TRANSCRIPCIÓN

INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ, EN EL ACTO "THE HEALTH ARGUMENT FOR CLIMATE ACTION" DE LA OMS Y UNICEF

Bakú (Azerbaiyán), 12 de noviembre de 2024

12/11/2024

INTERVENCIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE DEL GOBIERNO, PEDRO SÁNCHEZ

Thank you, Maria.

Dear Dr. Tedros, colleagues,

I would like to congratulate the organizers for such a timely event and report. We need evidence and policy recommendations to deal effectively with the impact of climate change on health, and your work does that.

Two weeks ago, as you may know, the south-east of Spain was hit by the worst floods in our recent history, causing more than 220 deaths and colossal material damage.

This was a tragedy for my country, but it is also a reality throughout the world, more frequently, more deadly.

Let me highlight three key messages which are, in my view, particularly important in the aftermath of the tragedy we just lived in Spain.

First of all, climate change kills and affects our health.

And it does so in various ways: often with extreme brutality, intensifying the frequency and severity of health threatening events like wildfires, hurricanes and torrential rains.

But at times, climate change kills more subtly, for instance by increasing the frequency and intensity of heat waves that worsen the health of the most vulnerable, or expands diseases to areas where they were previously rare.

Sometimes, climate change is also a more distant force that deteriorates everything essential to our health: damaging ecosystems, deepening poverty, fueling wars and conflicts and impacting water resources and crop fields.

As long as we do not stop burning fossil fuels, these phenomena will become more frequent and more intense.

Secondly, health is not merely "one more thing" impacted by climate change and the ecological crisis.

Health is the ultimate point where each and every one of the effects of climate change converge.

Human health, the health of the planet and the health of all the other living beings are interconnected. A healthy population cannot exist on a sick planet.

In this effort we must prioritize children, who make up 30% of the world's population. Childhood is a crucial stage in human development and it is particularly vulnerable to climate change, as its impacts can change all future physical and cognitive growth.

And third, climate change is deeply unfair.

Climate change harms and endangers everyone, but its impacts are not equally distributed. It intensifies health inequalities, preying on the most vulnerable and low-income population, those who contribute the least to its causes.

Climate action focused on health must tackle these profound health disparities and protect those in greatest need, by reducing inequality, creating jobs, providing affordable housing, and ensuring universal health care.

Health-centered climate action must be fair, leaving no one behind.

But let me end on a note of optimism.

Because it's not all bad news.

The report launched by this organization, the World Health Organization, today sends a positive message: we do not have to choose between improving health and fighting climate change. Luckily, they reinforce each other.

The installation of renewable energy, the electrification of vehicles and homes, the preservation of natural spaces, and low-carbon diets are all policies that improve people's health.

According to the report, a progressive, fair and orderly abandonment of fossil fuels could avoid almost 2 million deaths annually in the next decade. 2 million deaths. This is roughly the population of Slovenia, in Europe, or Lesotho. This is almost three times the number of deaths caused by malaria or HIV, two of the biggest global health challenges today.

That is why health and climate should be dealt with together in our efforts, in our policies, and also in the context of all future COPs.

Let us place people's lives and health at the heart of our fight against climate change.

Thank you.

(Transcripción editada por la Secretaría de Estado de Comunicación)
(Intervención original en inglés)