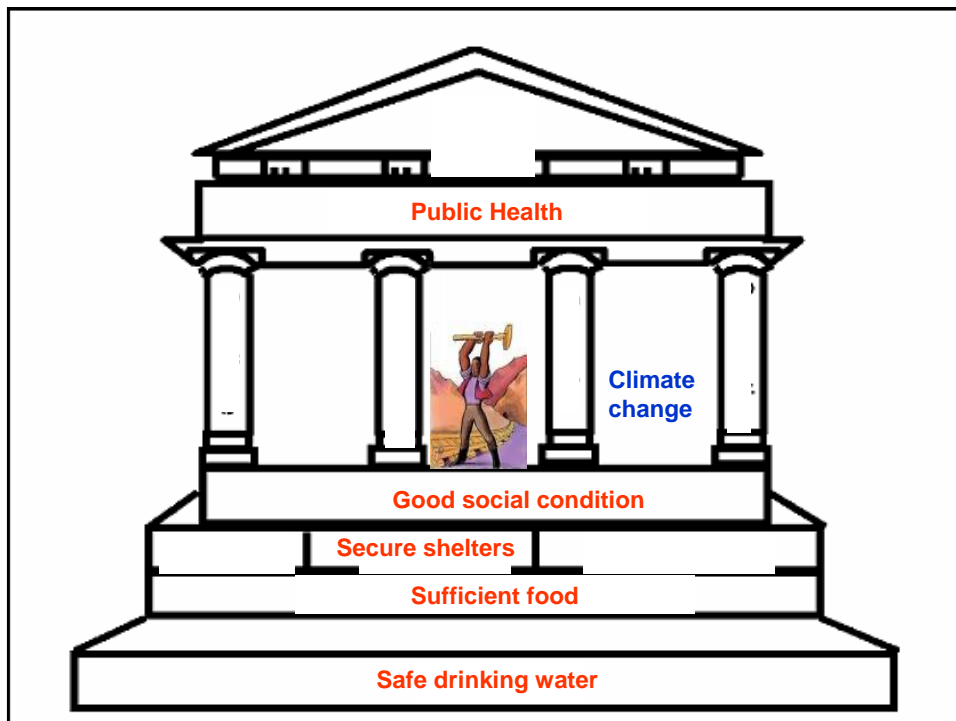
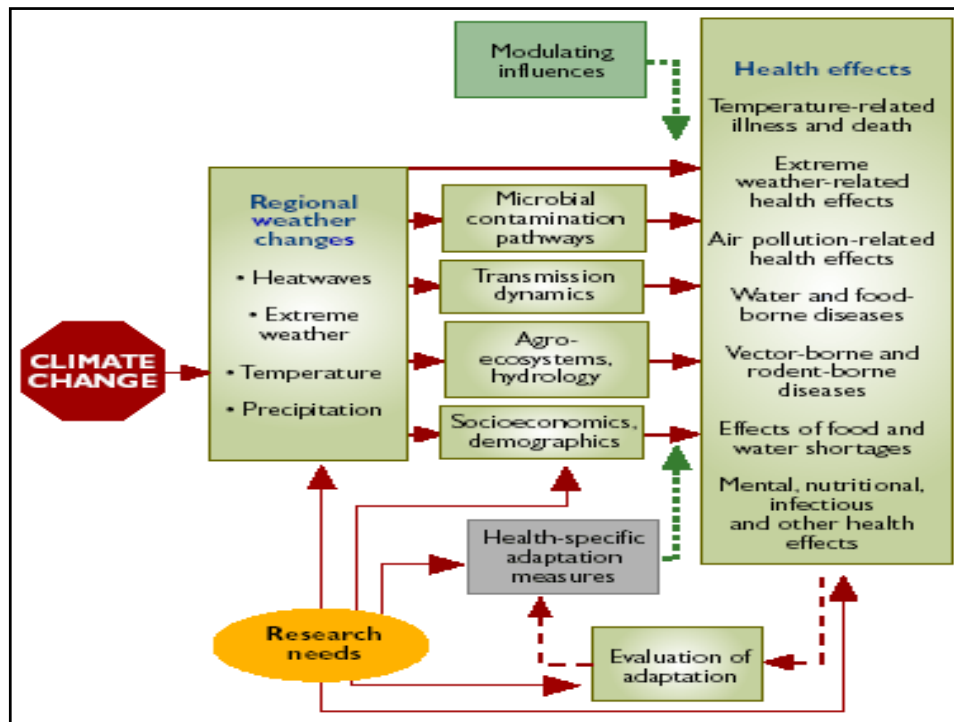


Adaptation to the threats of climate change in Health Sector

Dr. P.R.Wijesinghe
Consultant Epidemiologist
Epidemiology Unit , Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition





Vulnerability

- All are at risk
- Variable initial health risks
- Weak capacity to adapt – severe negative health outcomes
- Factors determining risks
 - Attributes of the person at risk
 - Age - elderly, children
 - Sex - women
 - Income - poor,
 - Disadvantaged – less educated
 - Disease status/disability
 - Place of residence
 - Broader socio environmental factors
 - Disaster preparedness
 - health sector response (weak public health systems)
 - Poor access to primary health care
 - environmental degradation
 - Programs to reduce determinants and outcome of climate change

Adaptation

- Adjustment which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities in natural or *human systems* in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects.
- **Types of adaptation**
 - anticipatory
 - autonomous
 - planned adaptation

Why do we need adaptation ?

- To reduce current vulnerability to the climate change that has already occurred
- To address projected health risks in the future

Adaptation policy and practices : options and constraints for the HS

- What is the current burden of climate sensitive health outcomes ?
- What is going to be the projected burden ?
 - Where, when, how
- How adequate and effective is the current response ?
- What modifications are needed to the current response ?
- Is the socio-economic and political milieu favorable for new policies, strategies & measures?
- What is the availability of resources to implement new policies, strategies & measures
 - Human, material, finances

Adaptation policy and practices : options and constraints for the HS

- How to develop effective use of health services for climate change concerns ?
 - Advocacy to mobilise political will for action
 - Public awareness
 - Social mobilisation: individual, health, non health sector, community, political leadership
 - Appropriate governance/management
 - Incorporating Health outcomes of CC into health policies and strategies
 - Ensuring preparedness and response at all levels
 - Individual level
 - Population level

Adaptation policy and practices : options and constraints for the HS

- Current burden for many outcomes –significant
 - Communicable diseases, nutrition
- Need to quantify the projected burden of health outcomes
 - Improving baseline disease surveillance data,
 - Correlation with climatologic data
 - Promotion of research for projections
- Strengthening existing public health services
 - Ability to focus on current concerns of climate change
 - Revising, re orientation, expansion
- Partnership with global network of disease surveillance
 - Role of IHR

Adaptation policy and practices : options and constraints for the HS

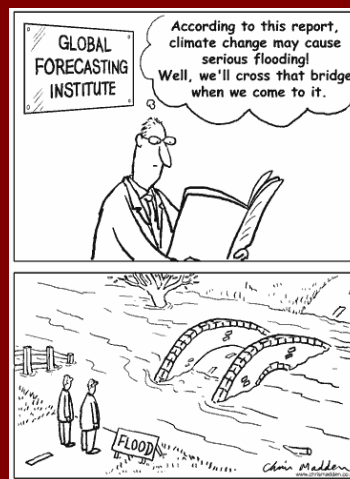
- Broadening available interventions coupled with forward planning & reorientation
 - to address additional burden and prioritisation
- Need to deviate from current short term risk management to long term planning for climate change
- Evaluation of the capacity to tackle projected risks
- Need based approach to interventions
- Access for those who need the most of it (access & equity)

Adaptation policy and practices : options and constraints for the HS

- Proactive adaptation policies, strategies and activities
- Plan of specific interventions and ongoing evaluation
- Higher degree of partnerships & coordinated efforts (intra and inter country)
 - determinants and interventions - cut across different scales
 - Ex; Water quality, food quality, environmental issues , urbanization
 - Ex: using agricultural practices to control malaria
 - International (Inter country)
 - Intra country (National, regional & divisional levels)

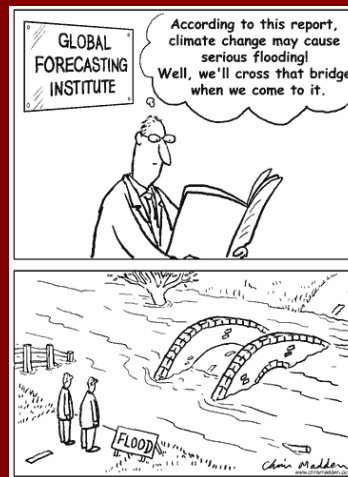
Some issues for consideration

- Are health impacts due to climate change a myth or a reality ?
 - awareness of the problem
- Is it a problem worth concern for the health sector ?
 - sense that problem matters
- Is our health system capable to mitigate impacts of such a phenomenon?
 - ability to act promptly
- Do we have the political will and other necessary support to implement adoptative measures ?



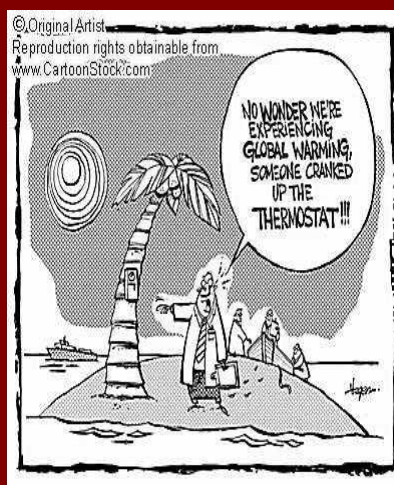
Some issues for consideration

- Will we be able to highlight priority activities
 - *Competing priorities*
- Are we too complacent?
 - *an inherent weakness*
- Will there be an impact due to population resistance, cultural and legal restrictions?
- Do we need to work out a way for participatory planning?
- Can we learn lessons from our current problems?
 - Dengue, viral hepatitis, leptospirosis outbreaks



Why are we able to sail through ?

- Resilient nature of the population
- High literacy
- Strong mass communication network
- Capable public health service
- Well established disease surveillance system
- Availability of interventions
 - Fine tuning to adaptative measures to CC
- Capable health man power & expertise
- Across sector operation - evolving





United we stand, divided we fall