



**ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & WOMEN IN  
ADVOCATING FOR A HEALTHY CLIMATE  
PRESENTATION BY THEMBEKA GWAGWA: DENOSA**



**DENOSA**  
PROFESSIONAL  
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# INTRODUCTION

- Would like to thank the organizers for the invitation.
- DENOSA is the NNO for nurses in SA with more than 77 000 members.
- Both a trade union and a professional body.
- Has affiliated to workers & nursing bodies nationally, regionally & internationally, examples:
  - Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU)
  - Southern African Network of Nurses & Midwives (SANNAM), International Council of Nurses (ICN), Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF) & Public Service International (PSI)

## IMPORTANCE OF THE HEALTH SUMMIT

- Climate is the biggest threat to Public Health in 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- UN Development Program states that it threatens the achievements of MDG's.
- Pakistan in 2010 had floods that destroyed thousands of cultivated land, highways cut off leading to setback to reach MDG's
- Globally the number of reported weather-related natural disasters are mounting rapidly e.g. Haiti, New Zealand & Japan.
- Conscientize health professional on issues thus increasing their involvement

# WHY SHOULD HEALTH SECTOR BE INVOLVED?

- Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development & are entitled to a healthy & productive life in harmony with nature.
- Health Sector is responsible for protecting & preserving lives.
- A better understanding of the links between climate change & health can help motivate behavioral change.
- Over 95% of LDC's have health as a priority yet, less than 30% have response plans

# ROLE OF WOMEN IN CLIMATE CHANGE

- Women serve as agents of social change & development through their roles in families.
- However, they are poorly represented in consultation and decision-making processes for the development of climate change adaptation strategies.
- This happens at all levels locally, regionally & globally.
- Promotion of their involvement is critical to addressing climate change in equitable, healthy and sustainable ways.

## PROMOTION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT

- Enhance women leadership to address the challenges.
- Enhance women's capacity to address health & nutrition risks resulting from climate change.
- Policies should address the needs of women & children, particularly in the contexts of nutrition, food security & health.
- Strengthen their role in promoting sustainable & diverse diets, resilient livelihood, local food systems & climate smart agriculture, including the production & consumption of nutrient-rich crops.

# ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- Put health at the heart of the climate change agenda in our countries, regional and international forums – Luanda Declaration by the African Ministers of Health.
- Advocate & raise awareness.
- Strengthen public health systems.
- Choose healthy paths to a low-carbon future e.g. shifting to cleaner & more sustainable means of supplying basic needs such as energy generation & transport.
- Promote research on climate change.
- Strengthen partnerships & our bodies – SANNAM conference

## CONCLUSION

- Not all of the effects of climate change will be harmful, but on balance health damages are projected to outweigh the benefits.
- Globalization has brought benefits e.g. efficient transport & trade, with rapid flow of people, goods & services but the negative is health risks can quickly spread from one location to another.
- Protecting & promoting the health of all populations is a global public good.
- Protection & enhancement of health is an essential pillar of sustainable development.



**THANK YOU**



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