



CHILLING PROSPECTS 2026

ACCESS TO COOLING IN THE AGE OF EXTREME HEAT



27 August 2026



15:00 CEST / 09:00 EDT / 18:30 IST





OPENING

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UNEP Cool Coalition

Access to Cooling in the Age of Extreme Heat



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

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Senior Specialist, Energy Efficiency and Cooling

Sustainable Energy for All

Access to Cooling in the Age of Extreme Heat



ENERGY. CLIMATE.
DEVELOPMENT.

Chilling Prospects 2026

Cooling Access, Heat Vulnerability and Mortality

Giorgia Pasqualetto,
Senior Officer, SEforALL

27 AUGUST 2026



Heat mortality is undercounted and unequal

Data is lacking

Global heat deaths are likely undercounted, visibility is unevenly distributed, methods don't transfer across regions.

The burden is unequal

Countries in Africa and the Middle East face the highest current burden and the steepest projected increases.

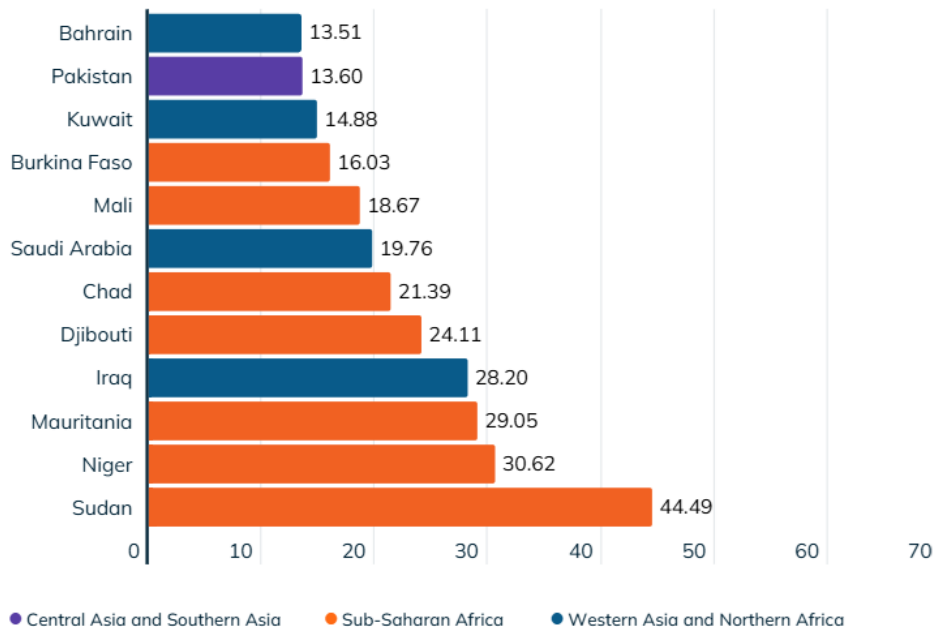
Indirect effects of heat are missed by surveillance

Lost income, food insecurity, power outages at hospital and care facilities, mental health tolls, cognitive impairment, etc.

Heat vulnerability assessments help predict mortality risk

Backed by the robust indicators and data, they provide a map for directing heat resilience and cooling investment.

12 countries appear in both the top 20 highest current heat death rates (below) and top 20 highest projected mortality increases



Which communities risk not affording or accessing sustainable cooling?

Access risk in 77 countries with populations that face heat stress

HIGH RISK		MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
			
RURAL POOR	URBAN POOR	LOWER-MIDDLE INCOME	MIDDLE INCOME
339 million	746 million	2.43 billion	1.33 billion
Vulnerable to heat stress, lack access to electricity and live in extreme poverty. Many are likely to be subsistence farmers without access to an intact cold chain. May lack access to properly stored vaccines.	Vulnerable to heat stress, have limited or no access to electricity, and live in extreme poverty. Poor quality housing likely does not protect from extreme heat. May have a refrigerator, but food might spoil due to intermittent power.	May be able to purchase the lowest first-cost air conditioner or refrigerator on the market. Limited purchasing choices favour cooling devices that are likely affordable, but at risk of being inefficient, raising energy consumption and GHG emissions.	May be able to afford a more efficient air conditioner or minimize its use. May move to energy efficient housing and working environments.

Passive and nature-based solutions provide a first line of protection

Passive solutions and urban nature are equitable strategies against heat

Shading, ventilation, thermal mass, cool roofs, tree cover, green space, cooling centres, etc.

Where slum shares are low, the formal built environment is a core lever

Raise building energy codes quality, including for affordable housing (e.g., Dominican Republic, Egypt, Indonesia, Paraguay).

Where slum shares are high and greenery is low, vulnerability is acute and urgent

Building energy codes matter, but expanding nature and upgrading informal settlements are urgent priority to protect marginalized populations (e.g. Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Mali, Niger).

Urban solutions should consider vegetation, slum population, built-up area growth, and building energy regulation (among other dimensions)



Long-term resilience starts with infrastructure investment today

Countries facing the steepest rise in heat mortality by 2050 also have low projected AC
Many of them, grapple with largest electricity access gaps today.

Countries in that cluster present the most urgent case for investment.
Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Niger, Mali, Pakistan, Sudan sit at the sharpest convergence of risk.

In 2024 alone, over **16 billion people-days** (about 547,000 average human lifetimes) were potentially exposed to heatwaves without the electricity access.

Projected AC ownership and projected net change in temperature-related mortality in 2050 vs. current electricity access deficit



Act on what we know, build what we need

Govern heat as a recurring, predictable risk

Plan and invest in advance. Today, 6 in 10 people in Africa are not reached by heat early warning system.

Assess who is vulnerable, and why, in each context

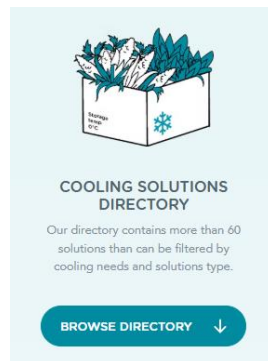
Heat hits differently depending on where you are: an outdoor worker, a woman in poor housing, a factory floor worker, a child in school have, an elderly living alone, etc.

Build passive cooling into construction expansion

The building stock under construction today offers a chance to provide shading, ventilation, cool roofs and tree cover.

Treat efficient cooling as a lifeline

Efficient fans, AC units, and refrigeration, backed by reliable power - all protect people and livelihoods at lower costs.





SEforALL.org



PANEL DISCUSSION

Equitable Approaches to Passive and Active Cooling Solutions



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Article 25



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Access to Cooling in the Age of Extreme Heat

Strength in Hotter World

*Access to Cooling in the Age of
Extreme Heat Webinar*

Cool Talks

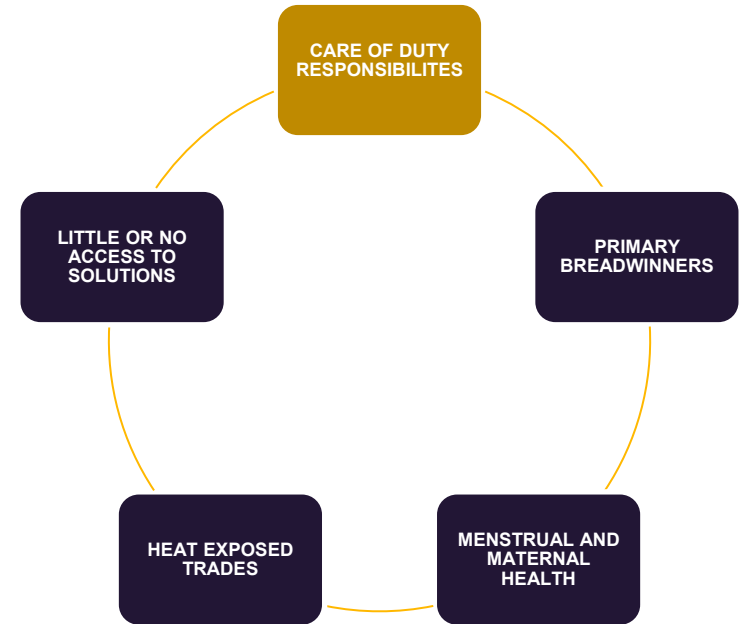
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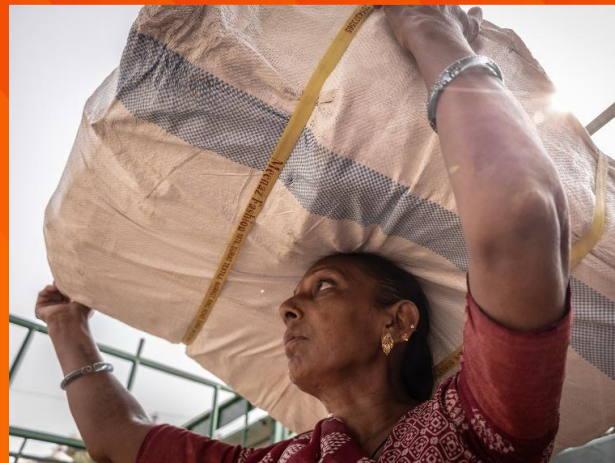
**Women are
disproportionately impacted
by extreme heat.**



CONNECTED FACTORS INCREASE SEVERITY & FREQUENCY IMPACTS



770 MILLION WOMEN INFORMAL WORKERS – ONE STORY



HEAT SOLUTIONS BY, WITH, AND FOR WOMEN

Women's Climate Shock Insurance and Livelihoods Initiative (WCSI)

Heat Literacy

- Lived experiences of women
- Health & financial impacts of heat
- Heat assessments & mapping
- City calculator

Cooling Solutions

- Market shade
- Cooling centers
- Heat Early Warnings
- Protective equipment:
 - Solar fans & lanterns
 - Thermoses
 - Tarpaulin Sheets
 - Umbrellas
 - Cool Roofs
- Nature-based solutions

Financial Protections

- Cash assistance
- Insurance
 - Heat Parametric
 - HERA Materna
- Heat Disaster Preparedness Fund

"Since we got this [cooling] shelter, I haven't lost a single workday to illness, and my earnings stay steady even when the heat is harsh."

"During peak heat days, we are unable to work in the afternoon as our homes become extremely hot. At night, we cannot work as keeping the lights on for extended hours leads to increased electricity bills. But now, the solar lanterns help, can we work till late and early our daily incomes."

"The water jug provided us access to clean drinking water and prevented extra out of pocket to buy drinking water pouches."

"It (money from WCSI cash/insurance) was so timely. I was able to buy good grains and rations that feed my family for a week."

"I used the money to buy schoolbooks for my children instead of taking a high-interest loan."



Thank you!

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PANELIST

Siraz Hirani

Director Programs

Mahila Housing Trust

Access to Cooling in the Age of Extreme Heat



MAHILA HOUSING SEWA TRUST

Dignified Home, Dignified Work, Dignified Life

Access to Cooling in the Age of Extreme Heat

Siraz Hirani
Director Programs

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Focusing on women-led development, MHT contributes towards:



Start with Community, Not Technology

MHT flips the usual sequence: residents help define, test and refine every cooling solution before it scales.

THE LIVING LAB APPROACH

MHT prototypes cooling ideas inside real homes and neighbourhoods first. Residents live with a solution and react to it and that feedback directly reshapes the design before it ever scales city-wide.



LIVING LAB PILOT

The Mod-Roof

Prototype roofs were installed on real homes for a full summer. Feedback on cost, ease of installation, utility and street-facing appearance directly reshaped the design before it scaled.



CITIZEN ASSEMBLY · JODHPUR

Reaching the Most Vulnerable

Residents were asked how to get heat early-warnings to the most vulnerable - many illiterate, with no digital access. Their answer: mount announcements on the solid-waste collection vehicle that already visits every society each morning.

Five criteria that emerged from Living Lab pilots across MHT's cooling solutions

Effective

Affordable

Aspirational

Accessible

User-Friendly

Innovations That Emerged and Scaled

Two solutions born from the same community process now built into city Heat Action Plans.

IDENTIFIED BY WOMEN VENDORS

Women in the informal economy said cooling their homes wasn't enough. They needed cool public spaces too: transport they could still ride in summer, and a cooling centre nearby to shelter from heat stroke while they worked.



Cool Bus Stop — Ahmedabad

5–6°C

cooler

600K+

commuters

\$9,000

install cost

Evaporative misting and khus curtains at Lal Darwaja, with Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and AMTS — so commuters can still ride out the summer.



Net-Zero Cooling Station — Jodhpur

7.7°C

avg. drop

18,000+

sheltered

40

capacity

A passive-cooling shelter for informal workers to escape heat stroke mid-shift; results shaped NDMA's national cooling-centre guidelines & budget provision by state..

Why Community-Led Cooling Works?

When residents design the solution, the benefits compound for households, for cities, and for policy.



Ownership

Residents who help design a solution maintain and champion it, instead of letting it fall into disrepair.



Solutions that fit real budgets

The Living Lab surfaces cost and comfort problems before scale-up, not after.



Faster iteration, fewer failed pilots

A flawed idea is caught on one rooftop, not repeated across hundreds of installs.



From pilot to policy

Community-tested models feed directly into Heat Action Plans and national NDMA guidelines.



Women as designers

Those most exposed to heat, and least resourced to cope, decide what gets built.

"That's the difference between cooling that gets installed, and cooling that actually gets used."



PANELIST

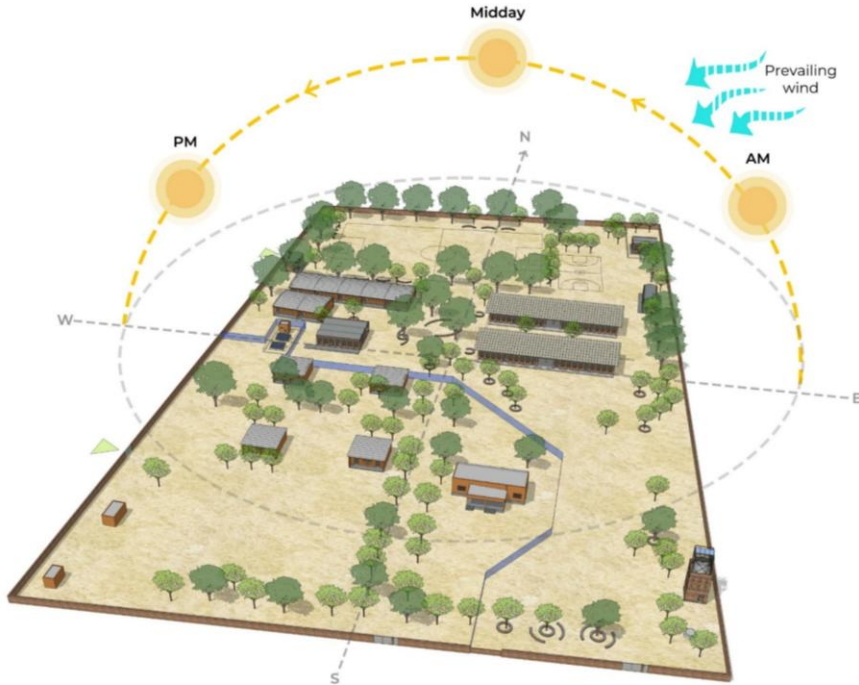
Toby Pear

Associate Architect

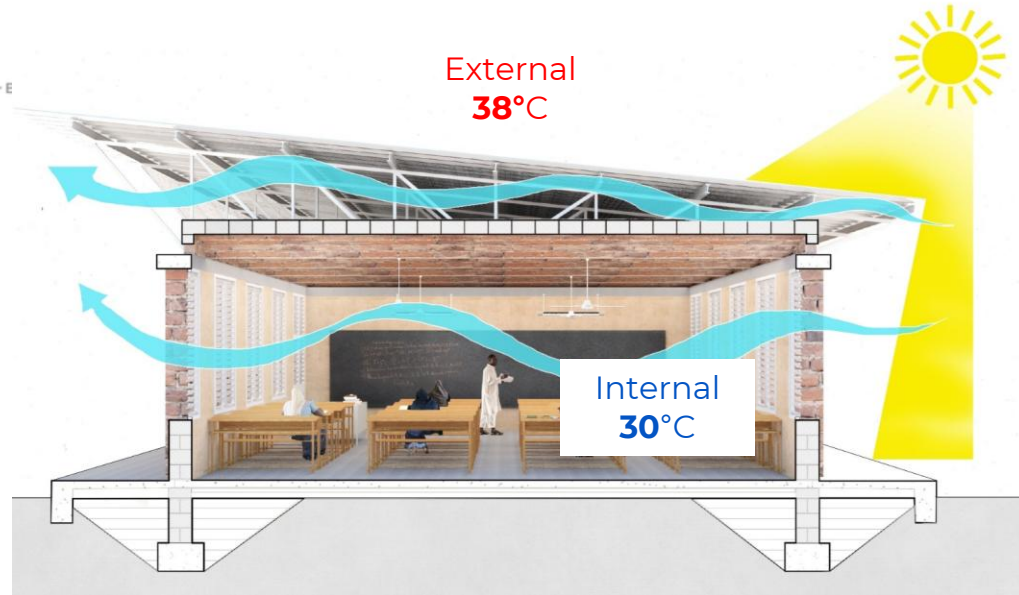
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Collège Hampaté Bâ, Niger



Orientation & Form
Thermal Mass
Natural Ventilation



Collège Hampaté Bâ, Niger





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Energy Policy Analyst

International Energy Agency

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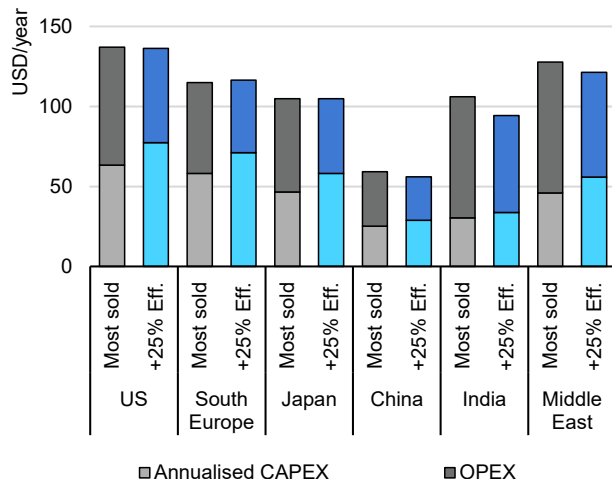
Cost vs Efficiency in cooling / IEA contribution

Fabian Voswinkel

27.08.2026

Cost vs. Efficiency in Air conditioners?

Average cost of higher efficiency



Source: IEA (2026) - [Cooling a hotter world: El Niño meets strong growth in global electricity demand](#)

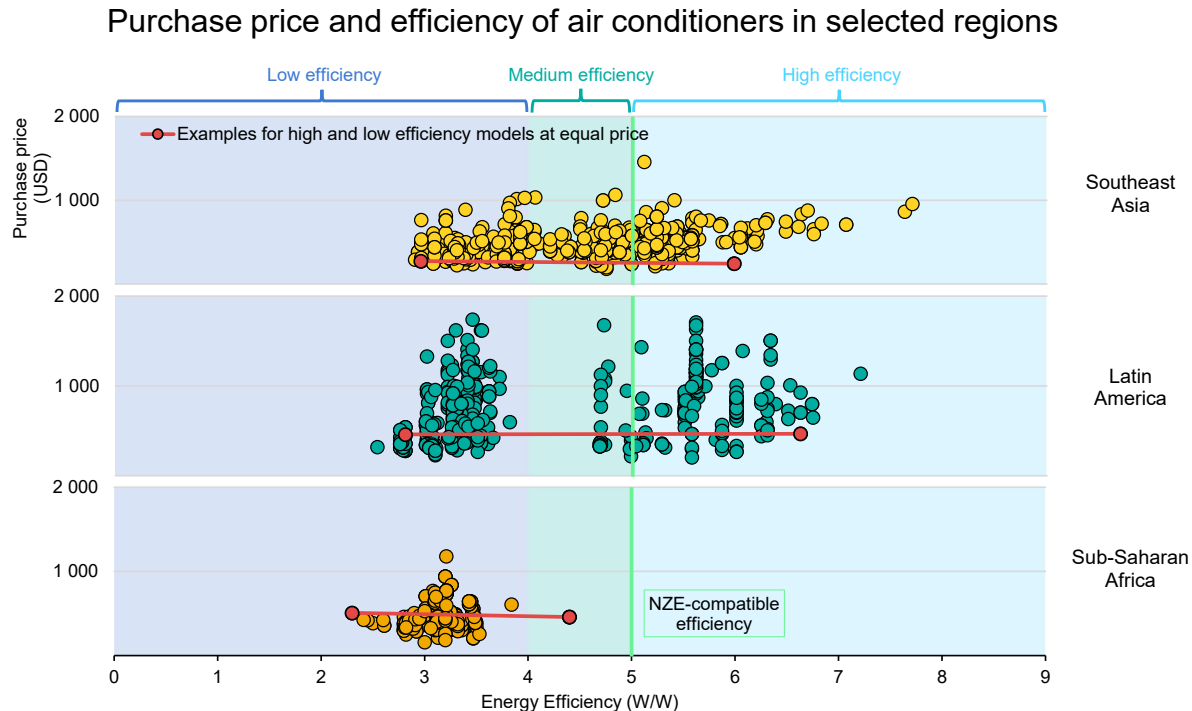
But is it the efficiency, that drives prices?

- IEA Energy-Efficient End-Use Equipment (4E) TCP performed a webscraping study in India in April 2026
 - 380 split AC models
 - 18 brands
- **Little correlation** between price and efficiency
- **Prestige and size make the largest difference in price**
- **Price drivers (OLS)**
 1. Brand (largest is +₹26,608)
 2. Capacity (+₹22,955/tonne)
 3. Efficiency (+₹6,579 per iSEER unit)

**On average, higher efficiency ACs have higher up-front cost
but that is largely due to brand or features,
not efficiency.**

On the ground research confirms:

Efficient ACs do not necessarily cost more than less efficient ones



In Southeast Asia and Latin America, it is possible to buy two different AC models at the same price point, with one twice as efficient as the other.

Q&A SESSION



Moderator

Lorena de Carvalho Araújo



THANK YOU!

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