

Rt Hon Helen Clark, Chair of High-Level Advisory Board for the Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change.

**Statement at the launch of the 2022 Lancet Countdown Report;
Wednesday 26 October 2022.**

Today we have heard about the clear evidence of the profound impacts of climate change on the health of people in every country.

As well, we see how populations around the world are struggling with the cost of living and with energy and food crises as a result of the impacts of compounding crises, including that of our climate.

We see how our persistent overdependence on fossil fuels is taking millions of lives annually because of exposure to air pollution.

Our panellists have spoken of the disproportionate impact all of this is having particularly on the health of vulnerable communities, showing us the human face of a failure to act.

With countries continuing to subsidise fossil fuels, and with the still undelivered promise from high-income countries to deliver on the promised \$100 billion per annum finance for climate action to low- and middle-income countries, our shared future really does lie in the balance. Thirty years on from the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change when Member States committed to avoiding dangerous, anthropogenic climate change, the situation could not be more urgent.

But is it too late to act? No. The evidence produced by the Lancet Countdown shows the multiple, and immediate health benefits which accelerated climate action could bring about. Cleaner air, healthier diets, more active lifestyles, greener cities, and a restoration of natural habitats could save millions of lives each year, while the transition to zero-carbon energy sources can help improve energy access, reduce energy poverty, and protect families from the harms of energy poverty.

As decision-makers prepare for COP27, protecting the health and wellbeing of both the world's populations and of our climate ecosystem must be their top priorities.

- **Governments, national and local, must prioritise protecting the lives of their people, and implement urgent and concrete regulatory measures to deliver Net Zero and healthy economies and societies, and ensure access to clean energy technologies.**
- **Governments must immediately stop subsidising the burning of health-harming fossil fuels, and instead redirect those funds to clean energy solutions and to helping those who are struggling with energy poverty and food insecurity.**
- **High-income countries must urgently deliver the \$100 billion per year to which they committed to ensure a just transition in which vulnerable and lower-income populations are not left behind.**
- **The private sector must act. It's in its interest to promote a much more rapid transition to a zero-carbon future based on renewable energy.**
- **And each of us can take action to reduce our carbon footprint. The choices we make about how we live matter - and we must engage with policymakers to encourage them make to the right decisions for our health and for the climate.**

The world is not yet meeting the commitments made in the Paris Agreement seven years ago. Time is now short, and action can no longer be delayed. A health-centred response to the compounding crisis is the only option to ensure a livable future. We must all play our part.

Thank you for joining this launch of the 2022 report of the Lancet Countdown. I hope you will leave inspired to take action, and to demand that those in power play their part in delivering a sustainable future.