A new tool to help one billion people at risk due to lack of access to cooling

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Credit: SEforAll

The Cooling for All Needs Assessment has been launched today, Thursday, November 7 to help governments, non-governmental organizations and development institutions to accurately size the market for cooling demands based on comfort, safety, nutrition and health needs.

Without intervention, delivering access to cooling for the benefit of all who need it, could see the global energy demand for cooling increase more than five times by 2050.

The new Assessment is part of Sustainable Energy for All's (SEforALL) latest report, "Chilling Prospects: Providing Sustainable Cooling for All 2019." The report finds that the public safety, health, safe medicine and food supply for 1.05 billion people in poor rural and urban areas are still at risk from lack of access to cooling.

Developed by Heriot-Watt University and SEforALL, the assessment looks to develop, for the first time, a methodology aligned to the United Nation (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to better provide demand data to develop country-specific cooling action plan delivering access to cooling for the benefit of all who need it.

Professor Toby Peters from Heriot-Watt University, explains, "For a Government or a community to ensure that the cooling needs of their population are met sustainably, including for the most vulnerable—they first need to understand what these needs are—health, food productivity and safety … not simply demand for cooling based on GDP growth. An underestimation of the scale of the cooling demand, and its impact on energy demand risks contributing to a lack of ambition in policy, infrastructure and technology development, and could ultimately have far-reaching social, economic and environmental consequences."

Earlier this year the U.N. Secretary-General, António Guterres, called on all countries to develop National Cooling Action Plans to deliver efficient and sustainable cooling and bring essential life-preserving services like vaccines and safe food to all people.

Using three key purposes of cooling—food security and rural incomes, health services and thermal comfort, a series of indicators and a

scorecard has been developed to aid governments and other stakeholders to quantify the cooling gaps currently present and attempt to develop policies to meet cooling needs.

Brian Dean, Head of Cooling and Energy Efficiency at Sustainable Energy for All, highlighted the need to see cooling access as a right.

He said: "In a warming world facing ongoing deadly impacts from climate change, we cannot view cooling as a luxury. In a heatwave, it can be a matter of life or death for children and older people. It ensures that workers are productive, that families can store nutritious food securely, and that infants can receive an effective vaccine in a rural clinic. Delivering sustainable cooling is an issue of equity that will enable millions to escape poverty and help to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. However, we have to achieve this drive up greenhouse gas emissions and therefore further exacerbate the very problem it is designed to alleviate."

This assessment will help countries to build a true picture of the Cooling Need to meet the commitments laid down in the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. This will better address the cooling needs for the country/community under review, at present, in 2030 and in 2050, ensuring the needs of most vulnerable are included. It will also look at the current gaps and how demand will be affected by climate change, in both mitigation and adaptation scenarios and the delivery of access to cooling for all which is affordable and environmentally sustainable.

Professor Peters said: "This Needs Assessment is presented very much as a working paper. We recognize that it will require continued refinement based on stakeholder feedback, and our ambition, if we can secure the engagement and support, is to have during 2020 an agreed methodology and a full on-line needs-driven cooling evaluation tool-kit that can be applied consistently across planning processes, investment

frameworks, Cooling Action Plans, overseas development assistance (ODA), to support access to clean and efficient cooling for the benefit of all who need it without over-warming the planet."

Provided by Heriot-Watt University