

Rotorua Statement

WAIORA: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All

This Statement represents the collective voice of the social movement members, researchers, practitioners and policymakers who participated in the 23rd IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion, held in Rotorua, Aotearoa New Zealand in April 2019. It should be read alongside the Indigenous Peoples' Statement for Planetary Health and Sustainable Development from this Conference.

The conference participants call on the global community to urgently act to promote planetary health and sustainable development for all, now and for the sake of future generations.

Planetary health is the health of humanity and the natural systems of which we are part.¹ It builds on Indigenous peoples' principles of holism and interconnectedness, strengthening public health and health promotion action on ecological and social determinants of health. It puts the wellbeing of people and the planet at the heart of decision-making, recognising that the economy, as a social construct, must be a supportive tool fit for this purpose in the 21st century.

Waiora is an Indigenous concept of our host country, Aotearoa New Zealand, which expresses the interconnections between peoples' health and the natural environment, and the imperative of sustainable development.^{2 3} Waiora represents a call to work with Indigenous peoples to draw on Indigenous knowledge, and to share knowledge from our diverse cultural systems for the wellbeing of the planet and humanity. Sustainable development for all is a clear way to ensure environmental, social and health justice for the people of today and for future generations.

Urgent action is needed because mounting evidence tells us that the current economic and social development paradigm of infinite growth and endless exploitation of limited natural resources is unjust and unsustainable, leading to inequities within and among countries and across generations.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the new development agenda "Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development".⁴ The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integrate economic, social and environmental development around the themes of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. In doing so, they provide an action plan for the global community. They prioritise the fight against poverty and hunger while focusing on human rights for all, and the empowerment of women and girls as part of the push to achieve gender equality. The SDGs recognise that eradicating poverty and inequality, creating inclusive economic growth and preserving the planet are inextricably linked to each other and to population health.⁵

Conference participants call for immediate action from the global community in four key areas.

1. Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, and within and across generations. This requires:

The development of all peoples as empowered lifelong learners and engaged contributors to individual health and the health of families, communities and the planet.

Action and accountability to address the wide and enduring inequities experienced by Indigenous peoples, while ensuring the protection of cultural identity and customary ways of life.

Tackling the structural factors that drive the inequitable distribution of power, money, and resources; improving daily living conditions especially of those most in need; and measuring and understanding the problem and assessing the impact of action as outlined by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health.⁶

Prioritising intergenerational health equity in systems, frameworks and decision-making, as a central tenet of a planetary approach to health

2. Make all urban and other habitats inclusive, safe, resilient, sustainable and conducive to health and wellbeing for people and the planet. This requires:

Renewing and strengthening our relationship with planetary ecosystems.

Protection of the planet from degradation, including through sustainable production, management and consumption of natural resources so that the planet can support the needs of present and future generations. This requires taking, enabling and advocating for immediate action on climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Action to reduce disparities in the quality and quantity of resources available to communities as these disparities are at the root of inequities in health. Current threats will accentuate such disparities. These include threats to food and water supplies associated with climate change, depletion of both renewable and non-renewable resources, the degradation of the environment such as contamination of food chains and ecosystems, poor air quality and massive forced migrations.

Greater cross-sectoral action to protect and improve the health of populations experiencing inequities, including those in the world's fast-growing urban areas.

Fostering of peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear, racism, violation and other violence.

The realisation of the health co-benefits of sustainable 'One Planet' living.

Ensuring urban decision-makers apply a “health equity lens” to assess the risks and opportunities posed by policies and programmes and measure their effects.⁷

3. Design and implement effective and fair climate change adaptation strategies. This includes:

The development of new approaches to global, regional, national and local governance and stewardship that will equitably promote health and well-being and prevent and mitigate disastrous climate and environmental breakdown, particularly in Low and Middle-Income Countries.

Repositioning Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems to be on an equal footing with science and other knowledge systems to promote health and well-being and prevent and mitigate disastrous climate change and environmental breakdown.

Development of action-oriented policies and partnerships between health and other sectors to develop policies addressing health and climate.

4. Build collaborative, effective, accountable and inclusive governance, systems and processes at all levels to promote participation, peace, justice, respect of human rights and intergenerational health equity. This requires:

Respect for and adherence to the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples as articulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Effective global governance free from the domination of economic considerations and commercial interests.

The promotion of participatory democracy, coherent policy-making and regulation in the public interest and to restrict conflict of interest.

Participants at the 23rd IUHPE World Conference in Rotorua also confirm the critical role and relevant expertise of the health promotion community in promoting human health, planetary health and sustainable development, including implementing the SDGs. Participants urge the health promotion community to provide leadership across our one planet.

References:

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