

Barbados



KEY FACTS:

- ◆ Joined Commonwealth: 1966
- ◆ Capital: Bridgetown
- ◆ Population: 294,000 (2007)
- ◆ GDP growth: 1.5% p.a. 1990–2005
- ◆ Official Language: English
- ◆ Time: GMT minus 4 hours
- ◆ Currency: Barbados dollar (Bds dollar)

Current vulnerabilities and threats

1. What are the health risks from current or future climate change impacts that are of most concern to your country?

Vector-borne diseases such as leptospirosis (high rainfall levels) and dengue fever (high rainfall levels and high temperatures). Transmission of diarrhoeal diseases (water scarce conditions).

2. What population groups in your country are most vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change and what are the impacts likely to be?

- ◆ Elderly (> 65 years old).
- ◆ Children (< 5 years old).
- ◆ Immune-compromised individuals.
- ◆ Disabled.
- ◆ Agriculture workers.

Impacts: Illness, death and loss of income.

Strategy and Policy

3. How much of a priority is addressing the impacts of climate change on health for your country?

Mid-level priority.

4. Please describe the strategies your country has developed (for example, health and climate change adaptation strategies) that address the health impacts of climate change.

"Protecting Health from Climate Change" the theme of World Health Day on 7 April 2008 last year emphasised the need to sensitise the citizens of the world on health and climate change issues. In Barbados, healthcare personnel were sensitised on climate change issues and *Guidelines for Diagnosis and Treatment of Dengue Fever* were launched. Other activities included the distribution of print materials at the Healthy Lifestyle Extravaganza in addition to public service announcements during the period 3–8 April, 2008. During this period, the Ministry of Health contracted a consultant to evaluate the awareness and effect of the intervention through a Message and Media Recall Survey. This was the first time that such a survey was carried out on climate change in Barbados.

In addition the Ministry of Health's focal point also delivered a lecture to the public on the impact of climate change on health and two

environmental health officers took part in radio talk show programme on climate change issues.

5. Has health been integrated into national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies?

Yes.

6. What steps have been made towards implementation of these strategies?

N/A.

7. What are the current policy gaps in addressing climate change and health?

Policies need to be developed to address climate change and health.

8. How well equipped is your health system to cope with the impacts of climate change?

Two surveillance officers are designated to deal with surveillance of suspected and confirmed dengue, leptospirosis and gastroenteritis cases.

Environmental health officers and assistants at the community level are involved in the environmental surveillance of vectors as well as investigation of cases.

9. Have you made any changes to your health system in response to increased risks resulting from climate change and if so, what changes have you made?

Barbados has identified a focal point in the Ministry of Health and is seeking to address the impacts of climate change on public health with the establishment of a Climate Change Unit.

10. What are the main constraints to addressing the health impacts of climate change in your country and how will these be addressed?

- ◆ Limited financial and human resources.
- ◆ Inadequate national research so that the linkages between climate change and health can be better understood.

11. Have national resources been allocated to address climate change and health in your country? If so, approximately how much has been allocated and for what issues?

National resources have not yet been allocated.

12. Is the Ministry of Health working together with other ministries (such as Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries or Finance) to address health and climate change issues?

Yes. The Ministry of Health's representative attended a workshop on the Clean Development Mechanism hosted by the Ministry of Environment.

13. Has your country been involved in work to manage climate change and health at the international level?

Yes, the Ministry of Health's representative has attended a plan of action workshop in Brazil in April 2008 (Protecting Health from Climate Change in the Regions of the Americas).

The Ministry of Health was also represented at a consultation on WHO Work Plan on Health and Climate Change in Switzerland in October 2008.

14. How would you describe the capacity of your country to participate at the global level on climate change and health?

Limited capacity.