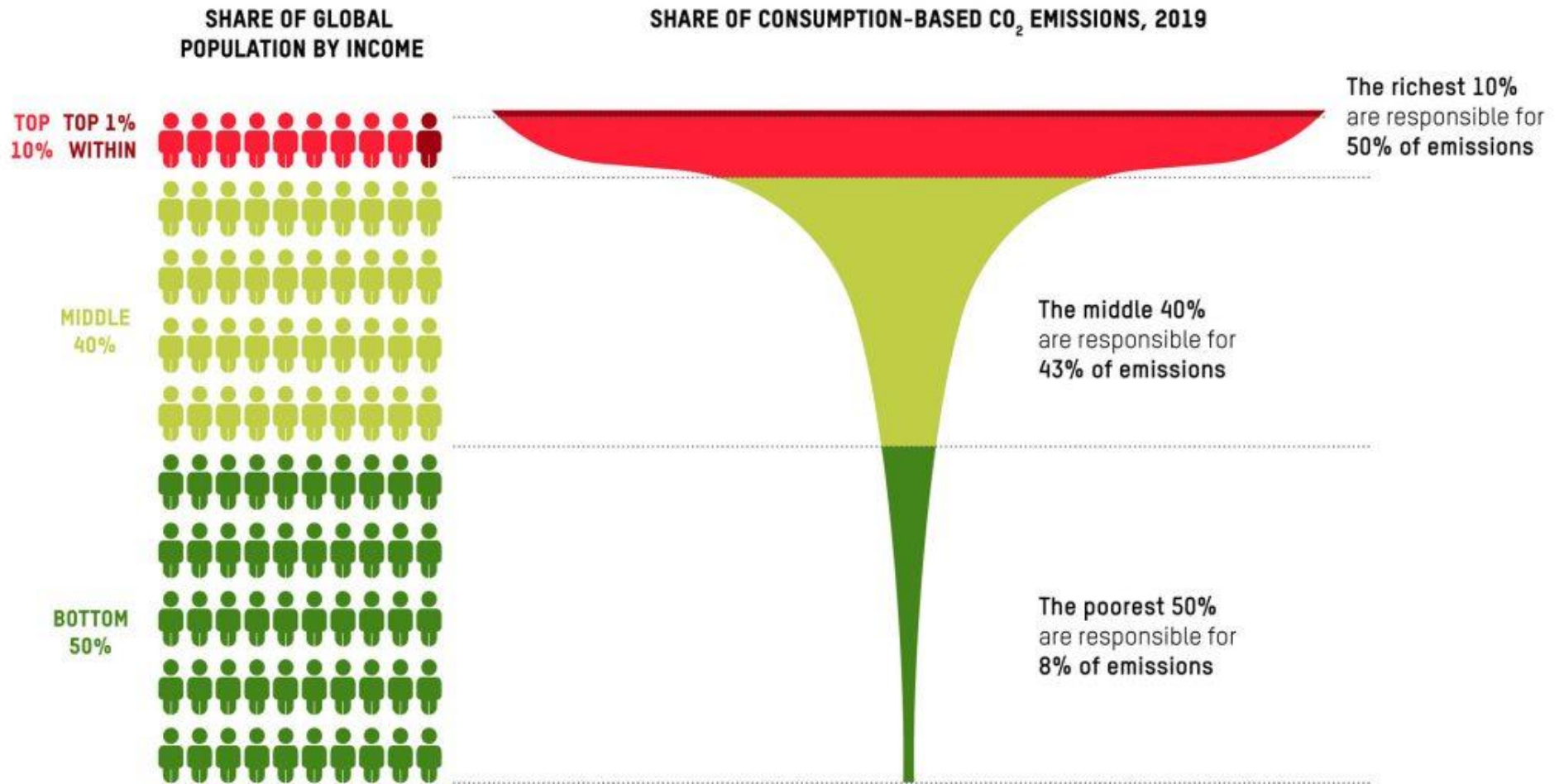
Joint Outcome 1.2. Lower-carbon health systems and societies are contributing to health and well-being

Plans to reduce, where possible, the carbon footprint of health systems, supply chains and care services will be developed, tailored and implemented, accounting for different national and local contexts

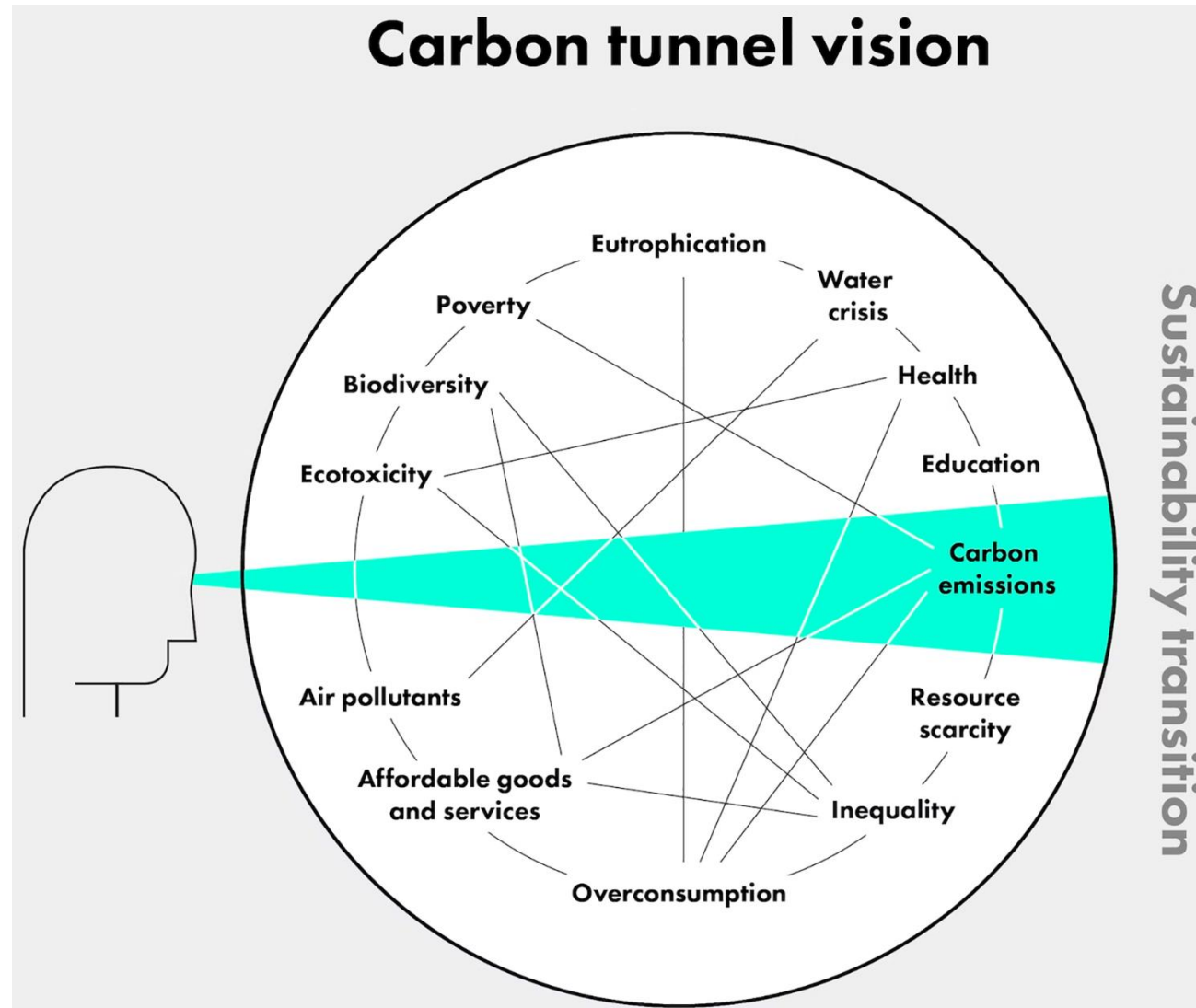
Assessment:

- Climate Change and Health higher on agenda of WHO
- Global Plan of Action welcome: governance and operationalisation
- Interrelation between the 6 pillars – to be seen
- Fragmentation or synergetic approach – beware of the silo approach
- Finance for implementation ? Much hopes but assessment is bleak
- Relation with other institutions and UN governance regimes ?
- Influence of *other global health negotiations and geo-political gridlocks?*
- Broader political – economy of health and ecological crisis is missing (focus on co-benefits, not on limiting harm, justice, responsibility)

Justice considerations



A tunnel vision for climate change and health ?



Deivanayagam, T. A., & Osborne, R. E. (2023). Breaking free from tunnel vision for climate change and health. *PLOS Global Public Health*, 3(3), e0001684.

Discussion: expectations for WHA77 and onward