

20 May 2016 – A review of data indicates that in the last 40 years more than 90% of the disasters that have taken place in Pakistan have been triggered by changes in the climate.

It is predicted that there will be an increase in the frequency and severity of climate-related events, such as floods, droughts, cyclones, heat and cold waves, in the coming years. Climatic changes could also affect human health, (e.g. increasing the number of cases of avian influenza, malaria, cholera, dengue fever) animals and have an impact on many types of eco-systems. Weather and climate effects key determinants of health – air, water, and food. They also influence the transmission of infectious diseases.

Climate change has deleterious impacts on sustainable development and economic growing seriously. In addition, policies to mitigate climate change (e.g. in energy, transport, urban planning sector) have a direct and important influence on health, e.g. through effects on local air pollution.

There is a need to focus on generating evidence on health and climate change, develop evidence-based policies to reduce emissions, slow down global warming, and increase the resilience of health systems in order to minimize the impact on health as a result of climate change.

It is critical to build the institutional capacity of the health sector (at provincial, district and local levels) in relation to extreme weather events to reinforce surveillance, early detection and response in the areas of infectious diseases, nutrition, respiratory diseases, water, and food safety. It is equally important that the provincial authorities are capable of generating and/or gathering intelligence and establishing early warning systems for climate-sensitive diseases, and in integrating such intelligence into existing health information management systems.

Improving evidence-based policies will lead to greater protection for health from climate change and raise the awareness of the public about adaptation to climate change and to adopt appropriate mitigation measures. Close coordination and cooperation between the Ministries of Health, Environment and Education and the Pakistan Department of Meteorology in issuing advisories and to handle the issue in a comprehensive way is essential.

## **Ongoing activities**

WHO is providing technical support to strengthen institutional capacities and promote the involvement of women and the local community in the proposed system by enhancing the capacity of participating communities to effectively monitor the quality of water sources affected by climate-related extreme events. These activities will ensure well-functioning and properly equipped water quality control facilities are in place in affected areas.

### **Planned activities**

Evidence-based assessment of health impacts on the most vulnerable victims (women, children, older people and the poor) of climate change will be conducted based on WHO guidelines of vulnerability and adaptation assessment. The assessment outcome will provide information for decision-makers on the extent and magnitude of likely health risks attributable to climate change, and priority policies and programmes to prevent and reduce the severity of future impacts. The assessment will focus on identifying populations vulnerable to current and possible future changes in the geographical range of climate-sensitive infectious diseases.

### **Related link**

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