Statements released by health organisations on 1 November 2023, in association with the letter to COP28 President-Designate

Dr. Lujain Alqodmani, President, World Medical Association
“As representatives of the global medical community, we fully support this letter. We are already seeing the impacts of the climate crisis on our health - heat stress, malnutrition, anxiety, vector-borne diseases, respiratory illnesses due to dirty air to name a few. Extreme weather events have another far reaching impact- hospitals and healthcare centres that are meant to provide cure and relief are often first in the line of fire, with access and infrastructure getting hit. Our dangerous addiction to fossil fuels will only aggravate this further. This is why we think that a rapid transition to clean and equitable forms of energy is a win-win on all fronts.”

Prof. Luis Eugenio de Souza, President, World Federation for Public Health Associations
“To protect public health from climate change, the health sector must become a leading voice for a rapid, just, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels and toward accessible, affordable, clean, renewable and healthy energy. If we cannot rapidly kick civilization’s fossil fuel addiction, many of our efforts at health development will be in vain. The health sector cannot adapt its way out of the climate crisis.”

Dr. Pam Cipriano, President, International Council of Nurses
“When disaster strikes, hospitals and health care centres are often at the forefront. They are also the epicenter of addressing the escalating and noxious effects of climate change that are robbing people of their health. We are seeing more people come into our health care centres, hospitals and clinics complaining of heat exhaustion, respiratory issues and allergies, second hand smoke exposure among other things. We firmly believe that COP28 is an opportunity to adopt unified solutions and take action to implement mitigation and adaptation policies that also protect our health. This means phasing out “dirty energy” like coal, oil and gas that have negative impacts on health and the environment and prioritising clean energy sources. We must invest in a healthy and climate-safe future--the time to act on this is now.”

Jeni Miller, Executive Director of the Global Climate and Health Alliance
“Around the world, the impacts of increasing floods, heat waves, fires and droughts drive home the point that the climate crisis is also, profoundly, a health and humanitarian crisis. People are being displaced, suffering and dying due to warming temperatures. At current levels of warming, health and humanitarian systems are already at their limits. While we welcome the COP28 Presidency making health a focus of the negotiations - putting the focus squarely on what climate change actually means for people’s lives - every government must put people’s health and well-being first, starting to fully phase out fossil fuels - thereby addressing the key drivers of global warming.”

Josh Karliner, Director of Global Partnerships, Health Care Without Harm
“While it is essential to pursue adaptation and resilience measures in response to climate change, it is crystal clear that the health sector cannot adapt its way out of the climate crisis. Fossil fuel combustion is driving this crisis and its escalating health impacts, therefore to protect people’s health around the world we must end our addiction to coal, oil and gas. In
order to protect public health from climate change the health sector urgently needs accelerate the decarbonization of its own fossil fuel dependent operations and supply chain, while joining forces with other sectors of society to foster a rapid and just transition away from coal, oil and gas and toward clean, renewable, healthy energy all around the world.”