

TIME TO ADAPT: EXPERT THINK TANK SPOTLIGHTS COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION TO AVOID ADDITIONAL 250,000 DEATHS EVERY YEAR

- New action report published today by The Collective Minds Climate Council, the think tank convened by Foundation S and The Africa-Europe Foundation calls on leaders to urgently fund climate adaptation solutions to strengthen health resilience to prevent a catastrophic surge of disease and death
- World-leading experts say efforts must be led by local communities, with many already living with huge disruption to health due to climate change
- WHO estimates 250,000 more deaths every year from climate change

NEW YORK, Wednesday, 20th September: Leading climate change and health experts, ministers from affected countries and CEOs of NGOs have released a report calling for urgent collective action to help at-risk countries adapt to the devastating health impacts of climate change as leaders gather in New York for the UN General Assembly.

The climate crisis poses the most significant threat to human health in the 21st century, with the World Health Organization estimating that unabated climate change could lead to 250,000 excess deaths per year from 2030 to 2050.

Amidst a growing climate emergency, Foundation S and the Africa-Europe Foundation have convened the Collective Minds Climate Council to outline the urgent need to elevate community-led climate adaptation, warning of huge humanitarian and economic consequences if we fail to act now.

The action report, titled “Accelerating Climate Adaptation for Health Equity”, outlines the urgent actions which must be taken now to improve health resilience, including:

- **Putting local communities at the center of decision-making and solutions:** Their voices and active involvement must be at the center of climate and adaptation planning to ensure that solutions are contextually relevant, maximally effective, and sustainable.
- **Building upon and leveraging evidence of effective local solutions:** Monitoring, evaluation, and learning must be integrated into adaptation efforts to understand and iterate on approaches, identify and scale effective solutions, and mobilize political commitment and financing.
- **Channeling flexible financing directly to local communities:** By directly providing grants, loans, and regular budget allocations to local communities in LMICs, we can enhance the quantity, quality, and equitable access to adaptation finance at decentralized levels.
- **Fostering an enabling environment for sustained progress on local adaptation:** By incorporating health into the climate dialogue with broad recognition and policy support for local adaptation across all levels, we can develop comprehensive policies and strategies that safeguard vulnerable populations, enhance health resilience, and achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Professor Alan Dangour, Director of Climate and Health at Wellcome Trust, said:

“All over the world, communities often with the least responsibility for climate change are those that are experiencing the greatest impacts, on their health, wellbeing and livelihoods as the devastating effects of a warming world continue to grow. The Action Report released today highlights the critical importance of putting local communities at the centre of decision making and solutions as we seek to build the necessary resilience to climate change. Our ambition is



to advance bold thinking around climate change adaptation, and to fuel continuous learning and improvement as we work towards equitable and inclusive solutions. The time for action is now”.

Vanessa Kerry, WHO Special Envoy for Climate Change and Health, CEO of Seed Global Health and Collective Minds Climate Council Member, said: *“The world is literally on fire – the climate crisis is killing us. We need urgent, decisive, and collective action at global, national, and subnational levels to accelerate local adaptation. This approach is critical to minimize effectively the health impacts of climate change, their subsequent and profound impacts on other sectors, and build healthy, climate-resistant futures. Otherwise we face a future in which our health, wellbeing and our very survival, is in peril.”*

Vanina Laurent-Ledru, Head of Foundation S, said: *“The climate crisis is a health crisis. We need urgent collective action now to adapt to its devastating impacts. The Collective Minds Climate Council is a culmination of Foundation S’s efforts to convene a diverse group of global experts to advocate to drive this urgent action. As a Council, we are spearheading efforts to provide real-world evidence on effective local solutions, support and fund locally-led climate adaptation programs, to accelerate policy change for climate adaptation and ensure the most vulnerable communities around the world build health resilience to ultimately save lives.”*

This call for action comes during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly where Foundation S, in partnership with Foreign Policy and the Africa-Europe Foundation, are today hosting a high-level event to launch their timely action report - outlining the need to go beyond mitigation efforts, and prioritize locally led adaptation in building health resilience to climate change. Speakers at the event include Anil Soni, CEO World Health Organization Foundation, and Dr Vanessa Kerry, WHO Special Envoy for Climate Change and Health.

Despite contributing the least to climate change, low- and middle-income countries are most affected by its consequences. In countries across Africa, which contribute less than 4% of CO₂ emissions, they lack the resources to adapt. Neglecting these vulnerable communities will heighten diseases, exacerbate food and water insecurity and contribute to forced displacement. In fact, ecological threats are projected to put 1.2 billion people at risk of displacement by 2050.

Paul Walton, Executive Director of the Africa-Europe Foundation and Collective Minds Council Member, said: *“Now is the time to act together. There is momentum for new and transformative partnerships to combat the climate-health crisis. The key will be our capacity for collaboration and transcending traditional sector-specific interventions. At the Africa-Europe Foundation challenging silos is central to our mission and we are committed to unlocking investment and scaling the impact of climate adaptation investment - with health resilience at the heart.”*

A new film featuring Collective Minds Council Members Minister Awa Marie Coll Seck, Minister of State, Senegal, Director of Climate and Health at the Wellcome Trust, Alan Dangour, and WHO Special Envoy, Dr Vanessa Kerry, has also been released today – reiterating the urgency of this work, and highlighting that the fight for climate action is also a fight for a more equitable world.

Since its creation in May 2022, Foundation S has been carrying a systems approach to philanthropy, through the creation of sustainable solutions based on public-private partnerships with local actors, so that actions stem from the specific needs of communities.

Through Foundation S, Sanofi has pledged \$42 million through 2030 to support community-led adaptation solutions to climate change. This funding will go to local organizations such as **Women and Children Network Development Foundation** working with rural



communities impacted by climate change in Ghana implementing women-centric solutions to address essential needs of single women, pregnant women and young women.

[The action report](#) was created with support from Management Sciences for Health (MSH), a global non-profit advisory organization.

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About Foundation S

Foundation S, the philanthropic organization of Sanofi, was launched in May 2022 to improve the lives of vulnerable populations by catalyzing community-based solutions and expanding access to medicines. With a focus on creating healthier futures for generations to come, Foundation S is committed to four key areas: childhood cancer, climate change and its impact on health, humanitarian aid, and neglected tropical diseases.

Foundation S operates as a “think and do tank.” Through the “think tank,” Foundation S works with global experts and thought leaders to identify solutions to global health challenges that impact LMICs. Meanwhile, through its “do tank,” the Foundation addresses those challenges with its partners through collective action. To advance the urgent need for action and attention to the impact climate change is having on communities and public health in some of the most vulnerable countries around the world, Foundation S convened the Collective Minds Climate Council in 2023, inclusive of members with broad sectoral representation. Members of the Climate Council serve as advisors and co-advocates in the movement to accelerate and raise awareness about the impact of climate change on health and to accelerate policy change and global financial support for climate adaptation in countries where climate change is already a reality and for those most at risk.

About Sanofi

Sanofi is an innovative global healthcare company, driven by one purpose: we chase the miracles of science to improve people’s lives. Our team, across some 100 countries, is dedicated to transforming the practice of medicine by working to turn the impossible into the possible. We provide potentially life-changing treatment options and life-saving vaccine protection to millions of people globally, while putting sustainability and social responsibility at the center of our ambitions.

About the Africa-Europe Foundation

The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is an independent platform for multistakeholder dialogue, frank debate and strategic analysis, working to strengthen the partnership between Africa and Europe. During the inception phase of AEF (2021-2022), multistakeholder Strategy Groups were set up and mandated to offer a safe space for exchange on complex issues of Africa-Europe relations, catalyse innovative partnerships and unlock untapped areas of cooperation. These dialogue platforms form the backbone of AEF’s programming which has a strategic focus on unlocking untapped areas of cross-continental cooperation, from working at the climate-development nexus to digital, blue economy, carbon markets and the future of health workforce. AEF’s #AUEUTracker aims to complement existing efforts to monitor and facilitate the implementation of political and financial commitments of the partnership.