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New Global Multidimensional Poverty Index Report Reveals Nearly 80% of the World's Poor Live in Regions Exposed to Climate Hazards

New York, 17 October 2025 – Nearly 8 in 10 people living in multidimensional poverty – 887 million out of 1.1 billion globally – are directly exposed to climate hazards such as extreme heat, flooding, drought, or air pollution, according to a new report released today by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford.

The 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report “Overlapping Hardships: Poverty and Climate Hazards”, released ahead of the COP30 climate summit in Brazil, presents new evidence that the climate crisis is reshaping global poverty. By overlaying climate hazard data with multidimensional poverty data for the first time, the findings reveal a world where poverty is not just a standalone socio-economic issue but one that is deeply interlinked with planetary pressures and instability.

Exposure to climate hazards likely exacerbates the daily challenges faced by people living in poverty, reinforcing and deepening their disadvantages. The report finds that among those assessed to be living in acute multidimensional poverty – spanning health, education, and living standards – an overwhelming 651 million endure two or more climate hazards, while 309 million face three or four hazards simultaneously.

“Our new research shows that to address global poverty and create a more stable world for everyone, we must confront the climate risks endangering nearly 900 million poor people,” said Haoliang Xu, UNDP Acting Administrator. “When world leaders meet in Brazil for the Climate Conference, COP30, next month, their national climate pledges must revitalize the stagnating development progress that threatens to leave the world’s poorest people behind.”

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The Burden of Concurrent Poverty and Climate Hazards

The findings emphasize that poor people globally are often confronting multiple, concurrent environmental challenges rather than a single one in isolation.

- Of the 887 million poor people exposed to at least one climate hazard, 651 million face two or more concurrent hazards.
- Alarmingly, 309 million poor people live in regions exposed to three or four overlapping climate hazards while experiencing acute multidimensional poverty. These individuals face a "triple or quadruple burden," often possessing limited assets and minimal access to social protection systems, amplifying the negative effects of the shocks.
- Individually, the most widespread hazards affecting poor people globally are high heat (608 million) and air pollution (577 million). Flood-prone regions are home to 465 million poor people, while 207 million live in areas affected by drought.

"This report shows where the climate crisis and poverty are notably converging. Understanding where the planet is under greatest strain and where people face additional burdens created by climate challenges is essential to creating mutually reinforcing development strategies that put humanity at the centre of climate action," said co-author, Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.

Geographical and Economic Hotspots

The burden of exposure is distributed unevenly across regions and income groups.

- South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are identified as global hotspots for these compounded hardships, accounting for the largest numbers of poor people living in regions affected by climate hazards (380 million and 344 million respectively).
- In South Asia, the exposure is nearly universal; fully 99.1 percent of poor people in the region are exposed to one or more climate shocks (380 million people), with 91.6 percent (351 million) facing two or more, much higher than any other world region. Despite making momentous and historic strides in poverty reduction, South Asia must also accelerate climate action.



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- Across income groups, lower-middle-income countries bear the greatest burden of exposure of poor people to climate hazards, both in terms of absolute number and high proportion. About 548 million poor people in lower-middle-income countries are estimated to be exposed to at least one climate hazard, representing 61.8% of global poor people who are exposed to any climate hazard. Critically, over 470 million poor people in lower-middle-income countries confront two or more, concurrent climate hazards simultaneously.

Projected Future Inequity

“The burdens identified are not limited to the present but are expected to intensify in the future,” said Pedro Conceição, Director of the Human Development Report Office, UNDP. Analysis of temperature projection data reveals that countries with higher current levels of multidimensional poverty are predicted to experience the greatest increases in temperatures by the end of this century.

These findings highlight the urgent need for global action to address the unequal burden of climate-related hazards on people living in multidimensional poverty. Confronting these overlapping risks requires moving from recognition to action, emphasizing the need for climate-resilient poverty reduction strategies, strengthened local capacities for adaptation, and scaled international redistribution and cooperative finance mechanisms.

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About UNDP: UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow on social media at @UNDP.



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About OPHI: The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) is a research centre based in the University of Oxford working on the multidimensional measurement of poverty and wellbeing to help guide effective policymaking around the world.