

## **First Global Forum on Heat and Health Outcome Statement**

The First Global Forum on Heat and Health was held in Hong Kong Dec 17-20, 2018 to inform a global common action agenda for comprehensive heat risk management and formally launch the Global Heat Health Information Network. Following the consultations held in the USA (2015) and Sri Lanka (2016), this international Forum brought together over 120 interdisciplinary experts and practitioners from 33 countries to strengthen cooperation in interdisciplinary science and practice to build the capacity of governments, organizations, and professionals to protect populations from the avoidable health risks of extreme and ambient heat

The Forum recognised that there is a need:

- to improve awareness of the silent emergency that increasing heat and heatwaves pose to human health across the globe;
- to strengthen opportunities and resources for the protection of populations most vulnerable;
- to strengthen partnerships across relevant government, academic, and civil society partners to exchange information on good practices, tools and technologies, and lessons to understand and manage heat risks;
- to become more effective communicators about heat and heatwave risks;

The Forum identified that the Network should engage with and support the concept of the five pillars for action:

- Communications and outreach;
- Partnerships and capacity building;
- Data, science, and research for understanding health risks of heat;
- Climate and weather information for decision-making and action;
- Interventions and actions to prevent heat exposure and negative health outcomes

Technical discussions examined priorities, gaps and opportunities across these areas of interdisciplinary research and practice, that led to the following recommendations.

Summary of key messages can be found in Annex 1.

### **Based on the above findings, the Forum collectively agrees:**

- 5.1 The Forum affirmed the need for the proposed network, and recommends to officially launched the Global Heat Health Information Network (hereafter the Network).
- 5.2 Recommends the creation of a coordination/secretariat function to respond to the needs for intensified and multi-level coordination, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, and to support the implementation of the action plan.
- 5.3 The Network recognizes the importance of WMO, WHO, and other international and regional bodies, and encourages them to build upon the partnership and leverage this mechanism to support and engage demand driven research and action for heat risk management.
- 5.4 Encourages all partners to better leverage processes and authorities to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement, and Sustainable Development Goals.
- 5.5 The Network calls for creation of opportunities and enabling environments for enhanced collaborative innovations, research and development, and interventions, including support to

innovation platforms, technical cooperation, sharing of good practice, pilot programming and partnerships are needed to facilitate interdisciplinary action at global, regional, and local levels.

- 5.6 The Network recommends an integrated systems approach, to more effectively enabling co-design and co-production of information and tools to facilitate decision-making.
- 5.7 The Network called out specific gaps in areas of occupational health; in understanding and managing complex heat exposures in urban contexts; enhancing global heat prediction capabilities across timescales; and evaluation of intervention effectiveness.
- 5.8 Members note, the Network should be flexible, interdisciplinary and agile to adaptively learn and respond to the needs of the community, and draw upon existing mechanisms and structures to provide scientific and normative guidance. An advisory and oversight mechanism to be further developed.
- 5.9 The Network requests the development of an action plan and key priorities, including future directions and targets, in the first half of 2019.
- 5.10 The Network recommends the Second Global Forum be held no later than 2020.

## **Annex 1:**

### **Key Messages of the Network [to be developed as a consensus statement]**

- Experts agree heat and heatwaves are impacting human health, ranging from increased morbidity, mortality, to well-being and productivity.
- Experts express a high level of concern for the insufficient awareness of this problem, low levels of preparedness, and available tools and information to confront the predicted impacts of heatwaves to human health, society, and wellbeing.
- Heat and heatwaves is a silent disaster, which is inadequately communicated and addressed by public health and disaster risk reduction policies and frameworks, current evidence is not being translated in a timely manner to application and policy, and it remains outside many mechanisms which could assist and prevent health impacts;
- The negative health outcomes associated with heat exposure are preventable. Public health interventions, when deployed sufficiently and in a timely manner, are available to protect communities.
- Insufficient appreciation of the magnitude of the cumulative and systemic impacts of heat and heatwave exposure on society, health, and wellbeing; the complex dependencies and real risks of cascading failures; and the concomitant risks of poor air quality and conditions of urbanization, places society at greater risk;
- Global expertise and response capacity exists and is improving in multiple critical domains, but remains fragmented and insufficient to address the scale and complexity of current and future known risks;
- A Network Approach can amplify solutions, strengthen impact, hasten learning  
Engagement and collaboration between a wide-range of professions and institutions, and a dynamic conversation with the public, will be fundamental for shared learning and action to address heat risks;
- will fill a much needed gap for technical cooperation and shared learning between interdisciplinary expert communities, as well as between academic and operational practitioners. By leveraging the existing specialties and strengths of Members agencies, it can also bring a unique collective global knowledge that can be translated to local knowledge and actions.
- Notes that addressing heat risks requires simultaneous investment in addresses current and future risks. For example, science and investments to inform healthy heat-resilient built environments and cities, must be simultaneously be scaled up while building immediate understanding and local heat risk management capacity.
- Investing in monitoring capabilities, including meteorological observations and health surveillance, as well as other impact metrics such as productivity and economics cannot be underestimated, as it underlies risk assessment and forecasting capabilities to inform appropriate societal responses.