

Stockholm Declaration: Sustaining resilient and healthy communities – Joint call for Action

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their 169 targets provide a transformative agenda that commits the governments of the world to leave no one behind. The SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals, calling for integrated and inclusive approaches that recognise the imperative of improving living conditions for all, but especially the most vulnerable.



The inextricable link between health and sustainable development means that health is influenced by and contributes to all of the 17 SDGs. This central role of health in sustainable development was re-affirmed by the [Shanghai Declaration](#) and the [Vienna Declaration](#). The Vienna Declaration specifically calls on all parts of the public health community, in Europe and beyond, working at all levels, local, national, regional and global, to recognise the multi-tiered determinants of health and opportunities for action.

This Stockholm Declaration builds on the momentum of the Vienna Declaration and calls for networks of actors to exchange ideas to strengthen action with an emphasis on building resilient and healthy communities. System level resilience is a priority within the Sustainable Development Goals. The public health challenges being faced today require that communities and systems develop the capacity to absorb, adapt, anticipate and transform when exposed to external threats as well as forecast 'shocks' and take pre-emptive actions¹.

¹ 2. Ziglio E, Azzopardi-Muscat N, Briguglio L. Resilience and 21st century public health. *European Journal of Public Health* Volume 27, Issue 5, 1 October 2017, Pages 789–790, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckx116>

“The public health community must promote the concept of Health in all Policies, at all levels of government. While public policy involves trade-offs between many competing objectives, the public health community must demand that, where a policy has a health impact, directly or indirectly, this is assessed and considered and, if the consequences pose a risk to health, this must be made explicit. The first step is to conduct Health Impact Assessments to understand the consequences for health, positive or negative, of all policies.” [2016 Vienna Declaration](#)

As health is recognized as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, the environment in which we live and work, has a major impact on shaping our health. Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health that must be taken into account. Environmental design has both a direct and indirect impact on chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and lung diseases, and mental health, including anxiety and depression. This is especially important for vulnerable groups, including migrants and young children.

A healthy community should include:

- A clean and safe physical environment
- Peace, equity and social justice
- Adequate access to safe food, drinking water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all
- Adequate access to health care services
- Opportunities for learning and skills development
- Strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks
- Workplaces that are supportive of individual and family wellbeing
- Wide participation of residents in decision-making
- Policies that take account of the cultural and spiritual heritages of all groups within the population
- A diverse, dynamic, and inclusive economy
- Protection of the natural environment
- Responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability

Addressing the 21st century needs of healthy and sustainable communities requires new approaches and partnerships between architects, urban planners, city engineers, community officials, engaged citizens and public health professionals. All sectors of the community are inter-related and should share knowledge, expertise and perspectives, working together to create a sustainable and healthy community. Particular attention should be given to groups at risk of social exclusion whose health outcomes may be worsened as a result of exposure to environmental risks. Community cohesion, good governance and social justice are all important pillars for building resilience at community level.

We, the European Public Health Association and the Swedish Association of Social Medicine, fully engage in collaboration across professions to promote sustainable and healthy communities throughout Europe and beyond. We call upon our members, partners and committed individuals to embrace and actively seek this collaboration across professions.

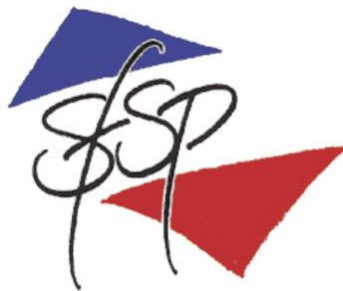
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