



NEXUS: Shaping a Common Agenda for Climate, Energy, and Health

Friday, April 10, 2014

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

38/F, One Corporate Center, Ortigas, Pasig City

The British medical journal *The Lancet* declared that climate change is “the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.” Indeed, the health impacts of climate change are already felt in different parts of the world – from changing patterns of infectious disease spread to increasing burden of illness and injury due to extreme weather events such as Typhoon Yolanda, which struck central Philippines nearly a year ago and destroyed more than 6,000 lives. While the effects on health vary from one geographic region to another, it is clear that climate change disproportionately affects developing countries, and in particular, the poorer and more vulnerable segments of society.

The recently published Fifth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN-IPCC) presented unequivocal evidence for the anthropogenic nature of global climate change. While climate change is partly due to harmful agricultural practices such as deforestation and land conversion, it is well-established that it is clearly a product of an economy driven by coal, petroleum, and other fossil fuels. These forms of energy also directly harm the health of surrounding communities – for example, coal-fired power plants emit particulate matter that weaken the respiratory system, as well as toxic metals such as mercury which can cause cancer and neurological disorders.

Indeed, rethinking our energy choices is critical if we are to stop, if not to reverse, climate change and protect the public’s health. While the root causes of climate change require transformations in society as a whole, the health sector can also play a vital role, not just in climate adaptation such as through disaster risk reduction, but also in mitigation, such as by divesting from coal and other fossil fuels and investing in renewable energy, especially in healthcare settings. This is in addition to ongoing efforts within the health sector in building resilient health systems that can respond to emerging health challenges brought about by climate change.

Finally, the health sector can be a powerful voice in this long-overdue transition from a carbon-based economy to a world that is powered by alternative energy. Now more than ever, the health case for cutting our addiction to coal and other fossil fuels needs to be articulated. Furthermore, the health sector should also highlight the benefits of renewable energy, not just for the global climate but also for people’s health.

Therefore, in 2014, **Health Care Without Harm-Asia** launched the **Healthy Energy Initiative**, which aims to mobilize the health sector to advocate for cleaner, healthier, and more climate-friendly energy alternatives. Through education, network-building, collaborative research, and advocacy, the Initiative hopes to raise critical awareness, promote dialogue, and build consensus among health professionals and healthcare organizations around the nexus of climate change, energy, and human health.

Having been at the forefront of research and education on climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, the **OML Center** welcomes the Initiative as it brings to fore the health dimension of climate change and energy, which has for long been invisible in the climate-energy discourse.

Roundtable Discussion Objectives

This roundtable discussion will gather leaders from the climate, energy, and health sectors to launch a national conversation and develop a common agenda that links climate resilience, sustainable energy, and health equity. During the discussion, participants will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the existing gaps in the climate-energy-health nexus in terms of:
 - a. Research?
 - b. Policy?
 - c. Implementation?
2. What are the roles of the health sector in terms of:
 - a. Climate adaptation?
 - b. Climate mitigation?
 - c. Sustainable energy?
3. How can synergies between the climate, energy, and health sectors be created?
4. How can this common agenda of climate, energy, and health be pushed forward?

The output of the discussion is a draft common agenda for climate, energy, and health, with initial action points for the different sectors and stakeholders. In addition, the roundtable participants will comprise the initial group that will eventually become a national network for climate, energy, and health.

Health Care Without Harm-Asia

<https://noharm-asia.org/>

An international environmental and health organization, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)-Asia is part of an international coalition with over 500 member organizations in 53 countries, working to transform the health care sector worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it becomes ecologically sustainable and a leading advocate for environmental health and justice.

Healthy Energy Initiative

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

The Healthy Energy Initiative is mobilizing the health sector to play a central role in advocating for a move away from fossil fuel-based power generation—particularly coal—and toward clean, renewable healthy energy options. At present, the Initiative is comprised of a network of health professionals, health organizations, and academic research institutions from five countries – Australia, China, India, Philippines, and South Africa – and the European region.

OML Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation

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

The OML Center recognizes that science and technology have a critical role to play in enhancing the resilience and coping capacity of the various sector of the society whose aspirations to develop sustainably is threatened by climate-related risks and disasters. Therefore, the Center strives to create a "Center of Excellence" by generating science-based solutions in the area of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.