**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Radical new approaches needed to simultaneously address human and planetary health issues**

Forum for the Future calls for more systems change agents

and interventions with potential to benefit multiple systems as part

of new United Nations Global Compact report

There is an emerging need to simultaneously address environmental and public health challenges, says a new report by the United Nations Global Compact.

Issued at the Health is Everyone’s Business event organized by the UN Global Compact on the sidelines of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the [*Business Leadership Brief for Healthy Planet, Healthy People*](https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/environment/health-is-everyones-business) report emphasises that business action that targets co-benefits for the health of both people and the planet is necessary for achieving a healthy future for all.

The Business Leadership Brief was informed by the [UN Global Compact Action Platform on Health is Everyone’s Business](https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action-platforms/health) — a collaborative partnership comprising representatives of business, civil society, non-profits and academia, including international sustainability non-profit, Forum for the Future.

The world faces substantial challenges in delivering health-promoting environments, with 91% of the world’s population breathing polluted air, 2.1 billion people lacking access to safe drinking water, and 2 billion people suffering from malnutrition.

Commenting on the interconnected nature of the challenges, **Sally Uren, Chief Executive at Forum for the Future, said:** *“The climate, health and environmental issues we face are now so urgent that we can no longer afford introducing fixes that fail. Instead, we must acknowledge the deep interconnections between challenges and accept that we need to fundamentally change the way we think and operate. This means embracing new ways of doing business, of investing and of collaborating. In short, we need to become systems change agents set on reconfiguring the key systems we rely on – from energy and mobility to nutrition and health – towards sustainable goals.”*

The report emphasises that companies taking an integrated approach to advancing the health of people, protecting the environment, and tackling climate change receive multiple business benefits, including increased employee productivity, reduced healthcare costs, reduced absenteeism and increased employee retention.

Practical examples of business action featured in the report include:

* Ramping up renewable energy systems — such as wind and solar power — to cut down carbon dioxide emissions can also reduce respiratory diseases associated with urban air pollution
* Expanding forests to pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere can simultaneously limit global temperature rise and protect communities from climate-related disasters
* Transforming the global food system through sustainable agricultural practices and Government incentives that promote healthy diets can advance both human health and environmental sustainability
* Taking a health-centric approach to urban planning, including active and green mobility, can simultaneously reduce air pollution and improve health through physical activity
* Changing lifestyles by eating less meat, riding bicycles and reducing air travel advances both human health and environmental sustainability.

Featured in the report, Forum for the Future stresses the need to take a systems approach, which shifts the focus from individual parts of the health system – such as a hospital or pharmaceutical manufacturer – to the organisation of parts, including all actors, drivers and interactions. Systems thinking identifies the interactions at play in order to find solutions that go deeper and address the underlying causes of what is not working. Only with this approach can transformational change be delivered.

“*By highlighting how change interventions can be designed to drive simultaneous benefits for human and planetary health, the Business Leadership Brief can play a role in driving systemic change in our health and environment systems*,” said **Sally Uren**. *“We must design interventions set to benefit multiple systems. Forum for the Future has identified nine strategies that can be used to do this – from creating a robust case for change and shifting culture to building the right incentives, business models and financing. The first step though is to really understand your role, power and place in the system, and to change your mindset. We all need to be open to new solutions to old problems if we’re to create a more sustainable future.”*

**-ENDS-**

For more information, interviews or comment, please email [a.langridge@forumforthefuture.org](mailto:a.langridge@forumforthefuture.org).

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**What is sustainability?**

Forum for the Future’s definition of sustainability is:

“Sustainability is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways that simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth’s life support system.”

**About Forum for the Future**

Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability non-profit with offices in London, New York, Singapore and Mumbai. We specialise in addressing critical global challenges by catalysing change in key systems.

For over 20 years, we’ve been working in partnership with business, governments and civil society to accelerate the shift toward a sustainable future. Together we are reinventing the way the world works.

Find out more at [www.forumforthefuture.org](http://www.forumforthefuture.org) or by following [@Forum4theFuture](http://www.twitter.com/Forum4theFuture) on Twitter.