

WHO Regional Committee for Europe: 65th session September 2015

**Statement in response to EUR/RC65/11 Environment and health in the WHO European Region:
progress, challenges and lessons learned
Provisional agenda item 5(a)**

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) representing over 420,000 occupational therapists worldwide supports the key conclusions from the 2015 Mid-term Review of the Environment and Health Process (EHP). The challenges being addressed by the Review are congruent with the objectives within the WFOT Master Project Plan on Environmentally Sustainable Occupational Therapy Practice.

The WFOT affirms that the protection of health against climate change risks can be enhanced by ensuring improved and more equitable access to services. These services need to mitigate and improve the social and environmental determinants of health, strengthen basic public health interventions and provide interventions targeted at climate related risks.

As stated in the WFOT Position Statement on Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable Practice within Occupational Therapy (WFOT, 2012; available at <http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre>), the WFOT recognises the interconnections between climate change, global health and sustainable development. Occupational therapists contribute to the development of a culture of low-carbon lifestyles by developing client intervention programmes to enable people to choose and perform daily occupations that are meaningful to them in the most environmentally sustainable manner.

The EHP provides an essential framework for collaboration and the WFOT sees that strong inter-sectoral governance and the generation of scientific evidence are needed to ensure progress is made. The WFOT is already raising awareness of the issues with its members and encouraging occupational therapists across Europe to consider linkages between the environment and health.

In 2012 the WFOT agreed that environment and health should be a major area of its work and has a strong commitment to working with governments at all levels, other non-state actors and clients to promote societal change recognising the environmental determinants of health as being important for creating, maintaining and restoring health.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists by Samantha Shann, Vice President Finance WFOT.