



# IFEH

International Federation  
of Environmental Health

## World Environmental Health Day 2023

26<sup>th</sup> September

Theme:

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH:  
STANDING UP TO PROTECT EVERYONE'S HEALTH EACH AND EVERY DAY.**

### Background for the 2023 WEHD Theme

Environmental health is one of the largest fields within public health because of the myriad ways external forces can impact how people eat, live, and grow. These forces can be about addressing our natural environment (as in the case for clean water or sanitation), but they can also be the consequence of human beings' actions.

According to World Health Organisation (2016), global environmental issues account for more than 12.6 million deaths each year. Along with the issues mentioned, include soil pollution, ultraviolet radiation, and biodiversity loss. According to the data, more than 100 illnesses and injuries can be directly linked to environmental health concerns. Often, these issues have the greatest impact on communities that are poor and already have significant health care vulnerabilities.

A report by Verywell Health (2020) indicates that more than 780 million people don't have access to clean drinking water worldwide and as a result, more than 2,200 children die due to diseases caused by poor water quality each day. Harmful microbes, which are more commonly called pathogens or germs, can infect humans and cause illness. Eating is one of the primary ways in which humans can contract diseases caused by microbes. Diet is the major factor attributed to cancer deaths globally, accounting for approximately 35 percent of such deaths (Rushton, 2003).

At least 155 states recognize their citizens have the right to live in a healthy environment, either through national legislation or international accords. Despite those protections, the World Health Organization estimates that 23 percent of all deaths are linked to "environmental risks" like land and air pollution, water contamination and chemical exposure. Exposure to pollutants can also affect the brain, causing developmental delays, behavioural problems, and even lower IQ in children. In older people, pollutants are associated with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

The last decade was the hottest in human history and we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with wildfires, floods and hurricanes becoming regular events that threaten lives, livelihoods, and food security. Climate change also affects the survival of microbes, facilitating the



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spread of viruses, and expanding the range of vectors. If no action is taken, pandemics are likely to occur more frequently, spread more rapidly, have greater economic impact, and kill more people.

A primary activity of any public health strategy is information sharing. By understanding what the risks are, Environmental Health Professionals can better deploy resources to protect everyone's health each and every day. There are many things that public and private institutions including NGOs can do to protect environmental health and safety of the community and throughout the planet.

We look forward to the various activities and events that can be developed around this year's theme and if there are any further developments from the IFEH, they will be communicated to promote the World Environmental Health Day (WEHD).

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