



## **Health and Climate Foundation**

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# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Health and Climate Foundation Establishes Washington DC Base to Combat Climate-sensitive Diseases around the World**

11/3/2008, Washington DC, USA – The newly formed Health and Climate Foundation (HCF) has established its headquarters in Washington DC.

The mission of the non-profit foundation is to help eradicate epidemics of climate-sensitive diseases around the world, but especially in developing nations.

HCF President, Dr David Rogers: “At least 30 climate-sensitive diseases, including malaria, cholera, rift valley fever and meningitis pose a major threat to tens of millions of people all over the world.

“Despite attempts to prevent epidemics, public health services everywhere are often overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the problem.

“We see a massive need for better cooperation between public health practitioners and climate scientists to combat these epidemics.

“The disease burden is high because we often don’t fully understand and cannot exploit the complex relationships between health, climate and other social factors to prevent epidemics.”

By working closely with the health and climate communities, the Foundation will identify pressing needs and assemble health, climate and social science experts to concentrate on practical solutions.

Many useful aid or research projects on climate-sensitive diseases, especially in Africa, have been carried out in the past, but these are often of limited duration and don’t leave behind much in the way of increased capacity.

HCF donors will help finance projects that can lead to long-term sustainable improvements in public health care by building local capacities to reduce the burden of climate-sensitive diseases.

“HCF is designed to act as a rapid, nimble interface between different sectors, some of

which have had little or no interaction, but together have great potential to provide innovative solutions to these diseases,” says Dr Rogers.

Many areas in the developing world are already suffering, but as climate change tightens its grip, weather patterns will shift and new regions will become vulnerable according to last year’s Fourth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Increased water stress, drought-reduced crop yields and natural disasters such as flash floods will increase negative impacts.

“Our clear purpose is to obtain measurable results – significant reductions of lives and livelihoods lost to these diseases,” says Dr Rogers.

HCF is already playing a major role in international efforts to improve how outbreaks of deadly strains of meningitis in Africa are predicted and managed.\*

However, other climate-sensitive diseases – which kill thousands and destroy the livelihoods of many other victims every year – desperately require increased scientific focus and better understanding of how to combat them at grass-roots levels.

\*<http://merit.hc-foundation.org>

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