



# State of Climate in Somalia 2026

## Briefing Paper

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## Objectives

This briefing examines Somalia's climate outlook for 2025 and beyond, marked by drought, erratic rainfall, rising temperatures, and extreme weather. Somalia is among the most climate-vulnerable countries, with an ND-GAIN score of 37.5 (162/192), ranking it the 7th most vulnerable globally. Since 1990, recurring droughts and floods show a structural climate crisis, not isolated events. The 2023–2025 drought, with five failed rainy seasons, has severely disrupted livelihoods, as over half of the population relies on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism, driving food insecurity and displacement. Forecasts for the Gu 2026 season suggest above-average rainfall, offering temporary relief but increasing flood risk and leaving long-term climate threats unchanged. Urgent adaptation and resilience measures remain essential.

### Key facts and figures include:

#### Population & livelihood

~18.3 million people (2023), of whom ~72% rely on climate-sensitive agriculture and livestock. Life expectancy and HDI remain [HDI 0.40] very low (FAO,2023).

#### Water and sanitation

Somalia is water-scarce: only ~411 m<sup>3</sup> renewable water/person/yr (2017) (down from 2087 m<sup>3</sup> in 1962). Only ~26% of people have access to safe drinking water, and ~47% lack basic sanitation/WASH services. Droughts frequently dry up wells and rivers, while floods contaminate water supplies (WB,2020).

#### Energy

Installed power capacity is ~400 MW (2025) (mostly diesel generators). National electricity access is only ~50% (~80% urban, 24% rural). Energy is extremely costly \$0.40–\$1.00/kWh). About 80% of household energy comes from biomass (wood/charcoal), driving deforestation (WB,2023).

#### Forests and land

Historically 62% of Somalia was forested (1980s); by 2014 only ~10% remained. From 2000–2017 Somalia lost ~686,000 ha of forest (40,000 ha/yr). Charcoal production is the primary cause: ~4.4 million trees are cut each year to make charcoal for cooking and export (~250,000 tons/yr) (WB & UNEP). Overall land degradation is severe: ~27% of Somalia's land was classified (erosion, desertification) as degraded by 2015 (FAO).

#### Sea-level rise

Climate models project ~0.2–0.4 m of mean sea-level rise by 2050–2080. Somalia's long, low-lying coastline (e.g. Kismayo, Hobyo) faces increased coastal erosion, storm surges and saline intrusion in coming decades (Weathering Risk).

#### Drought Dynamics

Up to 70–85% of cropland in key production zones is under severe drought stress. Groundwater depletion and crop failure are accelerating livelihood collapse (FAO,2025).

#### Food Security Impact

Up to 4.4 million people (~23% of the population) are projected to face crisis hunger levels during poor rainy seasons (FSNAU,2025).

#### Health Impact

with an estimated 4.4 million people facing food insecurity and 1.85 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. Droughts, followed by floods, have triggered outbreaks of cholera, measles, and diarrhea, as 5.2 million people lack safe water (Health Cluster,2025).

#### Economic Impact

Direct economic impacts from climate-induced droughts and floods in Somalia accounted for approximately 3.3% of the nation's GDP between 2000 and 2021. Agriculture and livestock, crucial to the economy, suffered \$2.84 billion in losses, representing 4.5% of agricultural GDP. Without increased resilient development, losses could reach \$5–\$100 billion by the 2050s (SPARC\_Ideas,2024).

## Climate Finance

In 2025, Somalia received roughly \$120–\$140 million in climate finance, including \$95 million from the GCF for agriculture, \$6.22 million GEF grant, and \$9.63 million from the African Development Fund, all focused on adaptation, water, and resilience.

# The Path Forward

### 1. Shift From Crisis Response to Risk Management

Invest before shocks occur and Prepare before disasters through early-warning to early-action systems that trigger support ahead of shocks.

### 2. Water System Transformation (From Emergency Trucking to Storage Economy)

Rainfall is lost because storage is limited, Expand water harvesting, climate-scale Berkads, and sand dams to secure dry-season supply.

### 3. Climate-Resilient Livelihoods (Reduce Rain Dependence)

Over-reliance on rainfall-based pastoralism makes every climate shock existential. Diverse incomes prevent economic collapse. Reduce reliance on rain-fed pastoralism. Promote drought-tolerant crops, agroforestry, fisheries, Promote solar-powered cold chains, agro-processing and climate-smart value chains.

### 6. Infrastructure & Planned Mobility Instead of Forced Displacement

Flood damage repeats because systems are weak and reactive. Redesign urban drainage in flood-prone cities Using soft solutions: Better drainage, stronger roads, and nature-based solutions like mangroves and wetlands can reduce flood impact naturally. Climate data infrastructure and monitoring help guide safer planning and early action.

## Seasonal outlook (2026)

Early 2026 forecasts predicted above-normal rainfall for the March–May 2026 Gu' season across much of Somalia, potentially alleviating drought (ICPAC,2026).

### 4. Restore Ecosystems to Rebuild Natural Protection

Environmental degradation amplifies both drought and flood intensity. Launch national rangeland restoration programs: Controlled grazing zones. Reseeding native grasses. Ban unsustainable charcoal production while scaling alternative fuels (solar, LPG transition programs). Reforest riverbanks and coastal zones to reduce erosion and sand encroachment.

### 5. Renewable Energy Expansion to Break the Deforestation–Drought Cycle

Charcoal dependence drives deforestation, land degradation and reduced rainfall retention. Scale decentralized solar mini-grids for rural communities. Replace charcoal with decentralized solar and use solar-powered irrigation to break the deforestation–drought cycle.

Climate data and planning guide safer growth modernize national hydro-meteorological monitoring networks. Integrate satellite climate data into planning ministries. Require climate risk assessments in all infrastructure and development projects and then Policy becomes evidence-driven instead of reactive.

Sector	Percentage
Forest Cover	10%
Degraded Land	27%
Nomadic Electricity Access	9%
Rural Electricity Access	24%
Urban Electricity Access	80%
Overall Electricity Access	50%
Water Access	50%
Dependence on Agriculture	70%

