ETHIOPIA

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2026

Health and Climate Change in Ethiopia

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the connections between health and climate change. In its tenth iteration, the 2026 Global Report shows that the health impacts of climate change have escalated, and frequently accelerated, in the decade since the Paris Agreement came into force.

This document draws on findings from the 2026 Lancet Countdown Global Report to present key insights for Ethiopia.

Increasing heat exposure is affecting vulnerable populations and workers in Ethiopia, with consequences for health, labour capacity, livelihoods and income.

Extreme drought has become substantially more widespread in Ethiopia, threatening water availability, food security and livelihoods.

Limited household electricity use and reliance on polluting fuels pose substantial health risks in Ethiopia, while insufficient consumption of nutritious foods contributes to preventable mortality, highlighting the need for cleaner energy and improved access to affordable, diverse and healthy diets.

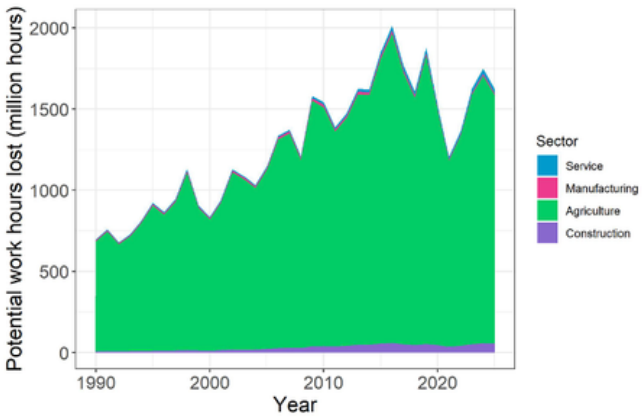
Heat and Health

Exposure to high temperatures increases the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing conditions, face the greatest risks.

Children under one year of age and adults over 65 in Ethiopia each experienced approximately 6 additional heatwave days annually between 2021 and 2025 compared with 1986–2005, reaching an average of over 8 heatwave days per year for both groups. (Indicator 1.1.1)

The average annual monetised value of heat-related mortality among people aged over 65 in Ethiopia was US$1.76 billion between 2021 and 2025, equivalent to approximately 101,000 average annual incomes. This was a 285% increase compared with 2000–2004. (Indicator 4.1.2)

Annual potential work hours lost, disaggregated by economic sector. Ethiopia, 1990-2025.



Heat exposure caused an average annual loss of 1.64 billion potential labour hours in Ethiopia between 2016 and 2025, approximately 94% higher than the annual average in the 1990s.
However, potential labour hours lost per worker declined slightly from 35.3 hours annually in the 1990s to 33.4 hours between 2016 and 2025. The increase in total losses therefore reflects changes in the size of the exposed workforce as well as heat-related labour impacts. (Indicator 1.1.3)

Heat-related labour capacity reduction in Ethiopia caused an estimated potential earnings loss of approximately US$511 million in 2025, equivalent to 0.47% of national GDP.
Agriculture accounted for approximately 88% of these losses. (Indicator 4.1.3)

LANCET COUNTDOWN: HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

Drought

Drought threatens water availability, food security and livelihoods, with consequences for health and wellbeing. In Ethiopia, extreme drought has become substantially more widespread.

An average of 65% of Ethiopia's land area experienced at least one month of extreme drought annually between 2021 and 2025, compared with 11% in 1981–1990. (Indicator 1.2.2)

Energy, Food Systems and Health

Reliance on polluting fuels contributes to harmful air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and premature mortality. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Ethiopia's annual mean concentration of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) was 22 μg/m³, more than four times the WHO annual guideline of 5 μg/m³. Insufficient consumption of nutritious foods also contributes to substantial diet-related mortality. Expanding household electrification powered by renewable electricity, alongside improving access to affordable, diverse and nutritious diets, can protect health while supporting more sustainable energy and food systems.

Electricity accounted for only 1.8% of household energy use in Ethiopia in 2023, while 97.8% came from solid biofuels. (Indicator 3.1.2)

Almost all electricity generated in Ethiopia in 2023 came from low-carbon sources (99.99%). (Indicator 3.1.1)

No electricity use was recorded in Ethiopia's road transport energy in 2023. (Indicator 3.1.3)

In 2023, approximately 44,000 deaths in Ethiopia were associated with insufficient consumption of nutritious plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds. A further 1,700 deaths were associated with excessive consumption of dairy, red meat and processed meat. Improving access to affordable, diverse and nutritious foods is therefore a critical public health priority. (Indicator 3.3.2)

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with food consumption in Ethiopia increased by 12% between 2016 and 2023. Improving food-system sustainability alongside access to nutritious diets can support both health and climate goals. (Indicator 3.3.1)

Romanello M, Walawender M, Israelsson J et al. The 2026 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: A decade of escalating health harms and a decisive moment for all. The Lancet 2026; published online October 2026. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(26)01779-4