

Health and ethics must be included in future climate change talks

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Human health and health ethics considerations must be given equal status to economic considerations in climate change deliberations and furthermore, the health community, led by health ministers and the World Health Organization, must play a central role in climate change deliberations, argues an international expert in this week's *PLoS Medicine*.

Jerome Singh from the University of Kwazulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa, who also works at the University of Toronto, Canada, says: "The gap in ethics governance concerning climate change decision-making underscores the argument that policy-making on a variety of issues impacting climate change, including energy, transport, and development, needs to be underpinned by ethically sound principles, not just economic and legal considerations."

Dr Singh argues that the human health implications of climate change must receive greater prominence and be the main focus of future climate change deliberations. He makes the case for the responsibility of governments, the private sector, financiers, and society to practice socially responsible investment and to mitigate against the impact of climate change, particularly in relation to human health.

Going forward, Dr Singh argues that any ethics-based climate change guidance framework for investors, policymakers, and the private sector should incorporate relevant principles from the fields of bioethics, public health ethics, and global [health](#) ethics."

Dr Singh concludes: "Given that deliberations for a binding international treaty commence at [The 18th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change] in Doha 2012, there is an urgent need to devise such a multi-disciplinary synergized framework so that it can influence deliberations at future [Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change] meetings especially in the run-up to 2015, when a legally binding [climate change](#) agreement is expected to come into effect, as outlined in the Durban Platform."

More information: Singh JA (2012) Why Human Health and Health Ethics Must Be Central to Climate Change Deliberations. *PLoS Med* 9(6): e1001229. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001229](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001229)

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