



## Joint Statement

**Agenda Item: EM/RC70/6: Climate change, health, and environment: a regional framework for action, 2023-2029.**

**Dear Chairperson, excellencies, and colleagues**

The Eastern Mediterranean NCD Alliance, supported by the global NCD Alliance, would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work done by WHO and Member States, in optimizing the health co-benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

At present, we face two of the most critical global crises: climate change and the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These crises are deeply intertwined. Climate change has a range of adverse impacts on food production and supply, leading to food insecurity, increased dependence on imported and less nutritious foods, and malnutrition in all its forms. Furthermore, climate change and air pollution, a major NCD risk factor, share a common key driver (fossil fuels). Increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation, agricultural chemicals, and environmental infectious agents is also linked with climate change and has been linked to the development of conditions such as asthma, COPD, and cancer.

In our region, we have observed a clear connection between extreme temperature fluctuations, frequent storms, floods, heavy rains, and the rise in illnesses and premature deaths attributed to NCDs and other conditions sensitive to climate conditions. This adverse impact disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, including the elderly, children, outdoor laborers, refugees, and people living with NCDs.

There is an urgent need for coordinated efforts to address both of these crises concurrently. This entails implementing strategies that can address them simultaneously, including:

1. Raising awareness about how climate change impacts NCDs and safeguarding the well-being of people living with NCDs from climate-related risks.
2. Developing early warning systems and action plans for adaptation and mitigation in healthcare to enhance resilience against climate change.
3. Prioritizing NCD prevention and control within national climate change action plans and policies.
4. Ensuring close collaboration with all relevant actors free of conflicts of interest, including Civil Society Organizations, to establish a comprehensive approach that also addresses the root causes of climate change and air pollution and aims to reduce the use of fossil fuels.
5. Enhancing institutional capacity for NCD prevention and control while engaging local communities and people living with NCDs (PLWNCDs) in these efforts.

Thank you