

## **Global network of science academies launches a landmark study on ‘Climate Change and Health’**

**The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) and the German National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, embark on a new project to fill in critical gaps in our knowledge of the effects of climate change on human health.**

Extreme heat, natural disasters, and water-borne and infectious diseases are just some of the effects of climate change that put our health at risk. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 2030 and 2050 climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year from heat stress, malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition alone. Areas with weak health infrastructure such as developing countries will be the least able to cope, but the climate crisis will put stress on health systems worldwide.

Nevertheless, the evidence base on the effects of climate change on human health is still rather fragmented, and until recently policy makers tended to neglect this looming public health emergency.

“This must change: we need robust scientific evidence to guide policy, assess the effectiveness of current commitments, and protect health around the world. We owe that to future generations,” said Prof. Volker ter Meulen, President of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) and Past President of the German National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, at the launch of the ‘Climate Change and Health’ project.

This new project will produce three regional reports for Africa, Asia and the Americas (the [regional report for Europe](#) is already available) that will provide a snapshot of the current situation and present science-based recommendations for each region. Furthermore, an additional global synthesis report will highlight regional similarities and differences, and provide advice for decision makers for implementation at global, regional and national levels. Recommendations will take into account local circumstances and strategic needs.

The [German National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina](#), is leading this IAP project with financial support from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The project runs from October 2019 to March 2022, and is co-chaired by Prof. Volker ter Meulen and Prof. Sir Andy Haines of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a leading expert on the relationship between climate change and health.

Under the umbrella of [IAP](#), more than 140 national, regional and global member academies work together to support the vital role of science in seeking evidence-based solutions to the world’s most challenging problems. IAP’s four affiliated regional networks of academies – AASSA (Asia), EASAC (Europe), IANAS (the Americas) and NASAC (Africa) – are responsible for managing and implementing many IAP projects, and their experts and representatives convened in Halle, Germany, on 4-5 November 2019 for the first ‘Climate Change and Health’ meeting.

In Halle, participants shared their regional perspectives. They also discussed the project design and roadmap, and agreed that the focus of the project should be on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies that bring health co-benefits.

In the next phase, each network will form a regional expert group of outstanding scientists, policy-makers and practitioners nominated by IAP member academies. Each regional network will also organise a workshop which will draw together broader scientific and health expertise to sharpen the

regional focus of each report. Subsequently, there will be two more meetings during which participants will prepare their regional analysis and formulate evidence-based recommendations.

The regional reports from NASAC, AASSA and IANAS (together with any updated EASAC material) will be published and launched in 2021, and will then be used to engage with regional policy-makers, the scientific community and other stakeholders. The global synthesis report will be ready by the end of 2021, and will be presented to the World Health Organization (WHO) and other global and regional stakeholders.

For more information on the InterAcademy Partnership see [www.interacademies.org](http://www.interacademies.org) and follow [@IAPPartnership](https://twitter.com/IAPPartnership) on Twitter.

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