

Pakistan



KEY FACTS:

- ◆ Joined Commonwealth: 1947 (left in 1972, rejoined in 1989)
- ◆ Capital: Islamabad
- ◆ Population: 163,902,000 (2007)
- ◆ GDP p c growth: 1.3% p.a. 1990–2005
- ◆ Official language: Urdu
- ◆ Time: GMT plus 5hr
- ◆ Currency: Pakistan rupee

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?

The most direct effect of climate change would be impact of hotter temperatures, which would increase human deaths. Other impacts follow more intricate pathways like water and food related diseases, vector- and rodent-borne diseases.

- ◆ Vector-borne diseases: dengue outbreak.
- ◆ Water and food-borne diseases: prevalent and expected to increase with water shortages and fecal contamination of drinking water.
- ◆ Temperature-related illness and death: heat waves cause heat stroke and even kill vulnerable populations every year in the country.
- ◆ Effects of food and water shortages: malnutrition, stunted growth, high morbidity/mortality due to low immunity, renal diseases etc.

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?

The health of millions would be affected by the diarrhoeal diseases associated with flooding and drought becoming more prevalent. Intense rural poverty is likely to increase internal migration as well as migration to other countries. The main challenges are reduced agricultural productivity, human morbidity, and stressed use of natural resources. Agricultural productivity in Pakistan is affected due to changes in land and water regimes. This is negatively affecting agricultural productivity by altering bio-physical relationships like the growing period of crops, altered scheduling of cropping seasons, increased crop stresses (thermal and moisture stresses), changing irrigation water requirements, altering soil characteristics and increasing the risk of pests and diseases.

Populations at risk:

- ◆ Children under 5; diarrhoea and ARI.
- ◆ Urban poor.
- ◆ Weak, poor and women.
- ◆ Those dependent on marginal and subsistence farming.

Populations at risk in the future:

- ◆ Labourers and the elderly.
- ◆ Mountain, coastal and desert populations.

Strategy and policy

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

Low 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.

Existing adaptation interventions:

- ◆ Submitted Initial Communication Report for UNFCCC 2001.
- ◆ National Environment Policy (2005).
- ◆ National Water Policy.
- ◆ National Drinking Water Policy .
- ◆ National Drinking Water Standards finalised.
- ◆ National Sanitation Policy.

Future Strategies and issues of concern:

- ◆ National assessment of sectors requiring involvement and framework for collaborations.
- ◆ Awareness among policy- and decision-makers for perceived needs intersectoral coordination.
- ◆ Capacity building in various relevant government ministries especially health.
- ◆ Rebuilding/maintaining public health infrastructure and integration of health aspects through departments of health at grass root level.
- ◆ Promoting research on links between climate change and potential impacts on health in vulnerable communities.
- ◆ Strengthening the institutional basis for the implementation of national climate change policies and programmes.
- ◆ Strong monitoring and documentation involving stakeholders.

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

Yes.