

## Statement on energy and health

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Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I would like to highlight the health impact and health choices of energy on behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Every year, the pollution from burning biomass fuels and coal indoors is responsible for 1.5 million deaths. As we are meeting here today, 4000 persons, in particular, women and children, are dying from indoor air pollution. These are the results of a new WHO report, entitled "Fuel for life: household energy and health", which was launched at the CSD-14 last week.

Energy is essential to health, development and livelihoods - whether used inside the home, for cooking and heating, or in settlements and cities. Yet, both *energy production* and *energy use* can be harmful to health.

*Energy production* contributes to pollution in our living environment. Every year, exposure to fine particles in cities around the world is responsible for 800 000 deaths.

Yet, the impacts of *energy consumption* at the household level are even more staggering: More than half of the world's population still rely on biomass fuels and coal to meet their most basic needs. We need to also stress this side of using biomass fuels.

The World Health Organization would like to call on delegates and the CSD to consider the following points:

- *Health is a winning argument* In industrialized countries, health has been driving the environment agenda, lowering outdoor air pollution levels in cities. Let us use health concerns to improve air quality in the homes of the poor.
- *Health and productivity gains make cleaner energy investments worthwhile:* The above mentioned WHO report shows that reducing energy poverty generates real economic benefits. (Globally, the analysis shows a payback of 91 billion USD a year from the 13 billion USD a year invested to halve the number of people cooking with solid fuels.)
- *As a conclusion, health can and must be part of the solution:* It is not sufficient to simply use health as an argument; health must also be one of the key parameters to develop and implement appropriate interventions and policies towards a more equal access to energy.

Thank you.