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In reply please refer to: UNI-4N64-372-1

Your reference: LA/TW/MK/UH/is

Mr Ulrik Halsteen
Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
1211 Genève 10

14 August 2008

Dear Mr Halsteen,

I write in response to the letter from Ms Arbour to Dr Chan, dated 16 June, inviting the World Health Organization to contribute to a study by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the relationship between climate change and human rights.

I believe that WHO can make an important contribution to this study. Since the late 1980s, WHO has worked with partners in the public-health community around the world to describe and assess the implications of climate change for human health. In the course of this work, WHO has documented significant health risks, and shown that these risks are many times greater for the poorest populations, and for the most vulnerable individuals within those populations. WHO has also described how well-functioning health systems, with a focus on health equity, are essential to protecting human lives from the negative impacts of climate change.

A comprehensive set of resources describing the health implications of climate change can be found at <http://www.who.int/globalchange/climate/publications/en/index.html>. I would particularly like to draw your attention to the following key documents:

- The book "*Climate change and Human Health: Risks and Responses*" (WHO, 2003) which provides a detailed review of the health implications of climate change. <http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/cchhbook/en/index.html>
- The health chapter of the 4th Assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007), a product of the rigorously peer-reviewed IPCC process. <http://www.ipcc-wg2.org/>

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Recipients :...U...Halsteen

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- The report "*Protecting Health from Climate Change: World Health Day 2008*", (WHO, 2008), which summarizes the most recent evidence on this emerging risk, including a focus on particularly vulnerable populations. http://www.who.int/world-health-day/toolkit/report_web.pdf

For further technical information, please contact Dr Maria Neira (neiram@who.int), and Mrs Helena Nygren-Krug (nygrenkrugh@who.int), the WHO focal points for climate change and human rights issues, respectively.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Denis Aitken
Representative of the Director-General for
Partnerships and United Nations Reform