

# II Conferencia Latinoamericana de la Red Global de Hospitales Verdes y Saludables

21 y 22 de septiembre de 2015



## STATEMENT AT THE 2nd LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF THE GLOBAL GREEN AND HEALTHY HOSPITALS NETWORK Bogotá, Colombia, September 21-22, 2015

As representatives of Latin American hospitals and health systems, we express our concern about the health impacts of climate change. On the road to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris, we urge governments to reaffirm their efforts to confront what World Health Organization Director General Margaret Chan has called “one of the greatest challenges of our time.”

Climate change is already damaging human health around the world. Developing countries are in a situation of greater vulnerability because greater proportions of the population are homeless and/or living without basic water and sewer infrastructure. Access to healthcare is also more difficult. Climate change’s health impacts can be seen in the increase in deaths related to extreme heat, storms, flooding and drought, the spread of infectious and vector-borne diseases, as well as growing population migration and new conflicts.

As greenhouse gas emissions increase globally, so do the impacts on health. Associated costs rise and the health and development advances achieved in the past 50 years are threatened, according to the British health journal, *The Lancet*.

The health sector must prepare for the shifting burden of disease, as well as for the consequences of extreme weather events, which will increase in frequency. It is also necessary to invest in and build hospitals and health systems that are resilient and able to operate and protect the population’s health under these new conditions.

Most global greenhouse gas emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) used to generate energy. This dependence on fossil fuels not only contributes to climate change but also to air pollution that currently kills seven million people around the world each year. This figure is equivalent to more than double the number of deaths caused by malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined.

The health sector, in turn, contributes to the problem by emitting greenhouse gases through its consumption of fossil fuels and other practices. It is time for hospitals, health centers and health systems all over the world to lead by example, by investing in and choosing clean energy sources whenever possible, thus applying a collective, transformational decision that prioritizes healthy sources and contributes to the progressive abandonment of fossil fuels. Reducing our dependence on these fuels,

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particularly coal, will not only reduce greenhouse gases, it will also allow us to take measures to protect and improve population health in every country.

We call upon our health sector colleagues and governments to act to protect population health from the effects of climate change and air pollution, and to promote development based on clean, renewable and healthy energy.

To this end, we call on national and local governments to:

1. Promote a binding, fair, ambitious agreement in Paris that puts the world on the path toward a healthy future through, in part, the transfer of technical and financial resources to countries less able to swiftly make this transition.
2. Foster investment in clean, renewable energy, such as solar or wind, so as to achieve 100% use of renewables by 2050.
3. Implement adaptation and resilience actions in the face of climate change that prioritize the health of the most vulnerable populations.
4. Demand that comprehensive health-impact assessments be undertaken by recognized experts in the field before allowing new energy projects to go forward.

Furthermore, as health professionals and health care workers, we will strive to work in our sector to:

1. Lead by example, promoting the adoption of clean, renewable energy sources in our hospitals and health centers.
2. Adopt goals for the progressive reduction of greenhouse emissions in our healthcare facilities, and join the 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge organized by Health Care Without Harm.
3. Promote sustainable transport policies that include more investment in public transportation and renewable fuels for transporting the communities we serve and are part of, as well as vehicles for healthcare purposes.

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