

# Mauritius



## KEY FACTS:

- ◆ Joined Commonwealth: 1968
- ◆ Capital: Port Louis
- ◆ Population: 1,262,000 (2007)
- ◆ GDP growth: 3.8% p.a. 1990–2005
- ◆ Official language: English
- ◆ Time: GMT plus 4hr
- ◆ Currency: Mauritian rupee (MRs)

## 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?

Health risks:

- ◆ Health effects due to extremes of temperature and more a heat related health effects.
- ◆ Health effects due to natural disasters such as cyclones, flooding and tsunamis and including the following:
  - injuries and loss of life;
  - increase in communicable diseases such as food-borne and vector-borne diseases;
  - mental stress;
  - health effects due to air pollution.
- ◆ Other indirect health effects such as harm from ultraviolet rays.

### 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?

- ◆ Children.
- ◆ The elderly.
- ◆ Chronically ill persons.
- ◆ The less well off.

These groups would be more vulnerable to high temperatures, to infectious diseases and other effects of natural disasters, leading to high morbidity and mortality rates.

## 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.

There is a Natural Disaster Committee at national level which a multi-sector committee in which the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is presented. This committee looks into issues pertaining to cyclones, floods and tsunamis.

The health sector has a strategy to improve the healthcare delivery

system, with a focus on hospital surge capacity and acute care medicine, albeit, not necessarily linked directly to climate change as such, but as an ongoing process with a view to increasing accessibility to quality healthcare. Thus public health infrastructure development is an ongoing process.

The Ministry is also adopting an integrated vector management strategy to prevent vector-borne diseases.

Similarly, activities to enhance prevention and control of food-borne infections and other enteric infections disease are ongoing.

Health promotion activities are also being undertaken with a view to raising awareness on diseases, particularly the non-communicable diseases.

Laboratory capacity is also being uplifted for disease and vector surveillance.

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

Yes. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is represented in the Natural Disaster Committee. Moreover, mitigation and adaptation activities have been planned by various stakeholders, though these have not been integrated into a national strategy per se.

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

The activities in the health sector, as detailed above, are ongoing.

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

As such, no definite policy has been formulated in relation to climate change and health.

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

The health system is adequately equipped to deal with situations requiring small scale interventions. However, public health infrastructure, especially acute care medicine, would require further development, if we were to face major events such as a tsunami.

**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.

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

Further development of public health infrastructure would require additional resources, both human and financial. We have been receiving help from international organisations for the purchase of some medical equipment. These issues are being addressed to some extent by special budgetary allocations and also through support from WHO.

**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 are being allocated for the ongoing public health infrastructure development which indirectly would have some bearing on adaptation capacity.

**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?**

No.

**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?**

We would require more competencies as regards risk assessment and research activities pertaining to the impacts of climate change on health. However, we can share knowledge and experience on the subject.