



for every child

# Climate, Energy and Environment

The worst impacts of climate change are not inevitable.

**E**nvironmental crisis brings death, injury and trauma, and no one is more vulnerable than children. Today, nearly 160 million children live in high or extremely high drought severity zones, and over half a billion children live in extremely high flood occurrence zones. Rising sea levels, severe weather events, droughts and flooding have dramatic, devastating effects on the environment and are projected to pose grave risks for children over the coming decades. Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people around the world, damaging their health, threatening development gains and raising the risks of violence and conflict.

- Weather-related disasters increase the risk for girls to drop out of school and be forced into marriages, trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Almost one in seven of the world's children, 300 million, live in areas with the most toxic levels of outdoor air pollution – six or more times higher than international guidelines.
- Toxic air, caused largely by carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases, has grave consequences for young children, contributing to the deaths of around 600,000 children under-five every year due to pneumonia and other respiratory problems.

Extreme weather can cause people to suffer whether from sudden climate-related events like cyclones or slow-onset climate change that also results in resource scarcity and pressures on vulnerable families.



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## UNICEF in Action

Across 190 countries and territories, UNICEF is working with governments, the private sector, community organizations, schools, families and children to transition to a more resilient and sustainable world. UNICEF is focused on scaling sustainable access to safe water and sanitation, reducing disruptions to education and health services in times of disaster, and helping governments and local communities develop action plans to manage the risks children face.

UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) team has been an integral part of UNICEF's climate, energy and environment

## About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit [unicefusa.org](https://www.unicefusa.org).

work. UNICEF continues to expand its use of solar technology for water pumping in WASH programs to improve the resilience and sustainability of water supply systems and reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. For example, as seen in Mozambique, UNICEF-supported solar water systems continued to function during the Cyclone Idai flooding event, unlike many handpump systems and those relying on the electricity grid.

Air pollution is another climate-related risk to the health of children that UNICEF is addressing. In the world's coldest capital, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the "Designing the 21st Century Ger" initiative aims to reduce coal consumption and improve air quality for families living in gers (traditional nomadic homes). UNICEF is planning a human-centered design project with multiple partners to support ger insulation, increase access to clean-burning fuels and promote alternative heating and cooking methods that do not rely on fuel.

## 2019 UNICEF Climate Change Snapshot

In 2019, UNICEF:

- UNICEF supported the construction of 1,286 solar water systems in a total of 40 countries.
- 4.5 million beneficiaries of directly supported water systems were using water from climate-resilient systems, or 24% of safe water beneficiaries.
- 56 UNICEF country offices engaged in child-inclusive, climate-resilience programs.
- 36 countries were implementing community-level water safety plans to monitor and manage contamination risks, including those posed by climate change, in most cases with direct community support. More than 9,000 communities are now estimated to be covered by water safety plans. ●

## What is UNICEF doing to reduce its own carbon footprint?

UNICEF is dedicated to environmental sustainability in its own operations, and is working to transform how and where it works to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.

UNICEF has established a dedicated internal fund to support this process, which also includes reducing water and energy consumption, paper use, and waste.

UNICEF has already begun implementing solutions to reduce its carbon footprint

in more than 70 offices worldwide by using energy efficient lighting, heating, ventilation/cooling systems and water efficient fixtures, as well as through solar powered water heating and energy systems and more. An increasing number of UNICEF offices are running on solar power, including in Jordan, Zimbabwe and India, with the Haiti office generating 100 percent of its power from the sun.



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