



7 April 2022, Ramallah - On this World Health Day, we call for a world that supports the health of humans and the environment alike. It is impossible to have a healthy society in a polluted environment, or to have a clean environment in an unhealthy society.

Protection of the environment is critical to the realization of Health For All.

Determinants of human and environmental health require the efforts and support of all sectors, towards achieving Health In All Policies. The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the impact on and response needed by many other sectors than just Health, it also painfully exacerbated inequities and highlighted the different vulnerabilities to public health risks all over the world including in Palestine. Building stronger and fairer health systems and empowering communities to have control over their health and the health of their environment is essential to creating a world where clean air and water, and safe and nutritious food, is available to all.

“In Palestine, COVID-19 created additional obstacles to realizing comprehensive, quality and affordable health care for all. Our frontline health workers showed resilience and steadfastness, but also faced risks and difficulties in their work. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Palestine, more than 9000 health care workers have been affected by the virus. We sincerely thank our brave colleagues for their continued efforts and the care they provide to our communities,” said Dr Mai al-Kaila, Palestinian Minister of Health.

Strengthening health care services and health systems preparedness is needed for the effective detection of and response to future public health emergencies. The climate crisis poses a major threat to human health that demands urgent action across all sectors of society.

“COVID-19 has underlined the need for cross-sectoral engagement to improving population health and addressing the determinants of health inequities. The right to health for all depends on maintaining and improving essential health care, for which expanded domestic and international commitment and investment is vital. Immediate support is needed to address the critical situation jeopardizing sustained provision of referral services to Palestinian patients,” said Dr Richard Peeperkorn, Representative for WHO in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The protracted protection crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory contributes to climate vulnerabilities and fragmentation of health care provision and restricted access to services for patients and their companions.

“Palestinian patients face substantial barriers to accessing essential health care. In March, 35% of permit applications from the Gaza Strip were not approved in time by the Israeli Occupation Authorities’ for patients to reach their hospital appointments. Delaying medical care costs lives and affects the health and wellbeing of Palestinian patients and their families,” said Dr Mai al-Kaila

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