

# KUALA LUMPUR CALL TO ACTION ON PLANETARY HEALTH

19 April 2024







## PREAMBLE

In the vast tapestry of our interconnected world, Planetary Health encompasses the well-being of our planet's ecosystems, the health of its inhabitants, and the delicate balance that sustains life. Planetary Health is a global movement, analytical framework and field of work focused on understanding, quantifying and addressing the growing human health impacts of anthropogenic global environmental change.

We, participants of the Planetary Health Summit and Sixth Annual Meeting, together with associated stakeholders, acknowledge with alarm that humans are altering the Earth's ecosystems at such a scale and pace that our own survival, along with all life on Earth, is imperilled. Each year we move closer to potentially unstoppable, irreversible earth system tipping points. Whether in the climate, ecosystems, or other Earth processes, these tipping points pose a looming danger to humanity's future on our planet. The accelerating pace of environmental degradation, driven by human activities such as deforestation, carbon emissions, increased



water withdrawals from freshwater ecosystems, pollution, and loss of biodiversity, heightens the risk of triggering tipping points. From the collapse of ice sheets to the disruption of ocean currents and the degradation of vital ecosystems, leading to a sixth mass extinction, the interconnectedness of tipping elements is already manifesting in cascading effects and driving a global health and humanitarian crisis. The impact too on mental health is increasingly clear as we see increases in anxiety disorders, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, ecoanxiety and solastalgia.



The human-driven hazards and dangers we face are increasing. And yet examination of and responses to component parts of our systemic planetary crisis are insufficiently joined up, and our governance systems, fit for a 20<sup>th</sup> century post-world-war environment, are poorly adapted to face the existential challenges humankind has created in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Instruments such as the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depletion, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Geneva Conventions, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction, and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, among others, all aim to fix our relationship with the planet, but fall short individually in addressing the systems level transformation that we must make to safeguard human health, and which this Planetary Health movement espouses. With such a transformation, a more sustainable and vibrant future is possible.

Recent milestones, including the Working Group on the International Health Regulations, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body for a New Pandemic Preparedness Agreement, the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, aim to advance these efforts, but more must be done to build coherence and cohesion in global governance through the lens of Planetary Health.

This is not easy. We recognise that human evolution has created a complex integrated system which has generated incredible industrial, scientific, medical and social advances, but that these gains have come at a terrible cost to the health and safety of the planet. The links between the decline in Planetary Health and the drivers of this emerging devastation have their roots in our economic systems, which seek and rely upon profit, growth, extraction, and exploitation. It is now abundantly clear that the climate crisis, the loss of biodiversity and the ever-worsening environmental breakdown we are experiencing are directly linked to our economies. We argue that the global economic system is now fundamentally uneconomic; that it is directly undermining Planetary Health now and for the future. The health of the planet and its inhabitants can only be improved through a paradigm shift in how we govern and manage our economies and seek balance between what we need and what the earth can sustainably provide.



# COMMITMENTS

Our transdisciplinary and multi-dimensional approach is supported by a scientific evidence base. It is also underpinned by a social movement. As stewards of our shared home, we gather physically and virtually at Sunway University in Malaysia to reaffirm our commitment to Planetary Health. Building upon the principles and call to action set forth in the 2021 São Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health<sup>1</sup>, we are accelerating our ambition to bring Planetary Health to all sectors of society and the public. We commit our movement to:

1

Stand on the shoulders of the foundational São Paulo Declaration, which eloquently articulates the nexus between human health, environmental sustainability, and social equity, and, recognising the imperative it sets forth — to move the many and varied stakeholder groups from evidence to action — to carry this work forward.

2

Renew our efforts working at all levels with all stakeholders to apply the growing evidence base to propose and develop solutions that will allow humanity and the natural systems we depend on to thrive now and in the future. This includes supporting the United Nations and its Member States in charting a planetary health-informed pathway for the successor arrangements to the 2030 Agenda and Goals.

3

Maintain a sharp focus on human health and well-being, recognising that the boundaries between humans and all life with which we share this planet are interwoven and consequently harming our natural systems harms ourselves and future generations.

4

Use the Planetary Health Roadmap prepared for, and launched in this meeting, to support furthering the reach and ambition of the Planetary Health movement.

5

Accelerate efforts to achieve these commitments by ensuring that research and evidence generation respond to and are aligned with the Roadmap's Action Plan.

6

Develop and disseminate clear communications to all stakeholders, utilising a mix of wide-reaching media, articulating what needs to be done to co-create the 'great transition'; a comprehensive shift in how we live and interact with each other and Nature.

# CALL TO ACTION

These commitments signify our determination to actively implement measures that advance Planetary Health. Acknowledging the urgency emphasised by the São Paulo Declaration and reinforced during this Summit, we pledge to expedite the implementation of initiatives outlined in the Roadmap and call on others to join us in doing so. The challenges we face demand prompt, decisive action, and we stand united in our resolve to contribute to a resilient and regenerative future.

This Kuala Lumpur Call to Action stands as a testament to our shared commitment. We cannot wait any longer.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.planetaryhealthalliance.org/São-paulo-declaration>