

Health effects of climate change will be grave – Research findings

By Kofi Yeboah & Adwoa Amofa Osei
LEGON

CLIMATE change will have dire consequences on the health of Ghanaians and the country's development unless urgent steps are taken to address the phenomenon, recent researches have indicated.

The negative impact of climate change includes a high incidence of malaria and diarrhoea, the transmission of schistosomiasis and other

diseases, as well as development challenges.

This was made known by researchers at a dissemination workshop on "Climate Change Adaptation Research Training Capacity for Development" at the University of Ghana, yesterday.

It was organised by the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) of the university.

Malaria prevalence

In a presentation on "Climate change and malaria prevalence in coastal zones of Ghana", Dr Leonard Amekudzi of the Kwame Nkrumah

University of Science and Technology (KNUST) said climate change was likely to have a negative impact on malaria prevalence in the country.

He, however, noted that climate change challenge could be addressed through adaptation and mitigation measures.

He stressed the need to strengthen health institutions by giving them adequate staff and equipping them with facilities to enable them to deal effectively with emergencies.

Artisanal fishing

Making another presentation on, "Climate change and artisanal fishing in coastal communities", Dr Opoku Pabi of the University of Ghana said climate change was affecting the growth of fisheries, especially marine fisheries.

That is because the physiological processes of fish are hinged on the environment and so any change in climate may have a negative effect on fisheries.

Schistosomiasis

The Director of RIPS, Prof Samuel Codjoe, who made a presentation on, "Climate change/variability and schistosomiasis transmission in the Ga District, Ghana", said in 1964, before the construction of the Akosombo Dam, the prevalence of schistosomiasis was about 16 per cent, but that increased to about 81 per cent in 1971.

He said despite intervention measures to combat the water-borne parasitic disease, its prevalence was still high, adding that communities within the catchment area of the Densu tributary in the Ga District were mostly affected by the disease.

Drainage

One of the issues that generated interests among participants was the choice between open and close drainage systems in Ga Mashie.

Reacting to a research recommendation to maintain the open drainage system, an official of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA),

Nii Teiko Tagoe, said considering how 'tight' the area was, in view of population density, the open drainage system was not a better approach.



GN BANK Quick Read
Everywhere you want to be... The People's Bank...

Researches conducted by the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) of the University of Ghana indicate that climate change will have dire consequences on the health of Ghanaians and the country's development.

He, however, said the problem with the close drainage system was that people dumped rubbish into it, causing it to choke, thereby leading to floods during rainfall.

Writers' Email:
kofi.yeboah@graphic.com.gh /
adwofa@gmail.com



Some of the participants at the workshop in Accra. (INSET) Prof. Samuel Agyei-Mensah (right), Provost, College of Humanities, University of Ghana addressing participants at the workshop in Accra. Picture: SAMUEL TEI ADANO