



HMUNEA

HARITHKRAM
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ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY ON GLOBAL HEALTH

Global health diplomacy brings together the disciplines of public health, international affairs, management, law, and economics for negotiations, which influence and shape global policies on environment that are directed towards the attainment of better standards of health globally. The ever-changing dynamics of health, trade and foreign policy is at the cutting edge of global health diplomacy.

Pollution, or the introduction of different categories of waste materials in the environment, has adverse effects on the ecosystem from which we derive our sustenance. With the increase in pollution and environmental degradation, there is a global loss of the ecosystem that provides us clean air and water. The World Health Organization (WHO) explains that climate change caused by environmental degradation is already leading to poor global health. Data from the WHO concludes that as the world gets hotter and more crowded, our engines continue to emit harmful gases and radiation. To make matters worse, approximately half the world has no access to clean fuels or technologies like stoves, lamps etc.

SDGs Covered:

Goal 2: Zero Hunger

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal 13: Climate Action

Goal 14: Life below Water

Goal 15: Life on land

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

The very air we breathe is growing dangerously polluted: nine out of ten people now breathe in polluted air. Air pollution kills 7 million people every year. An alarming one-third of deaths due to stroke, lung cancer, and heart diseases are also caused by air pollution. On the other end of the spectrum, water-borne diseases account for the deaths of 3,575,000 people a year. Every year, 1 billion people suffer sickness caused by unclean water. The horror story doesn't end here: 23% of all premature deaths around the world have been attributed to environmental factors. Moreover, low-income communities are at a disproportionate risk because their homes are often closest to the most polluting industries.

The aforementioned problems are estimated to worsen in the coming years if the world does not wake up to these grim realities. They are already being deliberated upon and debated in discussions on world health.

We humans are primarily responsible for causing pollution, and we will suffer the consequences if we do not stop! We already see its effects manifested in global warming, contaminated seafood, increased cases of lung diseases and so on. While death from floods, extreme temperatures, asthma and respiratory diseases are growing in tandem with spiralling air pollution, diarrheal diseases, malaria, and malnutrition are being increasingly linked to environmental degradation and climate change. Many infectious diseases spreading through contaminated water are also on the rise. Common water-borne diseases like typhoid, cholera, paratyphoid fever, dysentery, jaundice, amoebiasis and malaria continue to affect people all over the world.

People in developing countries are reeling under an even greater burden of diseases and poor health. However, a million-dollar question is, what improvements can be suggested/made to regulations to ensure better environmental conditions and overall health of citizens?

We live in an ecosystem where the action of one has the potential to affect many. This can either prove to be a favourable advantage or an awful curse depending on what the step taken is. It is high time we wake up and not only own up to our mistakes (or those of our predecessors), but also try to reverse the damage done to the environment to the best of our potential. One way in which we can begin to inch towards the greater good of the environment and humanity is by making global health diplomacy take centre stage in diplomatic discussions and policy-making on world platforms. If we do not begin to work collectively on the environment today on strong international forums, the road ahead is going to be impossible to tread on. For us to be able to notice any change in the environmental and health conditions of humankind in our lifetimes, we need to begin today!