PROPOSED WFP HA RESOLUTION 2014
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND HEALTH

THE WORLD FEDERATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATIONS,

Recognizing that the impact of the World’s heavy dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear power is one of the greatest contemporary threats to human health including air pollution, radiological waste, climate change, and global competition for energy resources; and

Noting the positive correlation between air pollution created by the burning of fossil fuels and human health impacts including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, asthma, reduced lung function, lung cancer and premature death;¹ and

Recognizing that costs related to these health impacts amounted to $69 billion USD (£41 billion) in China in 2005², $60.5 billion USD (£36 billion) in United States over 30 years³, $335 million USD (£199 million) in South Africa in 2002⁴,⁵ $150 - $693 million (£89 – 413 million) in Costa Rica in 2011;⁶ and,

Noting that If India’s particulate matter pollution was reduced by 10% via taxes on coal and oil production, it would save $34 billion (£20 billion) annually in health damages by 2030.⁷ ⁸ Noting also that air pollution resulting from the burning of fossil fuels includes mercury, and greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, which accumulate in the atmosphere and contribute significantly to increasing global mean temperatures and global climate change, and that levels of several important greenhouse gases have increased by about 25 percent since large-scale industrialization began around 150 years ago, and that, during the past 20 years, about three-quarters of human-made carbon dioxide emissions were from burning fossil fuels;⁹ and

Noting long standing WFP HA policy first passed in a 2001 resolution on the negative health impacts of global climate change¹⁰ and the broad, worldwide scientific consensus regarding the potential or probable ecological and public health impacts of climate change;¹¹,¹²,¹³,¹⁴ and,

Acknowledging that the secondary impacts of global climate change, include food insecurity and population displacement due to increased incidence of extreme weather events and other climatic changes,¹⁵ which may result in social and economic disruption,¹⁶ increasing susceptibility to violent conflict; and

Recognizing further that energy infrastructure and the extraction of oil and other fossil fuels exacts heavy environmental and public health impacts, often resulting in oil spills, habitat destruction, and human casualties;¹⁷,¹⁸ and

Understanding that the production of energy by nuclear power plants also creates numerous environmental health and security vulnerabilities that remain unresolved,¹⁹ including the hazardous disposal of radioactive waste, proliferation concerns, and the threat of nuclear accidents, terrorist attack and other acts of sabotage,²⁰,²¹,²² and that an accident or attack at a nuclear power plant could result in a release of radiation, leading to radiation sickness, genetic mutation and cancer, and the contamination of large tracts of land; and

Noting that a sustainable energy strategy will protect public health and the environment, promote global stability and security, and create jobs and stimulate the economy;²³,²⁴ and current wind, water, sunlight technology appears to be adequate to fulfill the world’s energy needs through 2050;²⁵ and

Therefore, the World Federation of Public Health Associations:

1. Advocates a deliberate, multinational, multiphase transition to a global energy strategy that includes the promotion of energy conservation, including the adoption of responsible fuel-economy standards; improvements in energy efficiency; the development of renewable fuel sources for energy production; strengthened controls for greenhouse gas emissions and air hazardous pollutants; and the expedited institution of safe and renewable energy sources; and
2. Supports immediate legislative and regulatory efforts to reduce adverse health impacts and to mitigate global climate change, particularly through multi-pollutant control strategies that include health-protective limits on emissions of hazardous air pollutants, including mercury, carbon dioxide and other industrial greenhouse gases, in manufacturing, transportation, energy production, and where feasible, other emitting sectors;

3. Calls on governments to support the international process to promote a secure, sustainable energy system, taking into account the growing energy needs of developing economies; and

4. Supports mitigation and adaptation strategies immediately by the health care providers and increased resources for research, development, and deployment of renewable energy technologies and other energy alternatives; and

5. Pledges its participation in coalitions with other groups sharing common goals, principles, and objectives to ensure a public health perspective is represented in new energy policy proposals; and

7. Resolves to collaborate with workers and unions to ensure that a secure, sustainable energy policy provides adequate protections for workers in energy-related sectors and transition assistance to mitigate any adverse interim economic effects; and

8. Recommends the development of educational opportunities for the public to learn more about the environmental health and global security effects of energy policy through content in curricula in schools and programs of public health and continuing education programs.

REFERENCES:


7 World Bank. India - Diagnostic assessment of select environmental challenges (Vol. 1 of 3) : An analysis of physical and monetary losses of environmental health and natural resources (English). Disaster Risk Mgmt & Clim Change (SASDC) 2013 06/05;70004.


9 http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/1605/ggccebro/chapter1.html


16 Epstein and Selber. 49.


19 APHA Resolution 7909: Nuclear Power.

20 Lovins and Lovins 1982.

21 FEMA 1980.


