



CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

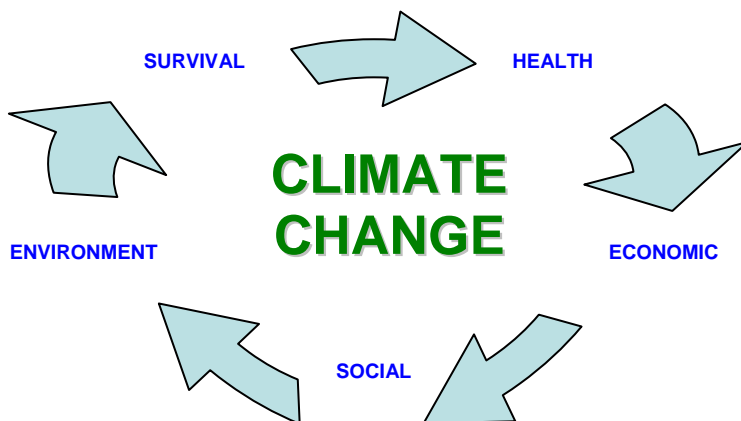


The results of the CHPA *Climate change and health survey* were presented to the Commonwealth Health Minister's meeting in Geneva on 17 May 2009.

Over 800 individuals from 42 of the 53 Commonwealth countries returned the survey, as well as a number of professional associations who returned surveys on behalf of a membership numbering in excess of 200,000. Responses were received from nurses, doctors, pharmacists, dentists, community health workers and others such as dietitians, physiotherapists and health administrators. The full report is available on the CNF website:

<http://www.commonwealthnurses.org>.

There was remarkable consistency in the effects, identified by health professionals, of global warming and climate change. The effects fell into five main categories: survival, health, economic, social and environmental. Each effect impacted on and was impacted by other effects, forming a relentless cycle of increasing severity.



There were some key messages to Commonwealth health ministers.

MESSAGE 1: WE CARE, DO YOU?

An amazing 96% of respondents were personally concerned about global warming and climate change. They did not however have the same confidence in their governments' concern or preparedness. While 73.3% considered global warming was a concern to their government, only 43.8% considered their government had an action plan or high level committee on global warming and climate change and nearly 70% said they had no input into or access to the action plan or high level committee.

MESSAGE 2: INVOLVE US! WE WANT TO BE INVOLVED

Governments, even those with action plans to deal with global warming and climate change, or disaster plans, did not adequately seek input from health professionals, or provide them with access to their policy or plans. Forty percent of respondents said their governments did not involve them in policy decisions or in formulating plans about global warming and climate change. As one respondent said, *Health professionals and their associations should be integral to decision making; because they bear the brunt of the health effects and disasters which will arise from global warming and climate change.*

MESSAGE 3: KEEP US INFORMED

Health professionals at all levels want to be kept informed. They understand they will be called on to care for people affected by global warming and climate change, but without information their response will be inadequate. *Consultation occurs, but only with health professionals at a policy or academic level. There is little or no consultation with health professionals in the workplace or in the field.* Health professionals also consider that the public are poorly informed. *Dissemination of information from the top down appears to be a major challenge and is not done well. There should be more public participation in decision making together with more public education.*

MESSAGE 4: THE COST OF INACTION IS GREATER THAN THE COST OF ACTION

Global, collaborative strategies are needed to avoid wholesale environmental devastation and gross social disruption with consequent risks to health and peace. There is a clear choice between continuing unsustainable and inequitable consumption of energy use and collaborative planning to mitigate foreseeable economic, environmental, social and health risks associated with climate change. Health professionals consider the cost of doing nothing, of being reactive, much greater in financial and human terms than taking preventative action.

MESSAGE 5: ACT NOW!

Respondents were concerned that governments are too distracted by other issues, such as their own domestic issues (unemployment, crime, and poverty) and the current global economic crisis. *There is very little evidence of any genuine commitment; the issue is not being taken seriously and is not high enough on their agenda.* Health professionals felt the time to act was now and that while individual effort was important, the leadership of national governments together with international collaboration and cooperation was critical to success.

We have only one planet. If we do not save it, we have nowhere else to go.



COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION

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CHPA LAUNCHED

The Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance (CHPA) was officially launched at the Commonwealth Health Minister's meeting in Geneva on Sunday 17 May. The CHPA consists of seven Commonwealth health professional associations accredited to the Commonwealth. The CHPA consider that by working together they can more efficiently and effectively represent and support health professionals in Commonwealth countries and promote high standards of care and equity in access to care for people living in Commonwealth countries.



Members of the CHPA with Senator Jan McLucas

Caroline Pontefract, Director of the Social Transformation Programs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat launched the CHPA which was facilitated by Senator Jan McLucas from Australia who chaired the Commonwealth Health Minister's meetings. Susie Kong, the CNF President, responded on behalf of the CHPA.

CNF ATTENDS CHMM

Susie Kong, CNF President and Jill Iliffe, CNF Executive Secretary attended the Commonwealth Health Minister's meeting in Geneva 17 May 2009.



CNF BIENNIAL 2009

Gaborone, Botswana
Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 June 2009



REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL

Further information, registration forms and the Biennial meeting and workshop program can be downloaded from the CNF website:

<http://www.commonwealthnurses.org> or by emailing: cnf@commonwealthnurses.org.

The CNF Biennial is being hosted by the Nurses Association of Botswana.

COMMONWEALTH PEOPLE'S FORUM



The Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (CPF) is held in conjunction with the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting which in 2009 will be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 22-26 November.

The CPF provides an opportunity for individuals and organisations across the Commonwealth to interact, network and share ideas around issues of concern and interest. More information about the CPF can be found on the website of the Commonwealth Foundation: <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com>.

Commonwealth Africa Symposium on the International Migration of Health Workers

The Commonwealth Foundation is holding a second symposium on the international migration of health workers. The first symposium was held in South Asia (New Delhi India November 2008). The second symposium will be held in Africa (Gaborone Botswana) 16-18 June 2009. The Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance will be working in partnership with the Commonwealth Foundation to conduct the symposium. The CNF has nominated a number of nurses from across Africa to attend the Symposium to discuss the effects of migration on their nursing workforce and the impact of HIV and AIDS on the nurses' migration decisions.