

Jamaica's position on Climate Change

It is no secret that climate change is one of the largest threats facing our world today, yet it seems that international conversation seems to be centered around issues of terrorism and tense international relationships, with global warming and its effects often being cast aside. Similarly, climate change is often thought only to be detrimental to the surrounding environment, with greenhouse gas emissions having significant negative effects on agricultural industries worldwide. However, it is likely that global public health will suffer the biggest consequences of climate change in the long run due to the several direct and indirect crises that are projected to rise along with climate change. In fact, in just the last 30 years, over 150,000 lives have been claimed as a result of climate change or changes in precipitation patterns. The most dangerous effects of climate change on human health are increased thermal stress, flooding, and growth of infectious diseases. In the past few decades, these effects have been demonstrated through various natural disasters, epidemics and increased mortality rates due to heat related illnesses. This brings this issue to the forefront of discussion and causes countries like Jamaica to assess how their population will be affected by climate change.

In Jamaica, specifically, the growth of infectious diseases and their vector organisms is the primary concern regarding climate change and the health of the population. Climate change has not only caused increasing temperatures, but natural disasters like flooding due to increased amounts of precipitation. This has created an ideal environment for infectious diseases to multiply and spread. In Jamaica specifically, waterborne, foodborne and vector-borne illnesses, such as salmonella and cholera, are likely to be the largest detriment to human health as a result of climate change. These diseases specifically thrive in warm, wet environments and these areas are becoming more abundant, especially in the Caribbean. The recent outbreak of Zika in the southern hemisphere has also demonstrated the potential for epidemics environments like these have due to climate change. After recognizing the importance of this issue, Jamaica is then faced with the task of preventing and solving this issue.

Jamaica supports the actions taken by the World Health Organization which aim to raise awareness on the issue, network with other global health organizations, and strengthen health systems to accommodate anyone who falls ill to infectious disease, heat complications or other health effects of climate change. Jamaica also plans to promote scientific research that focuses on finding new, cleaner sources of energy and developing technology that reduces the release short lived climate pollutants into our atmosphere.

In conclusion, Jamaica recognizes the significance of climate change and the negative factors it contributes to global public health. To reduce these factors, Jamaica supports the approach of mitigation. By partnering with various global health organizations, Jamaica wants to provide more health benefits for people who already suffer from climate change related illnesses as well reduce the risk of these diseases altogether. By taking the small but influential steps towards cleaner energy, Jamaica will promote and help to fund housing, transportation, and energy sources that use clean energy as opposed to SLCPs. If executed effectively, these actions could not only benefit the people of Jamaica but set an example for the rest of the world to follow as climate change becomes a more prominent issue in other countries as well.