

**National Consultation Workshop on Climate Change and Human Health in Nepal;
Vulnerability and Impact, Adaptation and Mitigation
Kathmandu, December 19-21, 2007**

Summary of Outcomes

Sixty-five representatives of Health, Environment, Meteorology, Water Supply, Agriculture and academic institutions participated in a consultation workshop to debate the effects that climate change may have on health in Nepal.

The workshop was organized by the Nepal Health Research Council and financially supported by WHO as part of its efforts to raise the capacity of member-states in this technical area.

Presentations were made by all sectors involved. It was clear that a lot of work has already been done in Nepal to determine the consequences of Climate Change on health.

A total of eleven papers were presented on the climate change impacts in Nepal and how they are affecting agriculture, water resources, energy and human health.

Long-term fluctuation in weather is already impacting on agricultural production, reducing crop yields and forcing farmers to adopt new agricultural practices. Higher prevalence of vector borne diseases is being reported in Nepal.

Still, the health effects of Climate Change have not yet been studied in great detail and there are many uncertainties that require further clarification and study.

The participants agreed that the way forward is by building capacity and taking concrete actions. This would include creating information through research and data collection as well as monitoring; Awareness-raising and community empowerment; Developing Governance; Setting up programmes and projects to reduce vulnerability to climate risks and exploiting opportunities.

Main Conclusions

1. Climate change is already underway.
2. There is an urgent need to:
 - Improve the understanding of public health authorities on the linkages between climate change/ variability and health
 - Assess vulnerabilities and identify interventions for mitigation and for adaptation;
 - Conduct research for evidence generation;
 - Identify adaptation needs and options derived from the challenges posed by future sudden and/or large climate changes;
 - Implement these, maintaining or improving current public health programmes in intersectoral collaboration with the Ministries (water, agriculture, urban development, etc.);
 - Network at Regional and National levels, strengthening institutions and mechanisms that can systematically promote interactions among researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders to facilitate the appropriate incorporation of research findings into policy decisions in order to protect population health no matter what the climate brings.

What to Do Next to Respond to Climate Change?

Set-up an inter-sectoral committee in the NHRC which would meet at least every six months to review current climate change and health related research and adaptation measures and determine further actions to promote our common understanding and action. In its first meeting, the committee decided to focus on the awareness raising potential of the 2008 World Health Day and develop specific promotional and awareness raising activities in the run-up to this day.

Ministry of Health and Population should strengthen its capacity to study and advise on Environment and Health linkages, including Climate Change effects on health

Immediate and Short-term Actions

1. Inform Ministry of Health Officials and other climate change and health stakeholders about the outcomes of the workshop;
2. Establish a focal point/coordination unit for environmental health/climate change and health in the Health Sector;
3. Organize consultative meetings every 6 months;
4. Act on World Health Day 2008 on Climate Change and Human Health;
5. Train health professionals to understand the threats posed by climate change and contribute to build capacity of national and local institutions including of negotiation skills;
6. Conduct research to fill out the knowledge gaps and reduce uncertainties;
7. Develop and implement programmes for Mitigation and adaptation to reduce vulnerability;
8. Involve communities in CC impacts monitoring and help them to employ appropriate measures;
9. Establish or strengthen Infectious disease surveillance, reporting and response system;
10. Promote cooperation and coordination of different sectors on Climate Change research and strengthening alliances for sustainable development.

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