

# Malawi



## KEY FACTS:

- ◆ Joined Commonwealth: 1964
- ◆ Capital: Lilongwe
- ◆ Population: 13,925,000 (2007)
- ◆ GDP growth: 1% p.a. 1990–2005
- ◆ Official language: English
- ◆ Time: GMT plus 2hr
- ◆ Currency: Malawi kwacha (MK)

## 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?

- ◆ Increased incidence or prevalence of communicable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, onchocerciasis etc.
- ◆ Floods which may destroy houses and crops.
- ◆ Drought which may result in food shortages.

### 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?

People of all ages are vulnerable to the communicable diseases (malaria, diarrhoea, onchocerciasis) which may be worsened by climate change and the impact is premature loss of life and loss of productive life years.

Children under the age of five years are also most vulnerable to malnutrition in addition to the problem of communicable diseases.

## 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.

The strategies are not set as strategies for dealing with health and climate change per se but they are set as strategies for dealing with communicable diseases and the issue of malnutrition. These are achieved through disease control programmes which the Ministry of Health has set up, for example, the National Malaria Control Programme or the National Onchocerciasis Control Programme. These strategies are implemented as Essential Health Care Package by the Ministry.

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

No.

### 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?

There are in general no policy issues for climate change and health. The Ministry needs technical and financial assistance in this area.

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

There are resources for implementation of health service activities in general in the country, however, the Ministry will need extra resources and skills in dealing with the issue of climate change.

### 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?

Not necessarily, but some health policy changes address the health problems associated with climate change, for example free distribution of insecticide treated mosquito nets to vulnerable groups, mass community based treatment of onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis.

### 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 lack financial resources and a shortage of human resources (health workers).
- ◆ The other issue is that the Ministry of Health is not included in the main Committee on Climate Change which has its secretariat in the Ministry of Economic planning and Development. The way forward would be to include the Ministry of Health on this committee.

### 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?

No, currently in the planning stage.

### 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.

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

No.

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

The country has a great potential to participate. However, all meetings at global level in the past on climate change have involved other ministries e.g. Environmental and Agriculture.

**Any other comments or information you would like to provide**

There is need for the Ministry of Health to be involved in issues of climate change at both international and national level. At national level this can easily be done because different ministries easily work together.