Infographic

The health toll of climate change is escalating, the global response is failing to keep up

In its 10th year, the Lancet Countdown's findings are stark: real progress in clean energy, adaptation, and evidence is being outpaced by faster-growing harm

Health harms from climate change are growing faster than climate action, creating a global health emergency

Heat-related deaths are at a record high, driven by climate change

Human-caused climate change was responsible for 71·5% of all heat-related deaths in 2023.

Global heat-related deaths, 2023

Average heat-related mortality rose 35·8% between 2006–15 and 2016–23.

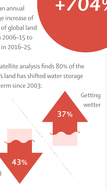
2006–15: **398 400 per year**

2016–23: **540 800 per year**

Extreme drought nears record levels and the increase is accelerating

In 2025, 51·8% of the world's land area experienced at least 1 month of extreme drought.

Global land area experiencing drought



The pace of this increase has itself accelerated by 704%.

+704%

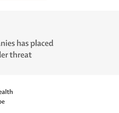
From an annual average increase of 0·35% of global land area in 2006–15 to 2·81% in 2016–25.

The increasing economic toll amplifies global inequities

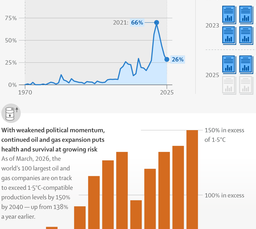
In 2025, heat exposure caused the loss of 573 billion potential working hours and US$1·07 trillion in potential income loss — the third year running above US$1 trillion.

Potential labour hours lost, billions

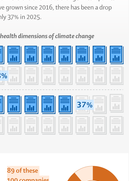
Potential income lost, trillions US$



These losses are unequally distributed. Agriculture is the hardest-hit sector, accounting for US$403·9 bn of potential income loss worldwide.



New satellite analysis finds 80% of the world's land has shifted water storage long-term since 2003:



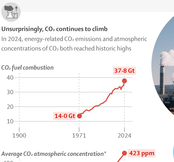
Read the Commission report: Review the complete analysis, insights, and supporting evidence at **www.thelancet.com**

Backtracking by countries and companies has placed the modest progress seen to date under threat

Political and institutional engagement with health and climate change is reversing across the globe

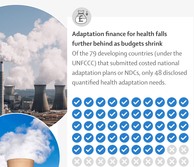
The share of countries mentioning the health–climate link in their UN General Debate statements has fallen for 4 consecutive years, from a peak of 66% in 2021 to 26% in 2025.

Proportion of countries mentioning the health–climate link



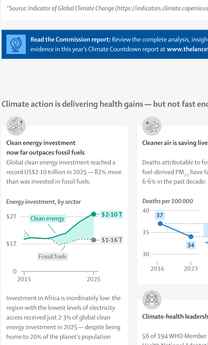
Corporate engagement is following the a similar pattern. Although mentions of the health dimensions of climate change in companies' UN Global Compact have grown since 2016, there has been a drop from 58% in 2023 to only 37% in 2025.

Companies mentioning health dimensions of climate change



With weakened political momentum, continued oil and gas expansion puts health and survival at growing risk

As of March, 2026, the world's 100 largest oil and gas companies are on track to exceed 1·5°C-compatible production levels by 150% by 2040 — up from 138% a year earlier.



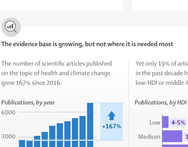
89 of these 100 companies have increased their planned production since 2016.

This continued expansion is reflected in the wider energy mix: fossil fuels still supply 80·7% of global total energy supply — with minimal change over the past three decades.

Total energy supplied by fossil fuels

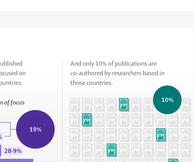
Renewables' share of electricity generation continues to climb and has surged from 5·5% in 2016 to 13·5% in 2023.

Electricity generation from renewable sources



However, electricity is only about 17% of the total energy supply, so this increase barely dents the fossil fuel share of global energy.

Proportion of total global energy supply, 2023



Unsurprisingly, CO_2 continues to climb

In 2024, energy-related CO_2 emissions and atmospheric concentrations of CO_2 both reached historic highs

CO_2 fuel combustion

*Average CO_2 atmospheric concentration**

**Source: Indicator of Global Climate Change (https://indicators.climate.copernicus.eu/)*

Adaptation finance for health falls further behind as budgets shrink

Of the 73 developing countries (under the UNFCCC) that submitted costed national adaptation plans or NDCs, only 48 disclosed quantified health adaptation needs.

Collectively they need US$3·2 billion a year for 2025–2030 — but international finance for health adaptation reached just US$1·1 billion in 2024.

Read the Commission report: Review the complete analysis, insights, and supporting evidence in this year's Climate Countdown report at **www.thelancet.com**

NDC=Nationally Determined Contribution

Climate action is delivering health gains — but not fast enough

Clean energy investment now far outpaces fossil fuels

Global clean energy investment reached a record US$2·10 trillion in 2025 — 82% more than was invested in fossil fuels:

Energy investment, by sector

Investment in Africa is inordinately low: the region with the lowest levels of electricity access received just 2·3% of global clean energy investment in 2025 — despite being home to 20% of the planet's population

Cleaner air is saving lives, but not universally

Deaths attributable to fossil fuel-derived $PM_{2.5}$ have fallen 6·6% in the past decade:

Deaths per 100 000

But, of 140 countries assessed...

Climate-health leadership is growing

56 of 194 WHO Member States now report having a Health National Adaptation Plan, up from only 14 in 2015.

49% of WHO Member States have at least one health surveillance system incorporating climate information.

The evidence base is growing, but not where it is needed most

The number of scientific articles published on the topic of health and climate change grew 167% since 2016.

Publications, by year

Yet only 19% of articles published in the past decade have focused on low-HDI or middle-HDI countries.

Publications, by HDI region of focus

And only 10% of publications are co-authored by researchers based in those countries.

Climate change must be acknowledged and addressed as a global health emergency to protect health and survival

Six priorities for a health-centred response

1. Recognise and respond to the health emergencies of climate change through established WHO and UN mechanisms, and develop a new WHO instrument to formally recognise and address climate change as a global health emergency
2. Align global governance and international systems around climate change and health as a top priority.
3. Prioritise and promote the urgent, just, and equitable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as a global health imperative.
4. Make health and wellbeing improvements as core objectives and key measures of success across all climate action.
5. Establish a global climate change and health data commons as a global public good.
6. Increase the provision of grant-based and highly concessional climate change and health finance, and meet international obligations.

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LANCET COUNTDOWN TRACKING PROGRESS ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
In collaboration with The Lancet
A decade tracking progress on health and climate change