

# Chapter 6

## Infectious Diseases and Climate Vulnerability in Morocco: Governance and Adaptation Options

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Climate change is expected to affect the distribution, prevalence and life cycle of several infectious diseases. This scenario is relevant to Morocco since the country is considered by many IPCC assessments reports as a climate change hotspot with a high vulnerability to many expected impacts. Given this existing vulnerability, this chapter aims to highlight relevant vector-borne diseases, the risks of their reemergence in many vulnerable regions and the pressing need to understand their dynamics within a context marked by knowledge gaps and limited scientific evidence; underline the problematic aspects of health adaptation to climate change and the current difficulties in terms of policy and governance to manage climate-health linkages; and finally undertake an assessment of Morocco's adaptive capacity from a health perspective and formulate recommendations for effective climate-health governance and policy.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The current realization that human beings need to be concerned about the only 'life-support system' that the Earth and its environment provide stems perhaps in part from the fact that, until fairly recently, the evolution of humankind was largely dependent on the quality of the environment and the resources it provides in terms of water, food, and favorable health conditions. These are as vital as ever, despite current levels of technology and apparent resilience in the face of often degraded environments in many parts of the world. Today, the necessary conditions for maintaining human security – i.e. water quality and quantity, food security, and health – are under threat as a result of numerous human-induced factors; among these, climate change is certainly one of the more durable aspects of anthropogenic disruptions to natural resources (Beniston 2010). It is currently recognized that with the constant increase of the planet's temperature, there are, and will be, more frequent and severe floods, droughts, storms, and heat waves; these changes to Earth's biophysical system will exacerbate and extend the rates and ranges of many diseases and overall contribute to poor health among all populations (Friel et al. 2011).

Therefore, coupled with other environmental risks, climate change poses a serious threat to the progress made towards global health and development goals in recent decades. This challenge will make efforts to ensure the conditions in which people can be healthy more difficult in a myriad of ways (Wiley 2010). Moreover, not only does climate change carry a direct and indirect health warning, it is already contributing towards widening the gap in health inequalities between people living in the developing and developed world. In other words, climate change health

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