

# World needs 'green recovery', health experts tell G20 leaders

May 26 2020, by Marlowe Hood

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Health workers—from cleaning crews to doctors, in hospitals and nursing homes—have been hit hard by the pandemic

Trillions of dollars, euros and yuan pouring into post-pandemic economies must build a "healthy and green recovery", 200 medical

groups representing 40 million health professionals worldwide told G20 leaders Tuesday in an open letter.

The twenty nations accounting for 90 percent of global GDP should prioritise investment in public health, [clean air](#), clean water and a stable climate in order to boost resilience against future health crises, said the letter.

"We have witnessed first-hand how fragile communities can be when their health, food security and freedom to work are interrupted by a common threat," the letter said, describing the COVID-19 pandemic that has sickened more than five million and claimed nearly 350,000 lives since the start of the year.

"These effects could have been partially mitigated, or possibly even prevented, by adequate investments in pandemic preparedness, [public health](#) and environmental stewardship."

The next G20 summit is scheduled for November.

A June meeting of G7 leaders was scrapped due to the global health crisis, but US President Donald Trump said last week it could still take place at the White House and Camp David, a summer retreat outside Washington DC.

Backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, the letter highlighted the health-wrecking impact of air pollution, which causes some seven million [premature deaths](#) each year.



"A truly healthy economy will not allow pollution to continue to cloud the air we breathe and the water we drink," organizations representing 40 million health workers said.

### 'New health threats'

"Before COVID-19, air pollution was already weakening our bodies," the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the World Organization of Family Doctors and two hundred other groups said.

"A truly healthy economy will not allow pollution to continue to cloud the air we breathe and the water we drink," the letter continued. "It will not allow unabated climate change and deforestation, potentially unleashing new health threats upon [vulnerable populations](#)."

Promoting the hashtag #HealthyRecovery, the appeal called for removing hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies for oil, gas and coal, the main drivers of both global warming and air pollution.

It also underscored the need to boost renewable energy, such as solar and wind power.

"Healthy lives depend on a healthy planet," said World Medical Association President Miguel Jorge. "We need a comprehensive approach, a healthy and green recovery, and we need it now."

Health workers—from cleaning crews to doctors, in hospitals and nursing homes—have been hit especially hard by the pandemic.

While there is no official tally, tens of thousands have been infected with the virus, and hundreds have died.

At the beginning of May, the International Council of Nurses reported that at least 90,000 nurses worldwide—possibly twice as many—had caught the virus.

Hundreds of [health professionals](#) have died, including many during the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China, the pandemic's epicentre.

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