



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

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World Health Day Commemoration: Our Planet, Our Health

Pretoria: South Africa will, tomorrow (Thursday, 7 April) join the rest of the global community to commemorate the World Health Day to raise awareness about the overall health and well-being of people across the country in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has revealed weaknesses in all areas of society and underlined the urgency of creating sustainable well-being societies committed to achieving equitable health now and for future generations without breaching ecological limits.

World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April, under the sponsorship and technical support of the World Health Organization, as well as other related organizations.

The 2022 campaign will be commemorated under the theme of “***Our Planet, Our Health***” which calls for global attention on urgent actions needed to keep humans and planet healthy and foster a movement to create societies focussed on well-being.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 13 million deaths around the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes. These include the climate crisis which is the single biggest health threat facing humanity.

The burden of environmental risks in the South Africa is equivalent to 3.7% of the total of our disease burden, with unsafe water, sanitation, hygiene and poor ambient and indoor air quality as the main contributors to the joint burden. Sadly, the joint attributable burden is especially higher in children under the age of five (5) years, accounting for 10% of total deaths in this age group.

The Department of Health supports a healthy recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that puts the health of both individuals and the planet at the centre of actions and fosters a movement to create societies focused on well-being.

As a result, the department calls for safe disposal of any Covid-19 related personal protective equipment like facemasks and continued practice of hand hygiene for personal benefit beyond the lifting of state of disaster as announced by President Ramaphosa, as part of the country`s transition from stricter lockdown restrictions meant to control the transmission of covid-19 pandemic.

Air pollution, contaminated water, inadequate sanitation including solid waste management, risks related to certain hazardous chemicals, and negative impacts of climate change are the most pressing environmental public health threats.

As the world continues with implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), health has a central place in SDG 3 which focusses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The 2030 agenda recognize health and wellbeing as central to sustainable development, as a precondition, an outcome, and as an indicator of a sustainable society.

World Health Day is one of the eight official World Health Organisation health awareness events, some of them being World Tuberculosis Day, World Malaria Day and World AIDs Day that are commemorated globally each year.

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