

# WBGU

German Advisory Council on Global Change

Summary

## Healthy living on a healthy planet



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# Summary

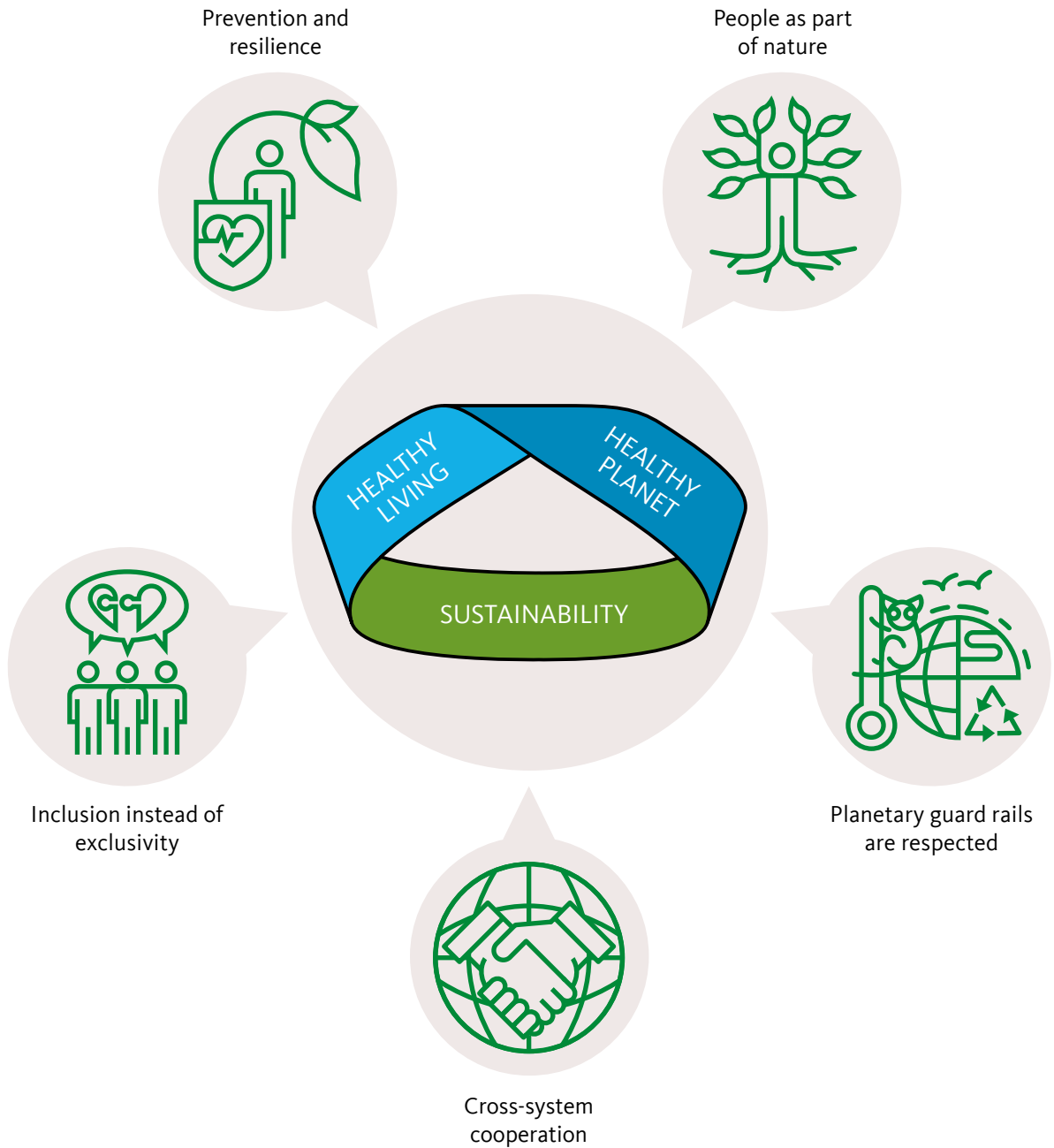
Our lifestyle is making us ill and is destroying the natural life-support systems. In the vision of 'healthy living on a healthy planet', human spheres of life – what we eat, how we move, where we live – are designed to be both healthy and environmentally compatible, and planetary risks – climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution – have been overcome. Health systems harness their transformative potential; education and science promote societal change. The vision can only be realized with international cooperation and requires what the WBGU terms global urgency governance.

Health is a precious asset and is of existential importance for every human being. It can never be taken for granted. However, our civilizational development does not automatically lead to ever better health; rather, we are well on the way to destroying the very preconditions of a healthy life for all people. This realization could generate enormous transformative power and give us the courage to change course.

The vision of healthy living on a healthy planet focuses on the inseparability of human health and nature, and thus on an extended understanding of health. The World Health Organization's comprehensive definition of human health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" is dependent on a 'healthy' Earth – with functioning, resilient and productive ecosystems and a stable climate. In essence, the goal is to explore and implement development paths that do justice to people and nature. It is about healthy lifestyles that simultaneously protect nature – about what we eat, how we move and where we live. It is about framework conditions that make these lifestyles possible. It is about preserving natural life-sup-

port systems (halting climate change, biodiversity loss and global pollution), preparing our health systems for the challenges ahead and harnessing their transformative potential. It is about education and science that can make the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet a reality. And finally, it is about reaching an agreement on this guiding principle at the international level, because without international cooperation, this vision cannot be achieved.

Faced with global crises and short-term ad-hoc reactions, we currently risk losing sight of medium and long-term sustainability goals. More attention must therefore be paid to overcoming undesirable path dependencies – e.g. institutionally separate environmental and health-protection policies and fragmented political, administrative and legal systems – to ensure that long-term efforts to shape the future remain possible.



## Prerequisites for a healthy life – five observations



As prosperity has increased in recent decades, human health has improved worldwide; yet not everyone has benefitted. Moreover, the prosperity gains themselves are increasingly having negative impacts on health: on the one hand from overeating, malnutrition and a lack of physical activity in everyday life, on the other as a result of their harmful side effects in the form of air pollution and environmental toxins. As a consequence, lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as mental illnesses are on the increase; they are now the main causes of a loss of healthy life-years.

Last but not least, our resource-intensive way of life with its immense emissions of greenhouse gases, the destruction of natural habitats and increasing pollution on land and in the sea has led to a global environmental crisis that threatens the natural life-support systems and thus the health of all people. Heat waves, droughts, flood disasters and pandemics drastically show us how much humanity is dependent on functioning ecosystems and a stable climate. Furthermore, the global crisis could threaten the cohesion of our societies and overburden our health systems.

It is time to take a new look at civilizational progress. In what direction do we want to develop as human beings? What role do we as a species want to play on this planet in the future? How can we prevent the consequences of our actions from fundamentally endangering the foundations of a healthy life for us and for other species?

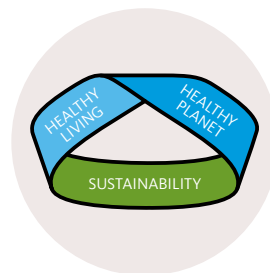
The WBGU's assessment can be summarized in the following five observations:

- We have not taken seriously enough the fact that human health is inseparable from the well-being of species and ecosystems.
- Halting climate change, biodiversity loss and globally increasing pollution is an indispensable prerequisite for making human health and the health of other living creatures and ecosystems possible.
- Combatting disease alone is not enough to maintain health in the medium and long term – preventive

healthcare, health promotion and the preservation of resilient ecosystems must be given a higher priority.

- Poverty and inequality make it impossible for many people to live a healthy life free from preventable diseases.
- Existing international cooperation structures cannot cope with the simultaneity and globality of the health and environmental crises.

## Moving towards a healthy future



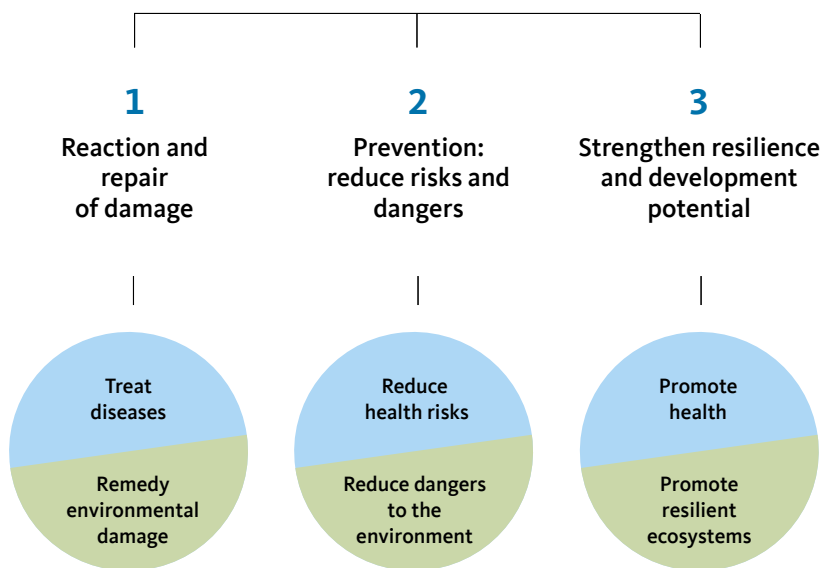
The WBGU counters these threatening future prospects with a vision of healthy living on a healthy planet, which can serve as an orientation for politics, business, science and civil society so that they can react systemically to the multiple crises described above. The vision can be outlined by five key points:

1. The inseparability of human civilization and nature finds its way back into public awareness.
2. Planetary guard rails are respected in order to protect the health of humans, species and ecosystems.
3. A reactive approach to diseases and environmental damage is complemented by more prevention and the comprehensive promotion of people's and nature's resilience and development potential (Figure 1).
4. Vulnerable groups receive solidarity worldwide, so that inclusion is guaranteed.
5. Cross-system cooperation promotes the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet.

The vision takes its orientation from the normative basis that the WBGU has developed in the form of a normative compass. The three dimensions of the compass are the preservation of natural life-support systems, the material, economic and political inclusion of all people, and the recognition of Eigenart (a German word meaning character, uniqueness) in the sense of valuing diversity and development possibilities. The linchpin is the inviolability of human dignity, which cannot be sufficiently respected without the three dimensions.

Integrative health concepts such as One Health and Planetary Health are very helpful for advancing the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet. These concepts have different priorities and disciplinary backgrounds,

### Healthy living on a healthy planet: three complementary approaches



**Figure 1**

A reactive approach to diseases and environmental damage is complemented by more prevention and the comprehensive promotion of people’s and nature’s resilience and development potential.

Source: WBGU

and they should each be used depending on the context to make the most of their respective strengths.

The vision of healthy living on a healthy planet is transdisciplinary, values-based and application-oriented. At its core is the realization that human health and well-being today and in the future are only possible in interaction with a healthy natural environment, and that current developments are not sustainable. This implies that humans have a responsibility for all life, including the biosphere of the entire planet. Civilizational progress must therefore be critically reviewed: global, human-made processes such as digitalization, urbanization, defossilization and land-use changes should be brought into line with the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet. This simultaneously makes the vision a mandate for science: how might a living environment for the human species be specifically designed to facilitate the well-being and health of people and human societies as part of a thriving biosphere, and to preserve natural life-support systems in the long term? And finally, the vision contains the mandate for implementation – as a new ‘project for humanity’ that requires fundamental changes to current civilizational developments.

The vision of healthy living on a healthy planet fits in with the guiding principle of sustainability as already agreed in the context of the Rio Conventions, the Sustainable Development Goals, other international environmental treaties, and national environmental, sustainability and climate goals. However, its implementation leaves much to be desired. The attention being paid to

health – as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasingly evident impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution, as well as growing warnings from the health disciplines, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) – therefore offers an opportunity to generate new momentum and support for solidarity-based transformations towards sustainability.

Firstly, transformations impact on people’s personal lives and living conditions; changes can be envisaged here that are beneficial to individual health and simultaneously contribute to the conservation of natural life-support systems. For its global analysis, the WBGU has selected the examples of what we eat, how we move and where we live, as they concern elementary fields of human existence. Secondly, addressing planetary risks is more urgent than ever: climate change, ecosystem degradation and global pollution require accelerated, concerted and systemic action if we are to move away from our current path, which is destroying natural life-support systems. Parallel to this, a reconfiguration of health systems worldwide is necessary. They need to be equipped to deal with the simultaneously arising new and old health risks, while at the same time making their own contribution to sustaining natural life-support systems. Finally, the transformation requires focused education and science, as well as a form of global cross-system governance that meets the great global and critical challenges.



## Global urgency governance



There is an urgent need for a form of global environmental and health governance that turns a healthy life on a healthy planet from a utopia into a realizable mission. Such a form of governance must be based on inclusive values that respect human dignity and a rules-based international order. The 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework should serve as its orientation framework. There is also a need for globally coordinated, accelerating, long-term governance that responds to the urgent need for effective action. Global urgency governance, as recommended by the WBGU, is characterized by the following features:

1. interdepartmental, cross-scale and coherent policy-making based on systematic coordination processes between outward- and inward-facing policy fields and oriented towards the guiding principle of healthy living on a healthy planet.
2. forms of governance and process design that substantially accelerate transformation processes towards sustainability. Their features range from regulatory approaches, incentive structures and bureaucracy reduction to actor mobilization through involvement and inclusion.
3. a long-term, future-shaping perspective that is simultaneously radically effective in the short term. It is important to maintain room for manoeuvre in the medium to long term. At the same time, the dynamics arising from the interplay of interdependent global crises should be dealt with powerfully, with intelligent reflection and by democratic dispute.

There are no blueprints for such urgency governance. It should be developed locally, regionally and nationally according to the respective sustainability challenges, adjusted to the circumstances and designed to be adaptive – while always guided by the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet.

This involves:

- › strengthening and implementing the 2030 Agenda as a global orientation framework and a mandate for action;
- › integrating a human right to a healthy environment as a guiding principle and monitorable benchmark in national constitutions, especially in Germany's Basic Law and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, so that civil society can take the state to court to force it to take or stop certain actions;
- › establishing a cooperative assumption of responsibility oriented towards the guiding principle of 'Health in All Policies';
- › already making a start now to create arenas for discourse and actor structures to develop a post-2030 agenda for healthy living on a healthy planet.

In particular, Germany's Federal Government should assume political, economic and intellectual leadership in UN and EU forums, at the G7, G20 and multi-stakeholder alliances, and vis-à-vis businesses and civil society. Within the UN, Germany should make use of the ongoing negotiations at the World Health Organization (WHO) on the Pandemic Treaty and the International Health Regulations to integrate a comprehensive understanding of pandemic prevention by means of nature conservation and climate protection and by strengthening health systems. It should also encourage interactions between different institutions: WHO, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

The EU should provide political leadership to boost links between environmental and health policies by taking concrete action to implement its high environmental and health standards, strengthening intra-European solidarity, EU-wide transparency and monitoring systems, and promoting partnerships.

The WBGU recommends that Germany should actively support global health policy at the G7 and G20 level and push for the establishment of a Planetary Health Task Force within the G7 negotiations. In addition, a contribution should be made to creating an Inter-Agency Global Health Standing Committee with the aim of coordinating global health organizations and alliances, their mandates and funding needs.

Companies must be given more incentives to assume responsibility for health and human rights beyond their immediate environment. An important contribution to this can be made by strengthening reporting and due-diligence obligations as well as sustainable finance, i.e. taking sustainability criteria into consideration when making investment decisions. These should be designed in such a way that people and the environment in all countries and societal groups benefit equally.

**Harnessing the transformative potential of health systems**



Many health systems around the world are not meeting the new challenges posed by global environmental change – because of their curative focus, which in some cases includes the overprovision of medical services, a lack of preparation for the new health risks, and a large ecological footprint. Yet health systems are key to protecting and improving health; it is therefore imperative to develop them further, especially in the face of the new challenges. A key role is played here by environmentally sensitive health promotion and preventive healthcare, where healthy ecosystems are recognized as a resource and a prerequisite for health, and environmental changes are taken into account as major determinants of disease. In this way, health systems can make a decisive contribution to the promotion of healthy and sustainable lifestyles and to the creation of health-promoting living conditions. Transformations towards sustainability, adaptation to environmental change and strengthening resilience can create the right conditions for appropriate healthcare while respecting planetary guard rails. Resilience in health systems should address not only the risks of climate change, but all anthropogenic environmental changes, especially pollution and biodiversity loss. A key aspect here is the security of supply, which must still be ensured in the event of unexpected and unlikely future events. Since social inequalities have a significant impact on health, health systems and their governance should be developed in a way that treats solidarity and inclusion as core elements and gives vulnerable groups special consideration.

The WBGU recommends significantly strengthening environmentally sensitive prevention and health promotion in health systems by enabling health professionals to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles and to educate patients on environmental health risks and adaptation measures. This requires the provision of the corresponding training at all levels, the improvement of personnel resources and an adjustment of remuneration

systems. Public health services should be significantly expanded, networked and their tasks extended to enable them to initiate and coordinate cross-sectoral cooperation for structural prevention (health-promoting design of working and living conditions). Integrated environmental and health-information systems should be used to analyse exposure, vulnerability and adaptation and to implement personalized digital early-warning systems. Existing strategies for improving sustainability and resilience should be combined and implemented, taking all environmental changes into account. Cross-system and international cooperation can achieve decisive advantages in this context and also generate synergies for transformations both in other sectors and globally. There is a particular need for research on the influence of environmental changes and healthy ecosystems on human health, on preconditions for transformations in health systems, on the effectiveness and co-benefits of health promotion and preventive measures, and with regard to measures, instruments and data for strengthening sustainability and resilience.

**Managing planetary risks: climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution**



In addition to climate change and biodiversity loss, globally rising pollution is a major health risk for people and nature.

**Promoting climate-change mitigation and biodiversity conservation**

Climate change is developing into the biggest threat to human health and is inextricably linked to the progressive loss of biodiversity. Particularly promising for addressing these crises and the associated risks for nature and people is a nexus approach which integrates climate-change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, harnesses synergies and constructively addresses trade-offs. The WBGU recommends supporting efforts to reduce emissions by combining it with a halt to exploration for fossil fuels. Strengthening the terrestrial, freshwater and marine biosphere can complement climate-change mitigation and secure adaptation

to climate change, biodiversity conservation, human well-being and natural life-support systems. This will also help preserve nature's contributions to humankind and achieve a long-term stabilization of the climate.

Improved nature conservation also plays an essential role in preventing zoonotic pandemics: establishing protected-area systems, implementing an integrated landscape approach and regulating hunting and the wildlife trade – taking into account the rights of Indigenous peoples and possible side effects on other sustainability goals – are important starting points for reducing contacts between humans and wildlife. Research into such preventive strategies should be stepped up.

For regions where the limits of adaptation to environmental and climate change will be reached in the foreseeable future and the well-being of humans, animals and plants is under threat, orderly and regular forms of human migration should be developed. The migration of species should also be facilitated by creating networked protected areas and ecosystems.

However, the global goals for biodiversity, the climate and sustainability for 2030 and beyond are likely to be missed if the causes of climate change and biodiversity loss are not sufficiently overcome and if measures to comply with current agreements and goals do not increase in pace and scale as specifically required.

### Pollution

The global increase in human-made pollution is a major health risk for people and nature. This can be reduced by means of a circular economy and controls on emissions.

Compounds with adverse health effects are released during production and consumption processes that are not managed in closed cycles. The problem of pollution could be reduced in the future as a side effect of climate-change mitigation measures in some areas. However, it could also shift to new substances and applications, e.g. in the course of the energy or mobility transition. For this reason, there must be a greater political focus on the issue of global pollution with hazardous substances right now – i.e. at a time when combatting climate change is a top priority on political agendas. Dealing with this issue could also generate co-benefits for biodiversity and climate-change mitigation.

To this end, a global framework convention to combat pollution by hazardous compounds should be negotiated, based on the concept of 'zero pollution'. The aim here is a relationship between humankind and the environment that is designed in such a way that no harm comes to either. A core element of such a framework agreement should be an international authorization regime for substances of very high concern.

The guiding principle of the circular economy, in turn, is crucial to achieving the zero-pollution goal. Many

chemicals are essential for economic processes and the functionality of technical products, and for some of them there is – as yet – no substitute. In future, therefore, especially persistent compounds whose release poses an increased risk to health must either be kept in technical cycles or not allowed to enter the environment during use.

### Shaping areas of life: what we eat, how we move, where we live



How we eat, move, live, work and spend our leisure time – all these aspects of life affect our health and, at the same time, have consequences for the climate, ecosystems and the spread of harmful substances. If healthy, environmentally friendly behaviour is to become attractive or even possible in the first place, the corresponding external conditions must also be conducive. Using selected examples from key areas of life, the WBGU shows which conditions and behaviours could be desirable and achievable.

### Ways to a healthy diet – for everyone

Whether the internationally agreed climate and biodiversity targets can be achieved will also depend on the transformation from environmentally damaging and unhealthy diets to a sustainable, plant-based, nutrient-rich and diverse diet. This transformation leads away from excessive consumption of animal products and ultra-processed foods and frees up land reserves previously tied up in animal feed production. The reassignment of land use should benefit human food production, climate-change mitigation and – by restoring ecosystems – biodiversity conservation. Such a transformation not only has ecological and economic benefits, it also significantly promotes human health, e.g. by improving nutrient supply and reducing disease risks, as well as by promoting diverse microbiomes in humans, cultivated soils and the food produced. Food production should be climate-smart and sustainable, be carried out in semi-natural landscapes, use only moderate amounts of synthetic and

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organic fertilisers, and cultivate climate-smart crops and production methods. Regional marketing reduces the need for emissions-intensive transport and maintains the freshness and quality of the food. The influence of farm size, cultivation methods, processing and distribution on sustainable production should be further studied in corresponding research projects.

The political goal should be to make balanced and sustainable diets (based on the Planetary Health Diet) significantly more attractive and diverse and raise people's appreciation for health-promoting and sustainable foods. To this end, the WBGU recommends positive communication and education on nutrition within the context of educational measures and awareness campaigns, but also in advertising and the way political measures are communicated and implemented.

### Activity-friendly environment – environment-friendly activity

Changing people's patterns of physical activity offers enormous potential for health and the environment. Currently, however, physical activity is sidelined in all areas of life – everywhere from employment, housework and education to mobility and leisure-time. Very many people fail to reach the WHO's recommendations for physical activity and spend many hours sitting. Physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour (i.e. sitting or lying when awake) are major risk factors for many non-communicable diseases, and the means used to avoid physical activity often harm the environment and people. Car traffic in particular consumes a lot of energy, resources and space, and causes air pollution, climate damage and noise. It restricts the freedom of movement, safety, social interactions and participation of people in their living environment and of all those who walk, cycle or rely on public transport, e.g. children and many older and poorer people.

Increasing environment-friendly physical activity and mobility requires an activity-friendly environment. The WBGU recommends pursuing three interlinked approaches:

First, physical activity should be re-integrated into all areas of life. To achieve this, above all the external conditions must be adjusted. Infrastructures, built-up and green public spaces, regulation, taxes, prices and public services should all be designed to make healthy and environmentally sound behaviour the easiest choice. This requires national cross-cutting strategies that stipulate and coordinate the contributions to be made by different policy areas to the promotion of environment- and climate-friendly physical activity.

Second, more active, clean and efficient mobility offers huge potential for synergies. Actors in the fields of health and sustainability should be given a greater

say in national mobility strategies. Active mobility should be promoted: by redistributing space and creating consistently safe footpath and cycle-path networks, compact settlements and dense, comprehensive local public-transport services. Furthermore, the negative societal and ecological effects of motorized private transport should be consistently incorporated into pricing, regulation and land allocation; its spatial access should be restricted accordingly.

Third, the needs of children and young people are a very good benchmark for designing cities and mobility systems because they can serve as a good proxy for many health and environmental aspects.

The three approaches should also be integrated into international development cooperation and financing, especially with regard to investment in the infrastructure.

### Housing in health-promoting and sustainable settlements

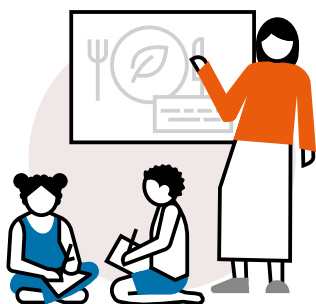
The way residential areas are built also determines how healthily people can live there. Cities and residential areas cause climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; at the same time they are impacted by them. This offers starting points for synergies which can be used to accelerate the transformation towards sustainability. This not only applies to the global need to improve both the residential environment and the building and housing stock. The need to build new urban settlements for around 2.5 billion people by the middle of the century offers a window of opportunity for advancing sustainable and healthy construction with climate-friendly building materials on a large scale in a short period of time – and for avoiding unsustainable path dependencies. This concerns, among other things, building materials, recycling, the design of cities and urban infrastructures, and health-promoting living conditions. It requires a planning policy which,

- › first, gives priority to an urban form that enables healthy living, environmental protection and climate-change mitigation,
- › second, speeds up construction projects worldwide in a way that keeps pace with rapid urban population growth and largely avoids unplanned urban growth, and
- › third, finds a balance between building density, mobility and the creation of green and blue spaces ('triple inner development') that is adapted to the respective regional conditions.

With regard to planning and governance, the WBGU recommends overcoming institutional and disciplinary boundaries in planning processes (e.g. integrating public health services), reserving a relevant proportion of urban space for forms of use that are oriented towards the common good, ensuring safe and affordable

health-promoting housing in the long term, and establishing the position of an Urban Chief Health Officer. In order to promote environment- and health-friendly infrastructures and construction methods, further recommendations include the expansion of urban green and blue spaces and timber-based construction in the building sector, as well as the reusability and recyclability of building materials.

### Education and science for healthy living on a healthy planet



Education and science occupy key positions in the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet. However, their transformative potential for the health of people and nature can only unfold globally if empirically based answers to research and education questions are developed worldwide in a context-specific manner, and networks for reflection and implementation are developed between politics, science, the private sector and civil society. This will require reducing the significant differences between national science systems, promoting transregional partnerships on the basis of reciprocity, and the systematic promotion of education for healthy living on a healthy planet worldwide.

#### Education

By bolstering a comprehensive health perspective, Education for Sustainable Development can also come to mean education for healthy living on a healthy planet. It should firstly enable and promote knowledge, attitudes and skills relating to environmental and human health throughout life, and secondly encourage sustainable action within the educational institutions themselves, thereby developing a role-model function for daily action. Participation and transdisciplinarity are important here. A core element of such an educational mandate is the conservation and restoration of healthy ecosystems and their typical biodiversity, also as a prerequisite for stabilizing the natural life-support systems for humankind. Another core element is designing the human-made

environment in a way that is oriented towards principles of promoting people's health. A third core element comprises the responsible and health-promoting use of natural resources and their regeneration to ensure their sustainable availability over generations, also taking into account social fairness in distribution.

Broadly based strategies from pre-school and school education to advanced-training programmes for lifelong learning serve to mutually strengthen the health of species, ecosystems and people and should be established as soon as possible. In addition, health professionals can be encouraged in their role as multipliers to promote the guiding principle of healthy living on a healthy planet.

This education strategy for healthy living on a healthy planet should feed into and give new impetus to the existing process of embedding Education for Sustainable Development in all areas of education. To this end, the WBGU recommends highlighting health as an integral and explicit field of action in the concept of Education for Sustainable Development and using education as a strategy for encouraging healthy and sustainable behaviour in healthy and sustainable conditions.

#### Science

The vision of healthy living on a healthy planet needs science to help shape society's future on a global scale – in an interaction between research, consulting and the promotion of young scientists at the interfaces between health science and the natural and social sciences. Research in partnerships between scientists from countries of different income groups and regime types is required, as well as continuous, iterative development processes of ideas and technologies, and the successive transformation of institutional guidelines and everyday cultural practices. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen underfunded science systems worldwide and to ensure the ability to speak and act on a common basis as a global society – by means of transregional cooperation between science, science policy and science funding.

The consequences of a fragmented and inequitable global science system could be observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. While vaccine development and production were possible in efficient national science systems, transregional distribution posed a huge challenge because of local demand. Accusations like 'global vaccination injustice' or 'vaccine apartheid' make multilateral cooperation difficult.

In Germany, the development of the Research Platform for One Health is promising. This should now be backed up by the various ministries providing the corresponding science funding in the spirit of the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet. The WBGU also advocates the establishment of an alliance to promote transformative research at the interfaces between

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environment and health involving cooperation between universities and non-university institutions, based on the example of the German Marine Research Alliance.

Similarly, at the international level, transregional support programmes focusing on the environment-health nexus should be further expanded and a joint funding landscape institutionalized; this should also include private-sector actors. Initial transregional support networks exist in this field in the form of the Belmont Forum and Future Earth. These need to be further expanded and funded, especially in the area of transformative environment and health research.

Scientists are part of a global community that has the potential to conduct collaborative research on the environment-health complex across national and disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, it is important to build the transregional and transsectoral networks that are needed in order to implement and shape political, private-sector and civil-society decision-making processes.

German science policy has a responsibility for shaping the future – by means of interdisciplinary, globally oriented science practised in a transregional dialogue for healthy living on a healthy planet.

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### **Epilogue: using the UN Summit of the Future as a forum and focusing on the post-2030 agenda**

This report targets decision-makers in the field of international sustainability and health policy and is also a contribution to the discourse on the preparation process for the United Nations Summit of the Future, which will be held in New York in September 2024. On behalf of the UN General Assembly, Germany and Namibia are co-facilitators for this summit, which also focuses on improving multilateral capacities for dealing with global crises. Global health and a stronger role for the WHO are already being discussed as possible focal points of the summit. In the WBGU's view, the vision of healthy living on a healthy planet should play a visible role at this Summit of the Future.

However, the transformative power of the topic of health extends far beyond the Summit of the Future and could become a central building block for the further development of the sustainability agenda beyond 2030. After all, health as it is defined by the WHO – “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” – requires a comprehensive transformation towards sustainability. This report aims to contribute to a political recognition of this broadened view of health.



## **The German Advisory Council on Global Change**

**(Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen – WBGU)**

The WBGU is an independent, scientific advisory body to the German Federal Government set up in 1992 in the run-up to the Rio Earth Summit. The Council has nine members appointed for a term of four years by the German Federal Cabinet. The Council is supported by an interministerial committee comprising representatives of all ministries and the German Federal Chancellery. The Council's principal task is to provide scientifically-based policy advice on global change issues. The Council:

- › analyses global environment and development problems and reports on these,
- › reviews and evaluates national and international research in the field of global change,
- › provides early warning of new issue areas,
- › identifies gaps in research and initiates new research,
- › monitors and assesses national and international policies for the achievement of sustainable development,
- › elaborates recommendations for action, and
- › raises public awareness and heightens the media profile of global change issues.

The WBGU publishes flagship reports every two years, making its own choice of focal themes. In addition, the German government can commission the Council to prepare special reports and policy papers.

More at: [www.wbgu.de/en/](http://www.wbgu.de/en/)