



22 January 2022 – The WHO country office in Egypt participated in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) that was hosted by Egypt from 6 to 8 November, and led more than 14 side events contributing to various initiatives that work to deliver on health and climate action.

### **Launch of the first global initiative on climate and nutrition**

During COP27, the COP27 presidency and the WHO country office officially launched the first ever global Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN) with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), other United Nations agencies, and partners such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.

The multisectoral flagship initiative will support Member States in accelerating progress in both climate and nutrition, through facilitating technical and high-level support, advancing integrated

action, and acting as a hub for capacity-building and data and knowledge transfer.

“Food production is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and misuse of fertilizers and pesticides has led to pollution of land and water. Climate change undermines food systems and nutrition, while food systems contribute to climate change. By connecting our actions on climate and on nutrition, we can accelerate progress in both,” said WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari during the event.

I-CAN has already garnered support from several Member States, including Cambodia, Oman, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and others.

### **WHO leads various side events at the UN pavilion**

From premature birth to the adaptation of the health sector in Egypt, the WHO country office led several events at the United Nations in Egypt pavilion at COP27, bringing together other UN agencies, high-level representatives from national health entities, and others, to discuss the opportunities and challenges of some of the most pressing climate change threats pertaining to health.

### **With youth, by youth and for youth**

WHO, together with the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, organized the first ever Global Youth Forum on Health and Climate Change to support meaningful youth engagement in climate and health action.

The in-person event held at COP27 presented a set of recommendations on health and climate action that were collated from youth around the world during a 2-day virtual consultation event that was held prior to the conference.

The Global Youth Forum is organized under the Patronage of H.E. Egypt Minister of Health and Population Dr Khaled Abdel Ghaffar and H.E. Minister of Youth and Sport Dr Ashraf Sobhy.

WHO also organized, in cooperation with the World Youth Forum several side events, discussions on mental health, clean energy, gender-based violence, tobacco and nutrition and their interlinkages with climate change.

## **WHO's work to support COP27**

For several months leading up to COP27, the WHO country office in Egypt worked closely with national stakeholders to develop and implement a national plan for emergency preparedness and response relating to a mass gathering, as the conference hosted more than 40 000 participants from around the world.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Population, WHO trained around 500 surveillance officers from the 27 governorates of Egypt on surveillance, preparedness and response during COP27 for diseases outbreaks and emergencies, such as COVID-19 and other medical risks.

Following an assessment visit to Sharm Al Sheikh International Hospital, WHO and the WHO Academy held mass casualty management training, including a simulation at the hospital, to support the health sector in managing mass incidents, which are defined as major incidents that can overwhelm the ability of medical resources to deliver medical care.

Another simulation was also held in Sharm Al Sheikh Command and Control Centre to test the readiness of the sectors of the Ministry to coordinate and respond to mass casualties.

In addition, WHO and the WHO Regional Centre for Environmental Health Action held training for food safety sanitarians and food handlers in Sharm El-Sheikh hotels and restaurants on food safety and response to foodborne disease outbreaks, during COP27 and beyond.

WHO had also procured different items, with a total cost of almost US\$ 42 000, to facilitate health education and communication events during the conference.

## **WHO's response to climate change**

Earlier this year, the WHO country office issued, in cooperation with the General Authority for Healthcare Accreditation and Regulation, the first Excellence Standards Guide for Green Healthcare Facilities, to support country efforts to building climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health facilities.

This standard will help facilities □ adopt eco-friendly practices, make a transition towards clean energy, reduce carbon emissions, dispose of medical waste safely and save water.

In addition, WHO conducted a training workshop for health care workers from different governorates and sectors within the Ministry of Health and Population to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct carbon footprint assessment and vulnerability and adaptation (V&A) assessments, which are tools that help countries assess climate-sensitive health risks they are exposed to. In total, 39 resilience and sustainability, 3 V&A, and 3 carbon footprint assessments were conducted for health care facilities all over the country.

WHO is also working with the Ministry of Health and Population, other relevant ministries and UN organizations to integrate climate and biodiversity in Egypt's National Food and Nutrition Strategy 2022–2030.

In its ongoing efforts to engage communities, WHO held training of trainers for health care students on climate and health to strengthen their skills and knowledge in health education and advocacy. WHO also launched a series of training for journalists on the coverage of health emergencies, including climate change.

“Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity, given both its direct severe impacts on health by threatening its essential ingredients such as clean air, water, and food, and its indirect impact by undermining many of the social determinants of good health, such as livelihoods, equality, and access to health care,” said Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative in Egypt. “Egypt is vulnerable to climate change impacts, including sea level rise, water scarcity and an increase in the extreme weather events. Accelerating action in both health and climate is a work in progress and we are very proud of our cooperation with the different stakeholders in Egypt to build a greener and healthier world for all,” she added.

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