

# Risks from extreme weather are 'significant and increasing'

27 November 2014



Human societies are not resilient to extreme weather, according to a new report released by the Royal Society today.

Human exposure to extreme weather is set to increase with continued changes in global climate and population size, location and age. The Resilience to Extreme Weather [report](#) identifies the regions most vulnerable to floods, droughts and heatwaves over the coming decades and makes key recommendations for improving societal resilience.

Compiled using the latest scientific evidence, including expertise from the University of Bristol's Cabot Institute member Professor Paul Bates, the report assesses the impact of extreme weather on communities around the world using mapped climate and population projections. It stresses that the combined impact of climate and demographic changes need to be accounted for when building resilience.

Speaking from the report launch event in Bangalore, India, Professor Bates, a member of

the report working group, said: "For the first time this report makes clear that global society is not resilient to the extreme weather that we experience now, and that in the future, with population and [climate change](#), we will be even more threatened."

The report calls for action at all levels of government – international, national and local – to reduce people's exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather now and in the future. In 2015 important international agreements on climate change, disaster-risk reduction and sustainable development will be reached. These agreements and their implementation present an opportunity to develop a coherent strategy to build resilience and will be more effective if based on robust evidence.

Professor Bates emphasizes the need for action: "Importantly the report makes a number of practical suggestions, such as encouraging businesses to report exposure to natural hazards in their annual accounts, that will start to address this situation."

The report highlights the current failure of global financial systems to recognize the risks posed by extreme weather. It calls for reform of financial regulation, with institutions and businesses assessing and reporting their exposure to extreme weather in order to build resilience in the global financial system.

The report also reinforces the benefit of early action, planning, and adapting to changing populations and climate to build resilient societies. In addition to engineering solutions such as dams and sea walls, the report recommends low-cost ecosystem-based approaches. By protecting natural flood plains and mangroves, and planting vegetation, natural defenses to [extreme weather](#) events are created, with many additional societal benefits.

Provided by University of Bristol

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