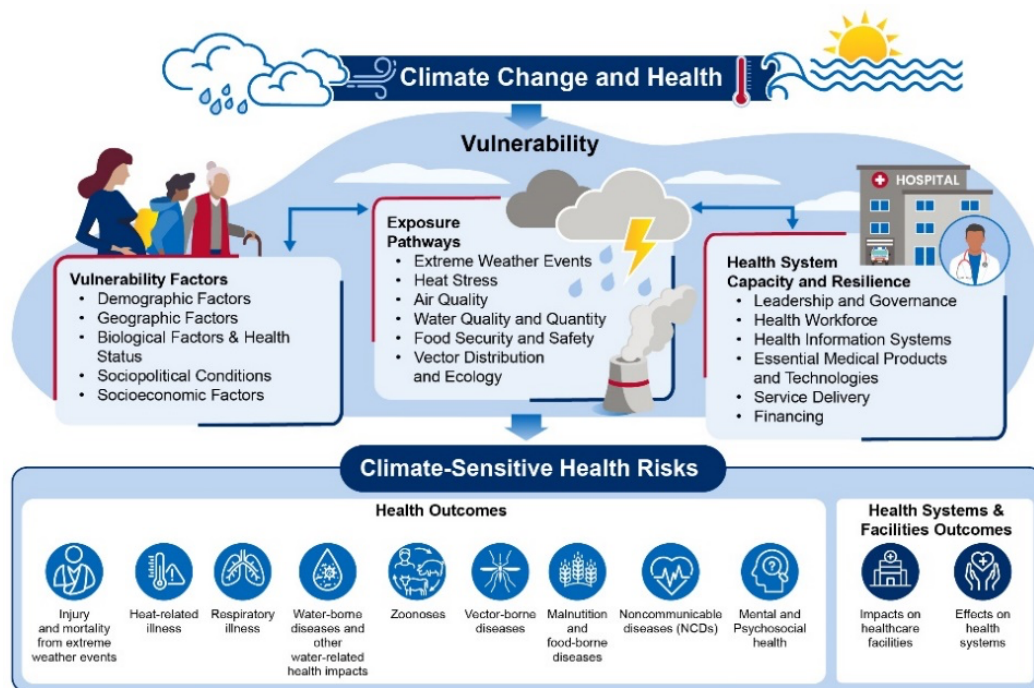


## Our Planet, Our Health: We have only one planet; our health depends on it

Climate change poses the most serious environmental and health crisis the world has ever faced.<sup>1</sup> Limiting further temperature increases and adapting to already unavoidable climatic change is essential to prevent further environmental degradation, safeguard livelihoods, and protect human health.<sup>2</sup>

Tajikistan is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the European and Central Asia region and has relatively low adaptive capacity.<sup>3</sup> It is a landlocked, mountainous country home to almost half of Central Asia's glaciers, which serve an important climatic role in retaining water, controlling flows, and regulating the climate in Central Asia.<sup>4</sup> The country is particularly vulnerable to climate change given its dependence on agriculture and hydropower, exposure to droughts and heat stress, and significant risk of floods and mudslides.<sup>5</sup> All these hazards pose threats to the health and well-being of the Tajik people, exacerbating vulnerabilities and disproportionately affecting women, children, poor communities, displaced peoples, older populations, and those with disabilities or underlying health conditions.



As climate change endangers Tajik habitats and livelihoods, infectious diseases may spread more easily and rapidly as demonstrated by COVID-19.<sup>6</sup> Increasingly erratic climate variability and extreme weather events may significantly impact the country's agropastoral productivity, leading to food and nutrition insecurity; while higher than average temperatures coupled with increased incidence of flooding may significantly increase the risk of waterborne disease.<sup>7</sup> Increased water scarcity will also have destabilizing effects on the country's hydropower-reliant energy security, which may result in downstream power disruptions or blackouts across homes, as well as clinics, labs, and hospitals.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, more frequent floods and mudslides may pose increased physical risks to the health sector, leading to disruption in medical supplies, damage to infrastructure, loss of medical records, and compromising accessibility to care.<sup>9</sup> Finally, many of these risks may significantly impact mental health and well-being. Studies indicate that climate events such as floods, droughts, mudslides, and fires cause anxiety and stress and exacerbate chronic mental illness.<sup>10</sup>

Without proactive climate adaptation and climate vulnerability mitigation, and a purposeful reduction in polluting activities, Tajiks may experience increased morbidity or mortality attributable to a changing climate.

How food is produced, what is consumed, and how much is lost or wasted all heavily shape the health of people and planet.<sup>11</sup> Evidence suggests that climate change is reducing the natural nutrient levels of important staple foods, with

<sup>1</sup> [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 6th Assessment Report – Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ibid](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Tajikistan | Climate Investment Funds](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ADB Working Paper Series Climate Change and International Migration: Evidence from Tajikistan](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ADB Climate Risk Country Profile: Tajikistan](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Lancet: COVID-19, climate change, and communities](#)

<sup>7</sup> [USAID Climate Risk Profile: Central Asia](#)

<sup>8</sup> [ADB Climate Risk Country Profile: Tajikistan](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Climate Risk Screening and Management Tools - Health Annex](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Policy brief on climate change and mental health/well-being](#)

<sup>11</sup> [EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report](#)

vitamin content and mineral levels dropping in correlation with rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels.<sup>12</sup> Building laboratory capacity, strengthening immunization services, and training health workers and communities on infection prevention control helps reduce disease transmission. Digital technology has been widely recognized as a transformative tool towards achieving sustainable and inclusive development.<sup>13</sup> Digital health improves communication, data collection and decision-making; safeguards personal information; links communities to the healthcare system to increase service utilization and; enables health worker capacity building from global experts. Digitalization reduces time-consuming paper-based processes and fuel intensive travel. Digitally transforming the health sector reduces greenhouse gases and creates more resilience to the effects of climate change.

Tajikistan is committed to improving the health and nutrition while building a more climate-resilient health system.<sup>14</sup> We have only one Tajikistan; our health depends on it.

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<sup>12</sup> [Carbon dioxide \(CO<sub>2</sub>\) levels this century will alter the protein, micronutrients, and vitamin content of rice grains with potential health consequences for the poorest rice-dependent countries \(science.org\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Accelerating National Digital Transformation Leadership Series Brief #1](#)

<sup>14</sup> [USAID Climate Change Impacts on Human Health and the Health Sector](#)