

Belem Health Action Plan Launched at COP30 - Explained

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COP30 Latest News

- At COP30 in Belem, global philanthropies pledged \$300 million and launched the Belem Health Action Plan to tackle the growing health impacts of climate change through integrated adaptation measures.

Introduction

- The intersection of **climate change and public health** took centre stage at the **30th UN Climate Conference (COP30)** in Belem, Brazil, as global leaders, philanthropies, and health experts launched the **Belem Health Action Plan (BHAP)**.
- The plan aims to strengthen health systems to withstand the escalating effects of climate change.
- Accompanying this initiative, a coalition of more than **35 major philanthropic organisations**, including **Bloomberg Philanthropies, Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and IKEA Foundation**, announced a **\$300 million commitment** under the **Climate and Health Funders Coalition** to address

the dual crisis of climate and health.

- It is the first coordinated global effort to channel adaptation finance specifically towards **climate-linked health outcomes**, placing human well-being at the core of climate action.

Background: The Health Cost of Climate Change

- Climate change has emerged as the **gravest health threat of the 21st century**, worsening air pollution, intensifying heatwaves, and driving the spread of infectious diseases.
- The **2025 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change** has become a key reference for the initiative. According to the report:
 - **Heat-related deaths** have surged by **23% since the 1990s**, now reaching **546,000 deaths annually**.
 - Over **154,000 deaths** were linked to **wildfire smoke exposure** in 2024 alone.
 - The **global dengue transmission potential** has risen by **49% since the 1950s**.
- Experts warn that every country is now facing health impacts from climate change, with **3.3 billion people** globally at heightened risk, especially those in **low- and middle-income nations** where health infrastructure remains fragile.

Launch of the Belem Health Action Plan

- The **BHAP** was launched by **80 countries and organisations** at COP30, building on findings from the Lancet Countdown report.
- It seeks to integrate **climate adaptation with public health strategies**, making health systems more **resilient, equitable, and climate-ready**.
- **Core Focus Areas of the BHAP**
 - **Building Climate-Resilient Health Systems:** Strengthening surveillance, early warning, and response systems to handle heatwaves, floods, vector-borne diseases, and air pollution.
 - **Investing in Research and Innovation:** Supporting research into climate-sensitive diseases and developing adaptive technologies for healthcare delivery.
 - **Health Equity and Justice:** Ensuring vulnerable communities, such as children, women, outdoor workers, and low-income groups, receive targeted support.
 - **Capacity Building:** Enhancing healthcare workforce training to manage climate-related emergencies.
 - **Integrated Policy Frameworks:** Aligning climate, health, and development policies across countries for coordinated action.
- The Plan also calls for **“shifting funding and power to communities most affected by climate change,”** ensuring that adaptation resources directly benefit those on the frontlines.

Philanthropic Commitment

- The **Climate and Health Funders Coalition**, comprising over 35 leading philanthropic entities, pledged an initial **\$300 million** to implement the Belem Health Action Plan and accelerate climate-health solutions. The inaugural funding will focus on:
 - **Extreme heat mitigation** and development of early warning systems.

- **Reducing air pollution**, particularly from urban and industrial emissions.
- **Combating climate-sensitive infectious diseases** such as malaria, dengue, and cholera.
- **Integrating climate and health data systems** to enable better risk forecasting and resource allocation.

Addressing the Adaptation Finance Gap

- A recurring theme at COP30 was the **severe adaptation finance gap**.
- According to the **UN Adaptation Gap Report 2025**, developing countries will require **\$310-365 billion annually by 2035** to adapt effectively to climate change.
- Yet, current funding flows hover around **\$40 billion per year**, far below what is needed.
- In India's case, the **2023 National Communication to the UNFCCC** estimated that the country will need **\$643 billion by 2030** to meet its adaptation goals.
- India has already spent **\$146 billion in 2021-22**, representing **5.6% of GDP**, up from **3.7% in 2015-16**, underscoring its commitment to climate adaptation.
- The BHAP and the accompanying philanthropic pledge are designed to narrow this gap, particularly by directing funds towards **health-related adaptation**, which has traditionally received limited attention.

Global Impact and Collaborative Framework

- The BHAP underscores the principle that **"protecting the environment is protecting people's health."**
- It introduces a multi-sectoral approach where **health ministries, climate departments, and global agencies** collaborate to:
 - Mainstream health into climate policies.
 - Foster cross-country sharing of data and best practices.
 - Develop global standards for measuring health impacts of climate change.
- By prioritising health in climate discussions, COP30 has expanded the definition of climate adaptation, from protecting ecosystems to safeguarding human life and well-being.

Source: IE | DowntoEarth

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