

2025 CLIMATE AND HEALTH POLICY PRIORITIES FOR KENYA

This document summarises key priority areas of focus for Kenya, supported by evidence from the 2025 Global Report of the Lancet Countdown.

DEVELOP AND FUND A NATIONAL HEAT-HEALTH ACTION PLAN TO PROTECT HEALTH AND LIVELIHOODS

- 1 Developing and funding a National Heat-Health Action Plan will enable Kenya to protect people from rising heat-related risks. The plan should include forecast-based heat alerts, integration of heat-health surveillance into disease monitoring, occupational safety measures for outdoor workers, and nationwide public awareness campaigns to promote protective behaviours.

Extreme heat is intensifying across Kenya, threatening health, productivity, and wellbeing. In 2024, people in Kenya were exposed to 11.5 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, almost none on those days would have been expected to occur without climate change. (**Indicator 1.1.1**). Prolonged exposure leads to heat stroke, dehydration, and cardiovascular strain, particularly among infants, older adults, and outdoor labourers. It also limits physical activity: in 2024, people experienced 188 additional hours of moderate heat stress risk during light outdoor exercise compared with 1990–1999 (**Indicator 1.1.2**).

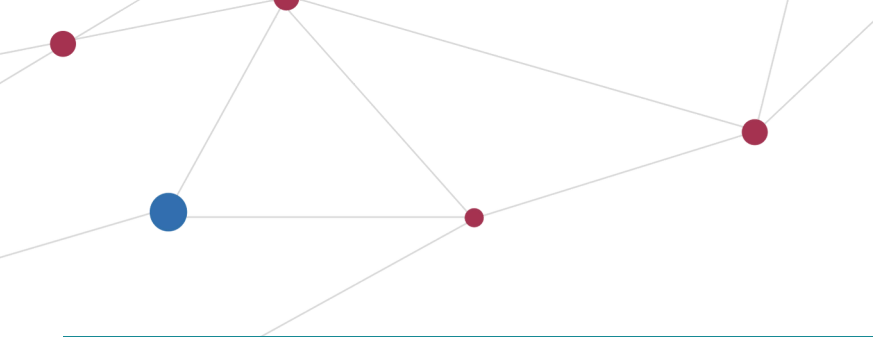
Extreme heat is also threatening the health of workers, and undermining their productivity, thereby affecting livelihoods. In 2024, 1.15 billion potential labour hours were lost in Kenya, 186% more than in 1990–1999, with agriculture (74%) and construction (17.5%) the most affected sectors (**Indicator 1.1.3**). The annual economic value of heat-related mortality losses among those over 65 reached US\$ 0.37 billion, equivalent to 22,819 average incomes, up 283% since 2000–2004 (**Indicator 4.1.2**).

Kenya's Climate Change and Health Strategy (2023–2027)¹ recognises rising heatwaves as a growing health threat; building on it, a funded Heat-Health Action Plan would turn warnings into early action by delivering forecast-based heat alerts, embedding heat-health surveillance in national disease monitoring, enforcing heat-safety protocols for outdoor and informal-sector workers, running nationwide public awareness campaigns, and upgrading health facilities with passive-cooling designs, reliable power, and surge capacity. This approach would reduce preventable deaths, protect productivity, and safeguard development gains as heat intensifies.

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL FORECASTING AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS FOR EXTREME DROUGHT AND FLOODS

- 2 To reduce the health and livelihood impacts of worsening droughts and floods, Kenya needs to strengthen national early warning systems and community preparedness. Integrating climate forecasting with health, water, and agricultural systems will enable timely action and protect vulnerable communities.

Kenya is increasingly facing both prolonged droughts and severe floods- two extremes that are leading to death and disease, devastating lives and livelihoods. The area experiencing at least one month of extreme drought per year has increased 89% from 1951–1960 to 2020–2024. Between 2020–2024, 30% of Kenya's land area faced at least one month of extreme drought annually (**Indicator 1.2.2**)



Droughts are also intensifying wildfire risk: between 2020–2024, people in Kenya experienced an average of 71 days per year classified as high wildfire risk, a 25% increase compared with 2003–2012 (**Indicator 1.2.1**). Meanwhile, flood risk is rising sharply. In 2024, 43,389 people lived less than one metre above sea level, leaving them highly vulnerable to inundation and displacement (**Indicator 2.2.4**). Floods damage infrastructure, spread waterborne diseases, and disrupt healthcare delivery, especially in low-lying regions.

Developing a coordinated national drought and flood resilience framework, with integrated forecasting, community-based preparedness, and health-focused early warning, can reduce loss of life, safeguard livelihoods, and strengthen Kenya's resilience to future climate shocks. Linking meteorological and health information systems enables timely alerts, while cross-sector emergency response mechanisms, health worker training, and clear communication with vulnerable populations ensure early action. Dedicated funding for forecasting, preparedness, and response systems will sustain capacity and protect communities from recurring droughts and floods.

ACCELERATE THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION TO REDUCE AIR POLLUTION AND IMPROVE HEALTH

3 Accelerating Kenya's transition to clean, renewable energy will reduce reliance on biomass and fossil fuels, lower air pollution, and protect health. Expanding access to renewable energy infrastructure, particularly for households and transport, can cut harmful indoor air pollution, strengthen energy security, and deliver major health and economic co-benefits.

Kenya has made important progress toward a low-carbon future, leading efforts on energy transition in the region. In 2024, the country's low-carbon transition preparedness increased by 11% from 2023 (**Indicator 4.2.4**). Renewable energy now contributes 16.9% of total energy supply (**Indicator 3.1.1**). However, fossil fuel use remains high: in 2022, fossil fuels accounted for 100% of all road transport energy (**Indicator 3.1.3**). At the household level, dependence on biomass continues to dominate, with 93.5% of energy coming from biomass and only 2.8% from electricity (**Indicator 3.1.2**). This reliance exposes millions to dangerous indoor air pollution linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. It also makes local energy access vulnerable to volatile international fossil fuel prices.

Kenya's energy sector is already making significant strides toward universal electricity access, clean cooking solutions, and renewable energy development.² Building on this progress, accelerating the transition requires redirecting fossil fuel subsidies to clean energy incentives, providing credit for local renewable ventures, and funding training for installation and maintenance. These actions empower local communities, spur private investment in off-grid solar and clean cooking, and build a resilient, decentralized energy system, directly translating into cleaner air, better health, and sustainable economic growth.

Accelerating Action

Urgently strengthening early warning systems for heat, droughts, and floods; enhancing surveillance and prevention of climate-sensitive infectious diseases; and accelerating the transition to clean, renewable energy can reduce preventable deaths, curb air pollution, and build resilience across communities and essential services. Increased investment in adaptation and health-protective infrastructure will further safeguard lives and support long-term wellbeing.

References

1. <https://hennet.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Kenya-Climate-Change-and-Health-Strategy-2024-2029-FINAL.pdf>
2. <https://www.iea.org/news/kenyas-energy-sector-is-making-strides-toward-universal-electricity-access-clean-cooking-solutions-and-renewable-energy-development>

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