

In The News and Elsewhere

4 November 2023

Converging Paths – Global Governance for Climate Justice and Health Equity

The text emphasizes the interconnectedness of climate change, biodiversity, and health, warning of a vicious cycle leading to global warming, biodiversity loss, and health issues.

Climate change is identified as a major health determinant, with estimates suggesting 250,000 additional deaths yearly between 2030-2050 due to climate-related diseases, costing \$2-4 billion annually. Vulnerable groups, especially women, face increased morbidity. Climate change-induced migration is a significant concern, with the number of climate migrants projected to reach one billion in 30 years. The text calls for climate justice, linking it with global health equity, and stresses the need for integrated global governance.

The text contains three sections. The first explores climate change impacts and vulnerabilities globally. The second delves into systemic intersectionalities, addressing ecological regeneration, gender equality, and urban climate strategies. The third proposes an integrated global governance framework for climate-resilient health systems. The document concludes with a ten-point framework for achieving climate justice and health equity.

[Link to [Observer Research Foundation article](#)]

Global Fund Articles

Elton John addresses Parliament urging leaders to do more to end Aids epidemic

Sir Elton John has urged political leaders to do more to eliminate the Aids epidemic, telling Parliament the UK “can be the first country in the world to defeat this awful virus”. The music superstar, 76, was honoured at a reception hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on HIV and Aids at the Speaker’s House, in recognition of his commitment to ending the epidemic through the Elton John Aids Foundation. It comes after Victoria Atkins, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced the UK Government will be expanding the roll-out of a HIV testing programme to 46 accident and emergency departments across England.

Elton John also stressed the importance of the UK doing more internationally, including helping the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. He said: “If the Government is serious about ending Aids, I call on it to fully restore the UK’s commitment, to pledge £1.46 billion pounds this current three-year cycle and ensure the Global Fund is fully financed.”

[Link to [The Independent article](#)]

How Moldova is trying to control tuberculosis

Moldova, on the edge of Europe, is working very hard to fight TB. The country aims to be tuberculosis-free by 2030, at the same time as joining the EU. But that’s quite a challenge.

‘We can only make it if we work together regionally.’

The cottage of the single Olga (41) in an old district of Balti, the second largest city in the country, is small but cozy. Through a small kitchen you enter the cramped living room and bedroom. In it there is a double bed, a sofa that can be transformed into another double bed, a TV cabinet and a baby cot. Olga and her five children sleep there, the eldest 21

and the youngest 3, and her grandchild, a baby. In and around the house there are four cats and five dogs.

'In the 1990s, when Moldova was going through a severe economic recession, the resistant variant of the disease in particular increased enormously,' says Valentina Vilc, coordinator of the national programme against the disease. Moldova had very little medication available. Therefore, to get the disease under control, a national tuberculosis programme was set up by the government in 1995, with the Ministry of Health and various NGOs working together to get the disease under control. One of the main donors to the programme is the multilateral organisation Global Fund, which invested a total of \$5.8 million in 2021 and 2022 to fight both HIV and TB

[Link to [MO news in Dutch](#) and English translation attached]

Le changement climatique pourrait relancer le paludisme en Afrique *Climate change could revive malaria in Africa*

This is an article in French on Climate Change impact to Malaria in Africa.

[Link to [Sci Dev Net article](#) in French]

HIV/AIDS Articles

This is how the world finally ends the HIV/AIDS pandemic

Nearly 30 years ago more than a decade after HIV/AIDS was first identified a group of scientists in the United States and France reported impressive results from a clinical trial.

Pregnant women living with HIV could reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to their newborn child by around 67% if they took a drug called zidovudine during pregnancy and their infant took it for the first six weeks of life¹. Five years later, a similar finding was reported in Africa² where, at the time, the prevalence of HIV among pregnant women exceeded 35% in several regions.

These studies, and subsequent ones that elucidated how effectively antiretroviral therapy could block parent-to-child transmission of HIV, augured an era of tremendous progress both towards eliminating such transmission and scaling up access to life-saving treatments for children and adults living with HIV.

[Link to [Nature article](#)]

AIDS response 'under threat' amid human rights backlash – UN

The global response to AIDS is "under threat" because of an unprecedented backlash against human rights that is stigmatizing the groups most at risk of HIV infection, the head of the United Nations AIDS programme has warned. Winnie Byanyima, executive director of UNAIDS, said countries where there are laws against LGBTQ people, or which criminalise sex work or personal drug use, are largely the places seeing a rise or plateau in new infections. Stigma, discrimination and a lack of comprehensive sex education was also an issue, she said. "This pushback - anti-human rights, anti-democratic, anti-gender equality - has put our work under threat," she told Reuters in an interview in London ahead of the launch of a new report from the organization she leads.

[Link to [Reuters article](#)]

Ageism: the -ism affecting the lives of older people living with HIV

WHO defines ageism as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on age. Ageism is a multidimensional concept that encompasses multiple components related to the individual, the social group, and the institution in different cultural and environmental settings. In people ageing with HIV these elements include self-stigma, discrimination in society, and experiences in care, many of which are unique to older people. In this

Position Paper, we use experience of people with HIV and clinicians taking care of them to explore these issues in high-income countries. The intersectionality of multiple -isms, which affect the lives of older people living with HIV, and ageism enhance several HIV-related issues, including self-inflicted stigma, and loneliness. Research is needed to explore how ageism contributes to worse physical, mental, and social wellbeing outcomes for people with HIV. The model of care for older people living with HIV needs to go beyond virological success by adopting a geriatric mindset, which is attentive to the challenge of ageism and is proactive in promoting a comprehensive approach for the ageing population. All stakeholders and the community should work together to co-create institutional strategies and educational programmes and enable respectful intergenerational dialogue to foster a stigma-free future for older people living with HIV.

[Link to [The Lancet article](#)]

UNAIDS Urges Investment in Community Leadership to End AIDS

As donors withdraw from HIV, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has chosen to focus on the importance of community-led interventions to end the AIDS pandemic for World AIDS Day on 1 December.

“There has been an unprecedented backsliding in financial commitments to community-led organisations, and it is costing lives,” according to UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima, writing in her organisation’s annual World AIDS Day Report released on Tuesday.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

PrEP: The small blue pill helping end HIV transmission

Access to a preventative drug has led to a fall in the number of gay and bisexual men diagnosed with HIV, a leading sexual health clinic has said. Health Security Agency (HSA) figures for London show the number of first diagnoses had fallen in this group by 3% from 2021 to 2022. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a "powerful tool" in ending transmission, 56 Dean Street clinic said.

[Link to [BBC news article](#)]

South Africa, Colombia and others are fighting drugmakers over access to TB and HIV drugs

In a series of moves experts say signal a shift in how developing countries deal with pharmaceuticals, South Africa, Colombia and others have recently adopted a more combative approach towards drugmakers, pushing back on policies that deny treatment to millions of people with tuberculosis and HIV.

[Link to [The Independent article](#)]

Tuberculosis Articles

The Forgotten Pandemic

As the country continues to grapple with alarmingly high tuberculosis rates, EU membership could help fight the disease, reports Julia Kaiser from Moldova, where she travelled with The Global Fund.

[Parliament Magazine article attached]

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[Link to [The Independent article](#)]

Global Health and Pandemic Preparedness

Future pandemic agreement talks: why it's complicated

Negotiations in Geneva grind on for a global agreement to tackle future pandemics. While the current draft shows promise, several contentious points persist, from the “one health” approach to access to vaccines and diagnostics, as well as financing.

The recent news of a spike in respiratory illnesses in northern China has served as a prickly reminder of the Covid-19 pandemic. A worried World Health Organization (WHO) has sought more information on the health situation, but Beijing has assured that there is no new circulating pathogen.

This latest episode has nevertheless sounded the alarm yet again of the need to prepare for a potential future pandemic. This very goal engages the 194 WHO member states who are negotiating toward an international accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response based on a first draft released last month.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body is set to begin its seventh round of talks on 4 December to hash out a document to be adopted at the next World Health Assembly in May 2024, with the hopes of avoiding repeating the catastrophic errors made during the Covid-19 pandemic, which cost the lives of millions.

[Link to [Geneva Solutions article](#)]

Advancing Equity and Rights for People and States on the Frontlines of the Climate Crisis

As the world faces the escalating climate crisis, it is imperative that we take immediate, equitable, and rights-based action. The current trajectory of global warming, already exceeding 1.1°C, poses a profound threat to human rights. The time has come to hold major polluting nations accountable for their fair share in addressing climate change. We believe that embracing equity, social justice, and rights-based approaches is the key to effective climate action and global cooperation.

In the spirit of this urgent call for change, the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are hosting a virtual event in conjunction with the Human Rights 75 initiative. Ahead of COP28, the objective of the event is to build momentum for a major “course-correction” to rights-based climate action consistent with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

[Link to [UN Human Rights article](#)]

Egypt Wiped Out Hepatitis C. Now It Is Trying to Help the Rest of Africa.

Effective drugs that have made the disease curable have yet to reach most of the region.

[Link to [New York Times article](#)]

Increasing Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity Will Bring 'Second Independence' for the Continent

Ensuring that Africa can manufacture its own vaccines will represent “the second independence of Africa”, Dr Jean Kaseya, Director General of the Africa Centre for

Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), said at the start of the Conference for Public Health in Africa 2023 (CPHIA) on Monday.

“Many African countries got their independence [from colonisers] in the 1960s, but we saw in COVID that we are not independent,” Kaseya told a media briefing shortly before CPHIA’s opening. “Other continents locked their doors and we were left beyond.”

With over 5,000 in-person delegates and an additional 20,000 virtual participants in attendance, Kaseya described CPHIA23 as the largest global public health event outside the annual World Health Assembly.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

African Civil Society Groups Launch New Alliance to Combat Pandemics and Climate Change

A new African civil society network to address pandemics and climate crises was introduced publicly on Wednesday on the sidelines of the Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA). The Resilience Action Network Africa (RANA) has been established by over 30 African organizations that are part of the global Pandemic Action Network (PAN), which was formed during COVID-19.

“This journey started a long time ago,” RANA executive director Aggrey Aluso told Health Policy Watch. “The voices of the global South and the concerns of low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa, do not inform global policies. But ‘the people who wear the shoe know where it pinches most.’”

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

Health at the Heart of Climate Action: WHO’s Message to COP28 Negotiators

COP28, the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), will take place from November 30 to December 12, 2023, at the Expo City complex in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Negotiators at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) must accelerate the end of fossil fuels, eliminate trillions in fossil fuel subsidies, and swiftly transition to clean, renewable energy to reap the health benefits of climate action, senior World Health Organization (WHO) officials urged at a press briefing on Tuesday.

Despite the absence of explicit mention of fossil fuels in the draft “Health Declaration” to be signed by UN member states at the climate conference, which begins on Thursday, negotiators working on the outcome document must recognise that “we need to halt emissions and accelerate the transition to clean, renewable energy for the sake of health,” stated Dr. Maria Neira, director of WHO’s Department of Climate, Environment, and Health.

“The more we postpone action on reducing emissions and accelerating this transition to clean, renewable sources of energy, the more we rely on fossil fuels, the more our health will be paying the price that is very high,” Neira said.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

COP28: 124 Countries Commit to Milestone ‘Declaration on Climate and Health’

In what is being described as a historic and pivotal moment by top COP28 and World Health Organization (WHO) officials, 124 countries have endorsed the Declaration of Climate and Health. Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, President of COP28 in Dubai, made the announcement.

“We have received commitments from 123 countries that are ready to sign the health declaration,” Al Jaber said Saturday. “That is a big achievement. It is a giant leap in the

right direction.” China committed to the declaration shortly after Al Jaber’s remarks, bringing the final tally to 124.

The political declaration marks the first time that the health impacts of climate change have taken centre stage in 28 years of UN climate talks. China and the European Union headline the list of signatories, while the United States, India, and South Africa had not signed at the time of publication.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

From Australia to Bangladesh and Beyond: Mobilizing Local Communities Is Key to Breaking Down Climate and Health Silos

A project born from community advocacy and Indigenous leadership has catalysed a unique partnership between a small, rural Australian community and global health experts, shining a light on the link between climate, health and the power of community-driven change.

Systematic water mismanagement combined with droughts and floods exacerbated by climate change has led to unreliable town water supplies for residents of Walgett in New South Wales.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

Africa CDC Conference Changes Public Health Narrative for the Continent

The silver lining to Africa being denied access to COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic is how it has galvanised continental leaders to focus on self-reliance – instead of depending on wealthy countries for assistance.

The determination to build the continent’s health capacity was abundantly evident at this week’s Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA) hosted by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

“Having a major conference like CPHIA on the continent here in Africa means that we can change the narrative. It means that we can lead the conversation. We can change it by centring what matters most to African communities and spotlighting extraordinary science from African researchers that would normally go unnoticed,” said Shingai Machingaidze, Africa CDC’s acting chief scientist and a rising star in global health.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

First-Ever COP28 Health Day Unfolds Amidst Uproar Over COP President’s Fossil Fuel Remarks

The inaugural Health Day at COP28 on Sunday saw a strong push by some global leaders, led by US Climate Envoy John Kerry, for a swift transition away from the world’s dependence on fossil fuels. While some ministers of health among the 50 countries gathered for the day also echoed Kerry’s call for a fossil fuel-free future, others were more hesitant.

The high-level Health Day, the first in 27 years of climate conferences, unfolded amidst an uproar over the revelation of remarks by COP President Sultan Al Jaber, who also serves as CEO of the United Arab Emirates national oil company Adnoc.

[Link to [Health Policy Watch article](#)]

Health at COP28: three things to watch for

The 28th UN climate change conference will see declarations related to health and humanitarian crises, as well as an assessment of progress on the Paris Agreement. Talha Burki reports.

Preparations are well under way for the 28th annual UN climate change conference (COP28). It will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates between Nov 30 and Dec 12. On Nov 16, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged world leaders at COP28 to “commit to protect the health of all people”. Whether his call will be heeded remains to be seen. Here are three things for the health community to look out for at COP28.

[Link to [The Lancet article](#) and attached]

Rethinking international financing for health to better respond to future pandemics

International financing for health has been high on the political and global health agenda since COVID-19. The recent launch of the Pandemic Fund represents the first consolidated effort of the international community to mobilise additional voluntary financial resources for the purpose of strengthening global efforts in pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR). Against such a dynamic landscape, building on recent critiques and new policy proposals, we propose a new generation of more equitable, effective and coordinated financing arrangements for pandemic PPR and for global health and development more broadly: lessons that could be applied in the ongoing endeavour of the Pandemic Fund. We also explore the principles of Global Public Investment and consider their potential to achieve greater inclusiveness in governance, diversity in financing, and transparency and performance in operations. The Pandemic Fund could become the first example of a global health initiative based on innovative concepts. It needs to be broad based, more flexible, leverage a great variety of funding sources and join forces with multiple stakeholders to maximise the impact.

[Link to [BMJ Global Health article](#)]

Malawi urges action for climate-vulnerable nations ahead of COP28

With the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP 28, less than a week away, Malawi’s Foreign Affairs Minister Nancy Tembo is looking ahead at the global meeting and hopes more will be done to help least developed countries like hers face the climate crisis. To do so, Tembo would like to see the loss and damage fund materialize, as well as a debt-for-nature system and an easier-to-navigate carbon market.

[Link to [Devex article](#)]

Unvaccinated and vulnerable: Children drive surge in deadly outbreaks

Large outbreaks of diseases that primarily kill children are spreading around the world, a grim legacy of disruptions to health systems during the Covid-19 pandemic that have left more than 60 million children without a single dose of standard childhood vaccines.

By midway through this year, 47 countries were reporting serious measles outbreaks, compared with 16 countries in June 2020. Nigeria is currently facing the largest diphtheria outbreak in its history, with more than 17,000 suspected cases and nearly 600 deaths so far. Twelve countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, are reporting circulating polio virus.

[Link to [New York Times article](#) and attached]