

Press Note

21st September 2015, New Delhi

A National Consultation was held on 21st September, 2016 on ***Planning for Heatwave Management in India*** in New Delhi. The workshop was organized by **TARU Leading Edge** in partnership with the **Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar (IIPH-G)**, **Understanding Climate and Health Associations in India initiative** and the **Indian Meteorological Society (IMS)**, supported by the **Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN)** of the Rockefeller Foundation and the **Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)**.

The chief guest of the workshop was **Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**. He spoke about the recognition of heatwaves as a serious threat to our society so much so that it is now seen as a disaster. He emphasized the need for urgent management measures including looking towards indigenous solutions. Distinguished speaker and lead author of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) when it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, **Prof. Rais Akhtar** spoke of the need for India to remain ahead of the curve in order to ensure a heat resilient India. Other speakers on the inaugural panel included, amongst others **Dr. R S Dhaliwal**, Scientist F and Head, Non Communicable Diseases at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR); **Mr. Jagan Shah**, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA); **Dr. D R Pattanaik**, Indian Meteorological Society (IMS); **Dr. Sadhana Bhagwat**, National Professional Officer, WHO India Country Office and **Mr. G. K. Bhat**, Chairperson, TARU Leading Edge. All the experts unanimously agreed that a national heatwave management plan for the country is urgently required as an overarching policy while also developing city and state level heat action plans.

To guide this process, 'Roadmap for Planning Heatwave Management in India' was released on the occasion which was developed under the guidance of eminent national and international experts including those from health, disaster; urban planning and environment fields. The specific objectives of the consultation for heatwave management were to identify gaps in the research and policy, initiate a discussion on institutional leadership, integrate long-term planning measures, develop a partnership action plan and learn from the experience of current initiatives in other States.

The consultation had technical sessions related to heat preparedness, sectoral perspective, learnings from international, state and city level experiences. These sessions were well attended with eminent chairs and speakers from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC), National Institutes of Health (USA), Health Canada, Oxford Policy Management, AIIMS and IIT amongst others.

In conclusion the WHO Heat Action Plan and its relevance for India was discussed. Proceedings of the meeting will be made available shortly.

Notes to the editor

About Taru Leading Edge

TARU is a leading development advisory and think tank that has worked extensively on climate change and disaster issues since 1990 with trans-disciplinary expertise to provide transformative solutions and insights.

About IMS

The objectives of the society are the advancement of meteorological and allied sciences in all their aspects; dissemination of the knowledge of such sciences both among the scientific workers and among the public as well as the application of meteorology and allied sciences to various constructive human activities, such as, agriculture and land uses, irrigation and power development, navigation of sea and air, engineering and technology, medicine and public health etc.

About IIPH-Gandhinagar

The mandate of Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar (IIPHG) is to strengthen the overall health system in the country through education, training, research, and advocacy/policy initiatives.

Contact details for the convenor of the consultation

Dr. Nitish Dogra, MD, MPH (Johns Hopkins, USA)

Fulbright-Nehru Environmental Leadership Program Fellow (2013-14)

Sector Adviser (Health & Nutrition), TARU Leading Edge

Mobile: +91-9971154749; Email: ndogra@taru.co.in