

Kenya



KEY FACTS:

- ◆ Joined Commonwealth: 1963
- ◆ Capital: Nairobi
- ◆ Population: 37,538,000 (2007)
- ◆ GDP growth: -0.1% p.a. 1990–2005
- ◆ Official language: English
- ◆ Time: GMT plus 3hr
- ◆ Currency: Kenyan shilling (KSh)

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?

Global warming and rainfall variability have serious impacts on human health and public safety. Some of the key impacts on Kenya are:

- ◆ Extension of malaria risk zones: As temperatures increase and patterns of rain change, malaria will increase in highland areas and other areas will become vulnerable to the disease.
- ◆ Rift Valley fever: This disease is associated with heavy, episodic rainfall as in the El Niño downpours of 1997. This disease is likely to recur with climate change.
- ◆ Cholera: This is associated with flooding and drought through the contamination of public water supplies and unhygienic practices during water shortages. Increased temperatures will result in more cholera bacteria in water sources.
- ◆ Meningitis transmission: This is associated with dust in semi-arid conditions and overcrowded living conditions. With climate change arid and semi-arid regions will increase levels of dust allowing the disease to spread more.
- ◆ Trypanosomiasis: This disease occurs in humid, warm areas where trees and shrubs grow. Highland areas and coastal regions are prone to this disease and will be most affected by climate change.

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?

- ◆ Heat stress: Heat disorders including heat stroke, failures of sweating mechanisms and cardiovascular disease affect the elderly, the immune-suppressed and pregnant women.
- ◆ Droughts and floods: These extreme events cause physical injury and death, diarrhoeal diseases due to lack of portable water and contaminated water supplies, food toxicity, Marasmus and Kwashiorkor will be prevalent among children, the elderly and the poor.
- ◆ Disasters: Increased disasters such as mud and land slides as well as floods may have long-term effects on the mental health of the affected people.

Strategy and policy

3. How much of a priority is addressing the impacts of climate

change on health for your country?

High 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.

- ◆ Environmental, Water and Sanitation Plan 2008-2012: This deals with the sustainable vector control in the country through the provision of clean and adequate water for consumption.
- ◆ Malaria Strategy 2005-2010: This deals with the effective control of malaria through indoor insecticide spraying and the use of effective malaria drugs.
- ◆ Mid-term Strategic Plan 2008-2012 and Vision 2030: Addresses the issues of policy, resource allocation, collaboration with key stakeholders in climate change. It also deals with research and capacity building in climate change and health.
- ◆ Environmental Impact Assessment Strategy (NEEMA): Deals with the conservation of the environment to mitigate climate change.

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?

- ◆ Implementation of the Strategic plans and policies through annual operation plans and results-based management.
- ◆ Institutional frameworks and systems have been set up to handle climate change and health, e.g. National Environmental Conservation Committee.
- ◆ The Government has set up a climate change co-ordinating committee to create awareness, facilitate research projects, develop human resource for climate change and to advise Government on climate change issues.
- ◆ The Government has established a Department of Emergency and Disaster Management and Response.

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

- ◆ Uncertainty in defining the current climate because of inadequate

observations.

- ♦ Uncertainty in defining the vulnerability indicators and how they might change in the future.
- ♦ Uncertainty defining climate change in the medium and longer terms in order to evaluate future impacts.
- ♦ Uncertainty in characterising the current socio-economic drivers of decision-making and how they might change under a future climate.

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

The country is inadequately equipped to handle the impact of climate change and health as follows:

- ♦ The Government has inadequate and weak systems to handle climate change and health.
- ♦ There is poor capacity to mitigate the impact of climate change and health.
- ♦ There are inadequate resources from the Government and development partners for the mitigation of climate change and health.
- ♦ Poor advocacy of climate change and health by the Government.

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?

- ♦ The country has set up disease surveillance systems to address the risks associated with climate change.
- ♦ The Government has strengthened information systems to monitor climate changes.
- ♦ The country has set up continuing education systems for climate change and health.

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

- ♦ The major constraint is inadequate evidence-based data. The Government needs to strengthen information systems, allocate more funds and train/capacity build staff on data collection and management.
- ♦ There are no clear policy guidelines on climate change and health. The Government is to review and develop clear guidelines and policies.
- ♦ No specific funding is available for climate change and health. The Government to set aside funds to mitigate climate change and health.
- ♦ Calamities related to climate change affect the whole country at the same time making it difficult to share scarce resources.
- ♦ Inadequate institutional capacity to cope with effects of climate change and health.
- ♦ No concrete linkages with other sectors affected by climate change, e.g. agriculture, environment, etc. The formation of a national co-ordinating committee to address climate change.

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 been allocated specifically for climate change in the health sector.
- ♦ Only limited resources are provided for the control of diseases such as malaria, etc. associated with climate change.

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

Yes.

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

Yes: by attending and participating in international workshops and conferences on the impact of climate change and health.

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

Although Kenya has been advocating climate change issues and health at scientific, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, as well as hosting various international conferences to discuss issues related to global warming and climate change, it has inadequate capacity to participate at the global level due to the following:

- ♦ The country has weak evidence on the impact of climate change and health due to poor research.
- ♦ The country does not have adequate resources to engage the impacts of climate change and health.

Any other comments or information you would like to provide

- ♦ There is a need to enhance the systematic observations network in order to increase our knowledge of climate characteristics.
- ♦ There is a need to mainstream/integrate adaptation strategies into national development plans and priorities. Some of these are already addressed directly or indirectly but not in a robust or sustainable way.
- ♦ More research and technology needs to be employed in our adaptation strategies.
- ♦ Indigenous knowledge and technologies need to be incorporated into adaptation options.
- ♦ Technical capacity needs to be increased to undertake vulnerability and adaptation assessment.
- ♦ Institutional capacity needs to be enhanced to integrate adaptation into national development plans.
- ♦ There is a need to enhance institutional capacity for regional co-operation in climate change issues.
- ♦ Public education and awareness raising needs to be increased on climate change issues especially amongst the communities affected.
- ♦ Climate information is crucial to climate change adaptation strategies in different socio-economic sectors. Climate scientists should therefore enhance seasonal climate prediction skills. The capacity of users to effectively use the information must be equally enhanced.

The main contact person for climate change

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