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Briefing for health policymakers and health professionals

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AUTHORS

Isobel Braithwaite
Projects Officer, Global Climate and Health Alliance

Dr Olivia Stevenson
o.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk
(Acting) Head of UCL Public Policy

Nick Watts
nicholas.watts.12@ucl.ac.uk
Head of Project, Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change: Emergency Actions to Protect Human Health

Summary

The 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change concludes that responding to climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the twenty-first century. Many solutions to climate change offer significant health 'co-benefits', reducing healthcare costs for often over-burdened health systems and improving economic productivity. Alongside reducing emissions, climate change adaptation is essential to protect health. Decades-long lag in the climate system means that we are already 'locked-in' to many years of warming, and the associated impacts, even if emissions drop sharply. Climate change affects the world's poorest countries earliest and most severely, despite them being least responsible. Wealthier countries therefore have a responsibility to support poor countries' responses.

Climate change and public health

Climate change threatens health in many ways. Its health impacts are already being felt, even with the limited rise in global mean

are essential in managing the health e ects of both tropical storms and heatwaves. ese conditions require improved human health monitoring systems and contingency planning, necessitating a collaborative approach across multiple government agencies. Climate change also strengthens the case for reinforcing response systems for infectious disease surveillance, including disaster risk reduction policies, contingency plans and identi cation tools for potentially vulnerable populations.

In assessing the health risks and adaptation responses available, a number of recommendations for health professionals and national health policymakers emerge:

1.

- **Encourage a transition to cities that support and promote lifestyles that are healthy for the individual and for the planet**. Health professionals are essential in facilitating this,