

## **National Consultation on Roadmap for Planning Heatwave Management in India** **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2016**

Heatwave events are becoming increasingly common. Globally, 2015 was the hottest year on record, beating the record set in 2014 and making it the fourth time this century that a new record high temperature record was set. Record breaking heat events have been witnessed across the globe in recent years, including in Australia, Argentina, China, Central Asia, large parts of Europe, Mexico, Japan, South Korea and the USA. Climate change has played a key role in intensifying and triggering, extreme heat events. India too is feeling the impact of climate change in terms of increased instances of heatwaves which are more intense in nature with each passing year, and have a devastating impact on human health thereby increasing the number of heat wave casualties. In 2015, heatwave in India killed more than 2,300 people, making it the 5th highest in world history in terms of number of deaths. Most of the deaths concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Odisha and Bihar.

The national and State Governments face considerable challenges in tackling this issue, even when they have recognized the gravity of the situation and works towards it. Most affected states have no plans in place to prevent mortality and morbidity associated with heatwave. Ahmedabad Heat Action Plan is already a well-known and well appreciated model showing that such an action plan can improve resilience of the citizens and reduce the severe health impacts of heatwave.

A one-day National Consultation therefore was held on 21st September, 2016 for *Planning Heatwave Management in India* in New Delhi. The consultation was organized by Global Change and Sustainable Health Institute of Taru Leading Edge (**TARU**) in partnership with Climate and Development Knowledge Network (**CDKN**), Understanding Climate and Health Associations in India (**UCHAI**), Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar (**IIPH-G**) and India Meteorological Society (**IMS**). The initiative was supported by the Asian Climate Change Resilience Network (**ACCCRN**) and **Rockefeller Foundation**. A roadmap document on the occasion was also released. The roadmap was developed under the guidance of eminent national and international experts including those from health, disaster, urban planning and environment fields.

The specific objectives of the consultation for heatwave management were to identify gaps in the research and policy, initiate a discussion on institutional leadership, integrate long-term urban planning measures, develop a partnership action plan and learn from the experience of current initiatives in other States. The consultation gathered around 60 participants including government representatives, academia, civil society and donor agencies. The consultation had technical sessions related to heat preparedness, sectoral perspective, learnings from international, state and city level experiences. These sessions were well attended with eminent chairs and speakers from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC), National Institutes of Health (USA), Health Canada, Oxford Policy Management, AIIMS and IIT amongst others. In conclusion the WHO Heat Action Plan and its relevance for India was discussed.

