

Ensure Climate Protection—Seize the Irrecoverable Opportunity!

Esteemed Members of the World Health Assembly

In the Covid-19 crisis, you have been leaders in your countries to minimize the public health disaster, not shying away from drastic measures when needed. In times of crisis, clear guidance is required, on the base of scientific expertise.

The first infection peak is coming under control, however, the challenges have by no means become less. In terms of a forward thinking - long-term risk management - the point now is to balance social hardships by targeted assistance measures, to restart the economic performance, and at the same time to limit a likely second flaring-up of Covid-19 infections.

A “*return to every-day life as usual*”, however, can and must not exist, in the light of the climate crises. Even though all of us long for a “*time after the crisis*”, as physicians and other health workers concerned with the health effects of climate change, we know that the big crisis is still ahead of us. If we don't steer against the progressing climate change now, this will develop in a much more catastrophic way than all the scenarios presented in the context of Covid-19. Thus, it is imperative to uncompromisingly drive forward climate neutrality until 2040. Political decisions required for that are not less challenging and cannot be postponed. Decisions have to be made now.

In the Covid-19 crisis it has become a matter of course to make decisions on the base of scientific evidence. We urge you to handle the climate crisis with the same professionalism. The scientific facts are much clearer than in the corona case. The coming five years are the time frame which essentially decides the future of mankind. Through consequent measures for the protection of climate, the climate crisis can now still be attenuated enough to avert large and irreversible changes and their catastrophic consequences - to human health, to life on earth.

If these measures are, however, postponed, and instead the fossil *lock-in* is further solidified by return to *business as usual*, you are gambling away irrecoverably the chance to protect humans from a further growth of the climate crisis into a climate catastrophe. The political responsibility for this is with you, and the directions you select now in recovering from the Covid-19 crisis are also decisive for the climate crisis.

In this temporal coincidence lies a big challenge, but the governmental controls required now also offer a big chance. It is in your hands to overcome two global threats with one common strategy, by you making the right decisions.

We therefore call upon you, on the basis of the state of knowledge in climate research and in line with your individual Government Programme, to couple country actions planned now as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis with clear climate protection aims as enumerated in the UN SDGs and Health for All.