2. Climate change and health in the Pacific

The Pacific is among the world’s most vulnerable regions to climate change. The Twelfth PHMM welcomed the WHO Director-General’s SIDS initiative on climate change and health. Pacific health leaders called for a massive scale-up of efforts to mitigate the health consequences of climate change, making climate change and health a standing agenda item for future PHMMs.

The initiative, launched in November 2017, envisions that, by 2030, all SIDS health systems will be resilient to climate variability and change. The initiative calls for increasing international financial support for climate change and health efforts in SIDS.

WHO hosted a meeting in Nadi, Fiji, in March 2018 to develop the Pacific action plan for the SIDS initiative. The Minister of Health and Medical Services of Fiji and the Minister of Health of the Cook Islands co-chaired the meeting, which was also attended by the WHO Assistant Director-General for Climate and Other Determinants of Health.

The WHO/Global Environment Facility project on Building Resilience of Health Systems in Pacific Island Least Developed Countries serves as a significant milestone in WHO’s climate change and health programming. The project aims to build climate-resilient health systems through strengthened governance and policy, early warning and health information systems, and preventive and curative health services.

Children catch crabs during low tide in the Marshall Islands. Climate change is affecting the close connection between ecosystems and people in the Pacific.