



**COP28
UAE**

Land & Drought Resilience Pavilion

BLUE ZONE, TA 4, STAND 205

**DRYING, DROUGHTS, DESERTIFICATION,
AND MENTAL HEALTH: ADDRESSING GAPS
AND NEEDS FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**



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HEALTH DAY Special Event
3rd December
15:30 - 16:30 GST,
Building 87, 1st floor, Stand 205



Partners

UNU CRIS, Aster DM Healthcare (UAE), G20 GLI/UNCCD, UNU MERIT, PEDRR, UNFCC, Belgian Delegation, Health Canada, Mental Health Working Group at the WHO Youth Council and EuroNet (European Network of Medical Residents in Public Health), The International Organization for Migration



The Land & Drought Pavilion at COP28 is jointly presented by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and its two flagship initiatives: the G20 Global Land Initiative and the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA), as well as partners, the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA).



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Background

The profound interplay between climate change and mental health, specifically resulting in drying, droughts, and desertification, necessitates urgent attention. As we delve into the intricate facets of this critical issue, we recognize the substantial toll these environmental transformations exact on the psychological well-being of affected populations. Prolonged droughts and the transition of habitable areas into arid deserts amplify stress, anxiety, and depression, further driven by factors such as resource scarcity, economic hardships, and forced migration. Indigenous communities acutely feel this burden, and those intimately connected to the land, as environmental shifts challenge cultural and spiritual identities. Acknowledging the mental health risks associated with these environmental changes and charting a course toward empowering affected communities is imperative.

This session aims to foster a dialogue elucidating the nexus between climate change and mental health in drying and drought periods. By exploring causative factors and innovative solutions, we aspire to leverage community wisdom, including local and indigenous knowledge, alongside technological advancements. The interwoven relationship between climate change, mental health, and the ramifications of explained crises positions Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) as a promising approach and multidimensional response toward managing persistent droughts and the transformation of habitats into arid regions and strengthening the resilience of communities grappling with these environmental shifts and help foster the adaptability and fortitude of affected communities, paving the way for a more resilient and psychologically sound future. Creating an enabling environment for communities to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly drought, is at the center of our discussion; however, building upon the insights gained from COP27 and the UN Water Conference 2023 on this topic, the discourse focused on the impact of floods.

This session will enhance our understanding of the interconnectedness of climate change and mental health by scrutinizing vulnerabilities specific to regions grappling with drying conditions in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, SIDS, and other areas. We aim to identify gaps and necessities in climate services for adaptation and Loss and Damage (L&D) schemes, ensuring mental health remains a focal point of discourse. Acknowledging the interwoven relationship between climate change, mental health, and the ramifications of highlighted crises positions Eco-Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) as a promising approach and multidimensional response toward managing persistent droughts and the transformation of habitats into arid regions and strengthening the resilience of communities grappling with these environmental shifts and help foster the adaptability and fortitude of affected communities, paving the way for a more resilient and psychologically sound future.

Related Resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoQvjobjNoY&source_ve_path=OTY3MTQ&feature=emb_imp_woyt

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/w4ccmh-water-climate-change-mental-health-integrating-inclusive-water-strategies>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7796245/>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00074/full>

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FOD_CCP3.pdf



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Agenda, session topics.... interactive open discussion, engaging the audience to glean diverse perspectives and foster a comprehensive understanding of the mental health challenges posed by droughts. We aspire to propel proactive solutions that resonate beyond this session.

The panellists will offer diverse perspectives on policy, practical implications, cultural contexts, and the intersectionality of gender, age, and socio-economic status and discuss innovative solutions. This includes harnessing AI and digitalization for early warning systems, integrating modern and traditional knowledge, and fostering sustainable community planning. The panel will explore strategies to integrate mental health support into climate policy and existing health systems, emphasizing community and multisectoral approaches. The overarching goal is to facilitate climate change adaptation, reduce Loss and Damage, and instill hope and resilience within communities and future generations.

Opening talk and session chair

Dr. Nidhi Nagabhatla (UNU CRIS) - Senior Fellow and Cluster Lead -Nature Climate and Health /PEDRR Representative

Special Remarks on the Health Agenda Relevance at/for COP 28

Dr. Azad Mooppan, Aster DM Healthcare, UAE

Dr. Katie Hayes, Senior Policy Analyst, Health Canada (Canadian Delegation)

Mr. Manuel Marques Pereira, Head of Division: Migration, Environment, Climate Change and Risk Reduction, IOM-UN

Thematic Insights

Dr. Sanae Okamoto , UNU-MERIT, Researcher and Behavioural Scientist

Dr. Francesca Zanni , Mental Health Working Group at the WHO Youth Council and EuroNet European Network of Medical Residents in Public Health

Dr. Charlotte Scheerens, Belgian Delegation to COP/ Coordinator-CliMigHealth global network)

Youth/Intergenerational Insights

Mr. Fale Andrew Lesā, Youth delegate UNFCCC (Samoa) Indigenous Person, Small Island State

Ms. Stacey Alvarez de la Campa- Island Innovation, Partnerships Manager/Climate Justice Consultant (Barbados)

Ms. Pooja Tilwawala, Youth Climate Collaborative, USA (advocacy group)

Mr. Mhamed Khalfa (Tunisia) : Arab Youth for COP Team

Mr. Abraham Bugre (Ghana) -United Youth Initiative for Africa (UNIYIA)

Closing Remarks : session organizing team representative



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Guiding Questions

- Considering the intersectionality of factors like gender, age, and socio-economic status, how can climate policies be tailored to address the specific vulnerabilities of communities (women, youth, trans people) experiencing drying conditions, particularly in the realm of mental health?
- Indigenous practices are integral to building resilience in communities affected by environmental shifts. How can we effectively integrate and leverage local and indigenous knowledge in mental health support initiatives, ensuring cultural sensitivity and empowerment?
- Sustainable community planning is emphasized as a crucial element in combating drought-related mental health challenges. Could panellists share examples of successful community-driven initiatives and approaches like Eco-DRR and how these could be scaled and adapted in different geographical and cultural contexts?
- The session underscores the need for a holistic approach considering environmental, social, and psychological aspects. How can mental health support be seamlessly integrated into existing climate policies and health systems, and what practical steps can be taken to achieve this integration on a global scale?
- In prolonged drying, droughts, and desertification, how can integrating modern technologies, such as AI and digitalization, enhance early warning systems to mitigate the mental health impacts on affected communities?

We will be here.

See the agenda for the day – 3rd December <https://www.unccd.int/cop28pavilion>

Land & Drought Resilience Pavilion (UNCCD" pavilion) Blue Zone, Zone B7 (Thematic Arena Nature), Building 87, 1st floor, Stand 205



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