

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Discussions of current health status, nutritional status, illness status, disease rate, and the current health care delivery system are contained in this volume. The organizing principle of this health assessment is that a geographic distribution of diseases is present in Cameroon. Identification of the disease distribution is critical because many of the most significant diseases have either discrete foci or are more regionally distributed as a function of climate and terrain. Disease distribution is generally covariate with the nature, type and distribution of reservoirs, e.g., human, insect, animal, and transmission patterns, e.g. person-to-person, animal-to-person, insect-to-person. The variety and magnitude of the reservoirs and transmission patterns are substantial; nevertheless, discrete geographically based disease patterns are present and are discussed in this analysis.

The initial health status of Cameroon can be analyzed by examining overall health morbidity and mortality statistics within the country. These statistics are a general reflection of the aggregate health situation in the country and can be compared with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and with other low-income regions. Key demographic characteristics and disease rates are also compared to Established Market Economies (EME) so that Cameroonian values can be placed in perspective. A major project such as the Chad Export Project has the potential to both positively and negatively impact the aggregate health care status in Cameroon. This section discusses the health data currently available and relevant to the project. The linkages between health, the environment, and the project are explored in Section 7.0 of the Environmental Assessment (EA) (Dames & Moore, 1997). An overview of mitigation strategies is presented in Section 8.0 of the EA and presented in detail in the Cameroon Environmental Management Plan—Volume I.