



Embassy of the  
Federal Republic of Germany



## The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cairo and the Ministry of Environment of the Arab Republic of Egypt

have the pleasure to invite you to the 67<sup>th</sup> Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) Panel Discussion

### Covid-19, Health and the Climate: Are we asking the right questions?

on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 5:30 pm (Cairo time)  
First virtual CCT via Zoom ([Register Here](#))



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During the recent lockdowns due to Covid-19, a common trope shared on social media has been the positive effect of the coronavirus on the environment. [Fake news](#), such as of the return of dolphins to Venice canals (the pictures were not taken in Venice), have spread like wildfire. Despite the false hope they spread, it is a good reminder that it is vital to consider the interplay between the environment and Covid-19's impacts in recovery processes.

Dr. Nicole de Paula and Dr. Kathleen A. Mar, researchers at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, Germany, [suggest](#) using this opportunity to highlight the interlinkage between the climate crisis and the health crisis, invoking the concept of **planetary health**. Planetary health is an emerging transdisciplinary field which studies the interdependencies between the health of human civilization and the state of natural systems, so to speak the world's health.

Health needs to make it on the agenda of climate change negotiations and be reflected in climate policies. So far, the health of humans and the human-made impacts on our environment during the Anthropocene have largely been considered as two separate silos, even though many studies suggest they are more closely linked than we may assume. Climate change already heavily impacts health and diseases and creates breeding grounds for multiple health hazards.

Changing climate conditions such as heatwaves lead to famines, heavily [compromising child-development](#) and general health, and increase Malaria spreading mosquitos. While [air pollution already kills 8 million people every year](#), strong air pollution has also been found to have links to an increased vulnerability to Covid-19. Furthermore, the loss of biodiversity, due to degradation of air, water and land, impacts disease patterns and gives way to new emerging disease.

In the [Conference for Biodiversity report](#), Egypt's action plan refers to its natural resources as being at the core of its economy and names its deterioration as one of the economic challenges Egypt faces. A planetary health strategy that jointly considers environmental regulations, their execution, health systems, biodiversity as well as socioeconomic factors will have a positive impact on people and the economy. Such strategy would also take into consideration the ecosystem's products and services on which some of Egypt's poorest depend and can mitigate the effects of the ecosystem's deterioration which threatens people's livelihoods and well-being.

Experts in Germany and Egypt have been able to examine some of these factors, the 67<sup>th</sup> CCT will bring them together to shed more light on these topics and discuss how a planetary health approach can shape Egypt's future.

#### The discussion will be opened by

**Mr. Philippe Maupai**

Head of the Science Department at the Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany

#### Panelists

**Dr. Wagida Anwar**

Professor of Public Health, Faculty of  
Medicine, Ain Shams University

**Dr. Nicole de Paula**

Klaus Töpfer Sustainability Fellow, Institute  
for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)

**Ms. Ragia Elgerzawy**

Environmental and Health File Officer,  
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)

**Moderator:** Ms. Lilly von Stackelberg, Coordinator Cairo Climate Talks



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