LANCET COUNTDOWN: HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

TUVALU

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2025

Health and climate change in Tuvalu

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the evolving relationship between climate and health through 50+ peer-reviewed indicators. Since 2016, it has provided peer-reviewed annual assessments, published in *The Lancet*. The 2025 report reveals the grave health toll of climate change inaction: fossil fuel dependence, rising emissions, and delayed adaptation are costing millions of lives. Recent climate policy rollbacks further threaten our ability to respond to the accelerating crisis, undermining progress towards a healthy future.

This document highlights key country-level findings from the 2025 Lancet Countdown report for Tuvalu, showing that:

In Tuvalu, populations are increasingly exposed to extreme heat, contributing to rising cases of heat-related illness and mortality, and undermining livelihoods and wellbeing

Communities in Tuvalu face growing health risks from sea-level rise, including direct impacts such as injury and waterborne disease, and indirect effects like displacement and food insecurity.

With the threats of climate change growing, protecting people's health and survival demands simultaneous and unprecedented efforts to advance adaptation and mitigation, and requires an "all hands on deck" approach.

Heat and Health

Exposure to high temperatures threatens lives and health, increasing the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with preexisting conditions, face the greatest risks. In Tuvalu, heatwave exposure has risen above global averages, placing growing pressure on health systems.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HEAT

Heat exposure limits labour productivity, undermining livelihoods and weakening the social determinants of health, such as income, nutrition, and access to essential services. This not only affects individual wellbeing but also places added strain on public health systems and economic stability.

45.9 In 2024, people in Tuluva were exposed to 45.9 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, any (100%) would not have been expected to occur without climate change. (Indicator 1.1.1)

Rising temperatures threaten the health benefits associated with outdoor physical activity. In 2024, individuals experienced over 220 more hours per person during which ambient heat would have posed a moderate or higher risk of heat stress if undertaking moderate outdoor physical activity (e.g., running), relative to the 1990–1999 baseline average. (Indicator 1.1.2)

In 2024, heat exposure resulted in a loss of nearly 660,000 potential labour hours, 64% more than the 1990-1999 annual average. Workers in the agricultural sector bore the brunt of this with 50% of these losses. Losses in agriculture increased 78% since the 1990s. (Indicator 1.1.3)

The potential income lost from labour capacity reduction due to extreme heat was US$14.7 billion in 2024 in the SIDS region. Workers in the agricultural and construction sectors were severely affected, incurring 31% and 32% of the respective losses in 2024. (Indicator 4.1.3)

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Sea Level Rise and Migration

Communities in Tuvalu face growing health risks from sea-level rise, including direct impacts such as injury and waterborne disease, and indirect effects like displacement and loss of access to essential services.

4,000 PERSONS which make up around 42% of the population were living within 1 metre above sea level in 2024. (Indicator 2.3.3)

The sea surface temperature in coastal areas of Tuvalu were 0.9C higher in 2024 compared to 1981-2010. (Indicator 1.4.)

FALEPILI UNION TREATY

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union Treaty is a bilateral agreement that focuses on the migration of Tuvaluans due to the effects of climate events. Signed in 2023, this treaty allows up to 280 Tuvaluans per year to be issued an Australian permanent visa. The treaty underscores the existential threat climate change poses to small island nations, where rising seas and intensifying climate events are making entire communities uninhabitable.

Data Scarcity and Importance of Local Data Sources

Low data availability is one of the key challenges in measuring and monitoring climate change and health impacts in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Global datasets, particularly gridded satellite monitored data, are often of too coarse resolution for small countries, and can therefore not be used. Many modelling models, such as for greenhouse gas emissions, are also often not suitable to run over very small areas, further limiting the available data. For a large proportion of indicators in the 2024 SIDS regional report (39 out of 59), data was available for some of the larger islands but only 13 had suitable data for over 30% of the countries in this region. This was true for both modelled and reported data, highlighting both technical limitations but also a lack of monitoring and reporting to international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO).

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