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News

Climate change

Twelve countries on climate change hit-list



Evan Schneider/UN Library

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JOHANNESBURG, 8 July 2009

The World Bank has made a list of the five main threats arising from climate change: droughts, floods, storms, rising sea levels, and greater uncertainty in agriculture. Four of the world's poorest nations top the [list of the 12 countries](#) at the highest risk.

Malawi, a low-income southern African country where most people live in rural areas and earn US\$975 or less per year, is most susceptible to droughts, which are likely to become more frequent and intense. It has had two serious droughts in the past 20 years and a prolonged dry spell in 2004.

Bangladesh heads the list of countries most at risk of flooding. Increasing glacial melt from the Himalayan ranges as a result of rising global temperatures is set to swell the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers and their hundreds of tributaries, flooding 30-70 percent of the country each year as the water makes its way to the Bay of Bengal in the south, where the coast is also vulnerable to flooding from rising sea levels.

Four of the world's poorest nations top the list of the 12 countries at the highest risk

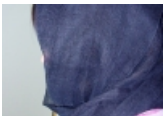
Vietnam is most threatened by rising sea levels: up to 16 percent of its area, 35 percent of its people, and 35 percent of its gross domestic product could be hard hit if the sea level rises by five metres, according to another World Bank study.

Most of Sudan, Africa's largest country, is arid land or desert, and most at risk of food deficits resulting from the impact of climate change on agriculture. It lies in the Sahel, a region

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described as the most vulnerable in the world to droughts by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), an international scientific body.

The Philippines, a middle-income country in Southeast Asia consisting of over 7,000 islands, leads the list of nations most in danger of facing frequent and more intense storms. In 2008 it was one of three countries hit by the most disasters, according to the Brussels-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters.

Here is a look at countries most at risk of the five threats:

Six Climate Threats, and the 12 Countries Most at Risk

	Low Income		Middle Income	
Drought	Flood	Storm	Coastal 1m	Agriculture
Malawi	Bangladesh	Philippines	All low-lying Island states	Sudan
Ethiopia	China	Bangladesh	Vietnam	Senegal
Zimbabwe	India	Madagascar	Egypt	Zimbabwe
India	Cambodia	Vietnam	Tunisia	Mali
Mozambique	Mozambique	Moldova	Indonesia	Zambia
Niger	Laos	Mongolia	Mauritania	Morocco
Mauritania	Pakistan	Haiti	China	Niger
Eritrea	Sri Lanka	Samoa	Mexico	India
Sudan	Thailand	Tonga	Myanmar	Malawi
Chad	Vietnam	China	Bangladesh	Algeria
Kenya	Benin	Honduras	Senegal	Ethiopia
Iran	Rwanda	Fiji	Libya	Pakistan

Source: World Bank

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