

**On the margins of the 79th
World Health Assembly**

**CLIMATE CHANGE,
HEALTH AND CITIES**

**From global
commitments to
local impact**

The role of cities in
advancing climate
action and health

20 May 2026
18:00–19:15 CEST
Villa Rigot



Context

Cities are central to delivering the objectives of the Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health adopted at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA). Urban areas concentrate populations, infrastructure, services, and economic activity, and are on the frontline of climate impacts. At the same time, cities are uniquely positioned to act as engines of solutions. They co-create and contribute to positive health and climate outcomes, through shaping policies, piloting innovation, generating data and evidence. Locally grounded practices can inform national and global action.

Cities are also best placed to operationalize whole-of-government approaches. They routinely work across sectors, engage local communities, and implement policies that address social and environmental determinants of health. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience deliver tangible benefits for both people and the planet.

Given the interconnected nature of climate related risks across human, animal, and environmental systems, integrating a One Health approach further underscores the importance of including cities in global climate–health governance.

Despite this central role, cities remain underrepresented in multilateral debates on climate change and health, including within WHA processes that shape global and national policy directions. To bridge the gap between global policy and local implementation, specialized networks and platforms such as the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and the Global Cities Hub serve as essential intermediaries to support cities in translating the Global Action Plan into measurable and localized action on climate and health.

Objectives of the event

- Strengthen the engagement of cities within the WHA, through existing city networks, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to debates traditionally led by States.
- Demonstrate cities' contribution to the implementation of the Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health, and encourage States to involve cities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of national climate and health strategies.
- Provide a platform for cities to articulate key policy messages on climate change and health, drawing on concrete local experience and evidence.

Agenda

Opening remarks

- **Dr. Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum**, WHO

Panel discussion

- **Amb. Elmer José Germán Gonzalo Schialer Salcedo**, Peru
- **Amb. Deike Potzel**, European Union
- **Cllr. Tony Fitzgerald**, Cork, Ireland
- **Dr. Pinar Okyay**, Deputy Secretary General, İzmir, Türkiye
- **Sir Andrew Haines**, Chief Scientific Advisor, Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health

Moderated by Anh Thu Duong - Co-director, Global Cities Hub

Interactive exchange

Closing remarks