



RECOMMENDATIONS

Health, an essential element of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



FEBRUARY 2019



To celebrate its 10th anniversary, WECF France organized on November 22nd, 2018 an international symposium on “health, a fragile but essential dimension to sustainable development”, gathering 30 speakers and 180 participants. The following recommendations were elaborated based on the debate contents.



Pour aimer ce siècle, ensemble.

4D and WECF France participate in the European programme “Make Europe Sustainable for All”, coordinated by the European Environmental Bureau, which gathers 25 partner organizations from 14 countries. This 3-year programme aims making populations, policymakers, civil society stakeholders and the media aware of Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.

The programme aims at an ambitious implementation of Agenda 2030 in the EU, by making EU citizens and policymakers more aware of their roles and responsibilities to build a sustainable future.

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ENSURE A HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL

Fight the causes and consequences of all forms of malnutrition

The world lives in a paradox : while undernutrition has increased over the past five years, obesity linked to malnutrition and sedentary lifestyles is increasing. This worrying trend reflect profound dysfunctions resulting from our agricultural and food models, with serious environmental and health consequences.

In figures

- In 2017, environ **821 million** people were undernourished, a number which has been increasing since 2014.

- Globally, increased breastfeeding could prevent **823,000 deaths in children under 5 years**.

- Obesity has tripled since 1975. In 2016, more than **1.9 billion** adults were overweight, including **650 million** of obese people

- **41 million** children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2016. Over **340 million** children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016.

Recommendations



Implement measures to ensure a healthy, good quality and local food to all by changing the food-processing models and reducing their impact on environment and health



Support the development of agroecology and organic farming, and encourage self-sufficiency



In France, implement the measures from the "Etats généraux de l'Alimentation" to allow a transition towards a healthy, local and sustainable farming model: support to local organic farming, availability of organic meals in schools' canteens, etc.



PROMOTE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Ensure a healthy environment for all

An environment favourable to a good health is essential to achieve the SDGs. Man-made pollutions heavily impact our health. Bad health has dramatic consequences, such as increase of non-communicable diseases, including in least industrialized countries and in economies in transition, where they become factor 1 of mortality, before infectious diseases. The role of environmental pollution in many pathologies such as among others IQ loss, reproductive disorders, cancers, degenerative diseases is recognized, and urgently requires strong prevention measures.

In figures

- Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) kill **41 million** people each year.
- Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes account for over **80%** of all premature noncommunicable diseases.
- **25%** of global mortality is due to environmental factors.
- An estimated **12.6 million** deaths each year are due to unhealthy environments.
- **1.7 million** of deaths of children under five could be prevented through healthier environments?
- Each year, indoor and outdoor air pollution cause **7 million** deaths, including **400,000** in Europe and **48,000** in France.

Recommendations

- ▶ Implement the ecological, energy and health transition in all territories, involving all stakeholders, to reduce air pollution, ensure sustainable mobility, the development of renewable energy sources, and a high quality of life
- ▶ In France, implement concrete measures to reduce environmental exposures and apply the precautionary principle, as part of the 4th environment and Health Action Plan, and the Second National Strategy on Endocrine Disruptors, and covering among others: radiofrequencies, suspected carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxics (CMR), endocrine disruptors, etc.
- ▶ Strengthen the role of health professionals role in prevention of exposures of populations,, including pregnant women and young children, and in the prevention of environmental factors of disease
- ▶ Ensure cleaning and remediation of polluted areas and former industrial sites, in particular those welcoming young children



STRENGTHEN THE PLACE AND ROLE OF WOMEN

Reduce gender inequalities, a factor of good health for populations

Persistent gender inequalities are known to be an obstacle in achieving the SDGs. In many areas, women are still excluded or in the background when it comes to accessing health services, education, natural resources, conditions to implement projects, and globally in participating in decision-making and having their voices heard.

In figures

- Unpaid care activities are almost entirely carried out by women: compared to men, women dedicate an extra **1 to 3 hours daily** doing housework **2 to 10 times more** time caring for children, elderly or sick people, and **1 to 4 hours less** to income-generating activities.
- Worldwide, whereas women make up **2/3 of the working hours**, they only earn **10% of the global income**.
- Women, just like men, work in jobs that are particularly exposed to chemical products, such as: hairdressing, beauty and nail salons, caregivers, housekeepers, cleaning agents, nursing assistants, nurses, midwives.

Recommendations

- ▶ Ensure that women's priorities are considered in all sectoral policies, at local, national and international levels -including access to land, water resources, food production, health, education - and their effective participation in development planning
- ▶ Better consider daily women's exposures to hazardous chemicals whether from domestic or occupational origin. Demand the Committee for the Safety of Substances and Cosmetics (SCCS) of the European Commission to consider occupational exposures during assessment of cosmetic products safety
- ▶ Develop gender education policies to consider gender roles and occupations, the distribution of paid and unpaid work, and gendered stereotypes



REDUCE HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Reduce health inequalities, especially through primary prevention

Environmental pollution is often a double burden for already vulnerable populations, due to their level of poverty, their lack of access to natural resources, and inability to become resilient. In addition, they are too often deprived of access to primary prevention, which is more effective and less expensive. Health professionals can play a major role in promoting better primary prevention practices.

In figures

- **16,000** children under 5 die every day.
- **99%** of maternal mortality is concentrated in developing countries.
- Worldwide, life expectancy can vary from 34 years depending on the country.
- Within the European Union, health inequalities cost about **1.4% of GDP** (Gross Domestic Product).
- France is one of the most unequal countries in terms of health in Western Europe. In 2013, the difference in life expectancy at age 35 between an executive and a worker was more than **6 years** for men, and **3.2 years** for women.

Recommendations

- ▶ Concrete measures to promote access for all to primary prevention of environmental exposures, especially during pregnancy and childhood
- ▶ Develop the health and environment training of health professionals
- ▶ Strengthen health professionals' role in reaching out the most vulnerable groups and people, due to their socio-economic situation, their age, their bad health (disabled, elderly, sick, etc.), etc.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



MAKE URBAN AREAS CONTRIBUTE TO A GOOD HEALTH

Transform urban areas into places favourable to a good health

A vast majority of the world population today lives in urban areas, and this trend is accelerating. It is therefore essential to make these places compatible with a good health and a high quality of life, by acting on all the necessary factors: food, air quality, mobility, access to care, well-being, etc.

In figures

- Within 20 years, **70%** of the world population will live in big cities.
- **60%** of animal species have disappeared since 1970 due to human activity.
- A **10%** increase in green spaces is associated with a reduction of diseases equivalent to a **5-year** increase in life expectancy.

Recommendations

- ▶ Take better account of biodiversity in spatial and urban planning
- ▶ Promote sustainable means of transport and soft mobility solutions
- ▶ Promote local urban agriculture



PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Responsible, healthy, socially just and ecologically sustainable production and consumption

Plastic pollution has become a major issue that already threatens the health of marine ecosystems and generates persistent environmental pollution. In addition, the consumerist model encourages the accumulation of products with short lifespans, generating a lot of waste, and having a huge impact on natural and / or non-renewable resources. Only an appropriate management of hazardous waste, a new model of responsible consumption, coupled with an in-depth rethinking of design, lifecycle, materials, uses, recyclability, toxicity of compounds, etc. can result in reducing environmental pollution and its impact on our health.

In figures

- More than **8 million tonnes** of plastics end up in the oceans each year, causing an approximate **\$ 8 billion** damage to marine ecosystems. Plastic constitutes **80%** of all waste in the oceans.

- In 2012, about **56 million tonnes** of electronic and electrical equipment were placed on the market. In a context of continuous innovation, miniaturization, etc. they quickly become electronic waste.

- **100,000 people** die from exposure to asbestos every year.

- Nearly **80% of the world's wastewater** is discharged into the environment without treatment.

Recommendations

- ▶ Engage all countries and stakeholders in strong policies to reduce plastic waste at the source, and strong policies to manage existing plastic waste, including implementation of the polluter pays principle, without letting this burden to least developed countries.
- ▶ Support the establishment of a binding international instrument on plastics, implementing the polluter pays principle.
- ▶ Stop the export of hazardous waste and chemicals by the European Union and its Member States to third countries with less resources, unable to cope with the management of these products, and exposing local populations to serious health hazards.



REDUCE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HEALTH

Reduce the impact of climate change on health

Climate change is an additional threat to health, which adds to other existing factors. Climate experts, scientists and health professionals release more and more data exposing the consequences of climate change on health, whether they are due to acute extreme events (tsunamis, storms, earthquakes, etc.) or long-term evolutions (global elevation of temperatures, scarcity of water resources, droughts, etc.).

In figures

- The number of vulnerable people exposed to heatwaves has increased by **125 million** between 2000 and 2016.
- Women and children are the most affected by bad weather episodes such as droughts.
- The number of extreme weather events has increased by **46%** between 2000 and 2013.

Recommendations

- ▶ Support communities in the development of local climate adaptation plans, using scientific data, field observations, traditional knowledge, and appropriate funding
- ▶ Ensure compliance with the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement by limiting global warming to 1.5 °C

Sources:

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World Health Organization, «Facts in pictures» : [Children's environmental health - Preventing disease through healthy environments](#) - [Health inequities and their causes](#) - [Nutrition](#)



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