



# PEOPLE

---

## Poverty, risk and crisis

A number of conflicts continued and intensified in 2015, bringing the number of people displaced by violence and persecution globally to over 65 million<sup>1</sup> and generating severe suffering and humanitarian need. While attention grows on the rising numbers of people reaching Europe, the majority of displaced people are in the Middle East, North of Sahara and South of Sahara regions, and 60% of those forced to flee remain internally displaced.

Disasters caused by natural hazards appear to have affected fewer people in 2015 than the previous year – 89 million people compared with 142 million in 2014 – though smaller-scale events related to climate change and the El Niño weather phenomenon have undoubtedly disrupted the lives and livelihoods of many more.

Poverty and vulnerability to crises are inextricably linked. In 2012, 76% of people living in extreme poverty – below the \$1.90 a day poverty line – were living in countries that were either politically fragile,

environmentally vulnerable or both. This is at least 677 million people ‘left behind’ – excluded from the benefits of sustainable development and vulnerable to the impact of future crises.

Better data on who these people are, where they live, and the specific risks and vulnerabilities that they face can inform shared efforts to break the cycle of poverty, vulnerability and crisis. Subnational and disaggregated data exposes the different kinds and levels of vulnerabilities, risks and needs that people face. By playing to their complementary strengths more effectively, humanitarian, development and other key actors can better understand the risks, needs and capacities of vulnerable populations and target their efforts accordingly to save lives, reduce poverty and build resilience.

# Poverty and vulnerability

People living in extreme poverty are often most vulnerable to crises. It is the people, families and communities with the least resources, capacities and access to services that are hardest hit by conflict, disasters caused by natural hazards or a combination of both. As their capacity to cope and recover is further eroded by crises, so their poverty and vulnerability to future shocks increases, creating a vicious cycle.

In 2012, (the most recent year of country-comparable poverty data), an estimated 76% of people living in extreme poverty – on less than \$1.90 a day<sup>2</sup> – were living in countries that were either politically fragile (32%), environmentally vulnerable (32%) or both (12%).<sup>3</sup> This is approximately

677 million people being ‘left behind’: most likely to be excluded from the benefits of growth and of prosperous and healthy societies, and at risk of being denied their basic rights.<sup>4</sup> In reality, the number is likely to be much higher as the most vulnerable people often go uncounted. For example in Figure 1.1, many fragile states including Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen are not included as poverty data is simply unavailable (see also Figure 1.2). The combined population of these five countries (179 million in 2014) is therefore missing from this analysis.

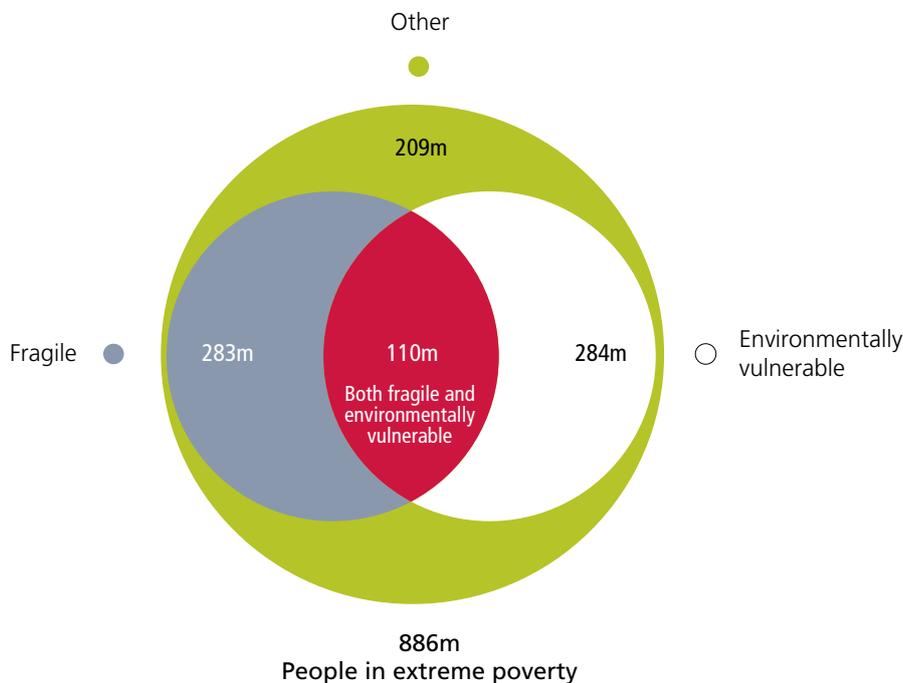
The UN Secretary-General’s report for the World Humanitarian Summit<sup>5</sup> suggested that data and joint analysis should become the bedrock

of development and humanitarian action. Putting this meaningfully and appropriately into action demands a sophisticated approach, drawing on a mix of available data sources to identify the most vulnerable people and understand the risks and needs that they face.

However, as Figure 1.2 shows, crisis-affected countries often lack recent, inclusive and reliable poverty data to inform longer-term responses to the needs of vulnerable populations. Five of the twenty countries that have received the most international humanitarian assistance in the last decade have not conducted national poverty surveys since 2009. Sudan, for example, which received the most

FIGURE 1.1

## Number of people living in extreme poverty in environmentally vulnerable and politically fragile countries



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank PovcalNet, World Bank World Development Indicators, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and INFORM Index for Risk Management

Notes: Chart not to scale. Poverty estimates use World Bank PovcalNet modelled 2012 data, using a 2011 PPP\$1.90/day poverty line. Regional estimates are available and used for 24 out of 31 countries with no poverty data; regional estimates are not available for the remaining 7 countries with no poverty data (all located in the Middle East and North Africa region). Fragile states are defined as per ‘fragile states and economies’ in the OECD report *States of Fragility 2015*.<sup>6</sup> The INFORM 2016 index is used to compile the list of environmentally vulnerable countries: countries scoring very high and high on the ‘natural hazard’ indicator, and excludes countries scoring ‘low’ and ‘very low’ on the ‘lack of coping capacity’ dimension.

international humanitarian assistance between 2005 and 2014, last conducted a national poverty survey in 2009. Somalia, which received the eighth largest amount, has never conducted one. Syria, Yemen, Jordan and Lebanon are all lacking up-to-date poverty data.

Although poverty data may be lacking in many crisis contexts, there are a number of examples where humanitarian and development actors have effectively pooled their resources and worked together on shared analysis. For example, in 2012, the UN country team initiated an extensive study in Palestine, drawing on a wide range of data sources to highlight the main developmental trends and challenges affecting the Gaza Strip and the priorities for humanitarian and UN development programming.<sup>7</sup> In the Sahel region, the multi-year UN-coordinated plan draws on security, development and humanitarian analyses to highlight the seasonal nature of humanitarian needs in the Sahel against a backdrop of complex and chronic malnutrition and food insecurity.<sup>8</sup> A new global risk platform, announced at the World Humanitarian Summit, will seek to facilitate this type of collaboration by improving data collection, analysis of inter-connected risks, and early warning efforts.<sup>9</sup>

While significant institutional, political and operational barriers exist, limiting effective humanitarian and development collaboration in many contexts, these examples demonstrate the practical possibilities. With people known to be living in extreme poverty concentrated in high-risk settings, a multi-faceted approach is needed including humanitarian, development, political, climate change, peace and security dimensions. While remaining mindful of humanitarian principles, this means judging where collaboration makes sense, agreeing objectives, then drawing on comparative advantages to better understand and address humanitarian needs and the root causes of poverty.

FIGURE 1.2

Year of most recent poverty survey in 20 countries receiving the most humanitarian assistance



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank World Development Indicators, OECD Development Assistance Committee, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service and UN Central Emergency Response Fund data

Notes: Year of poverty survey refers to the most recent household survey from which poverty head count estimates (based on the national poverty line) are derived. Countries selected are the 20 recipients of the most international humanitarian assistance between 2005 and 2014. South Sudan is shown as having a survey in 2009, although it has not had a national poverty survey since gaining independence in 2011. Data for 2009 is derived from all of Sudan census and household surveys.<sup>10</sup> DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

## Case study: Subnational differences in poverty and risk in Kenya

Even where national household surveys are available and up to date, national poverty figures can mask the differences in people's lives at the local level. Efforts to end poverty and build the resilience of the poorest people to withstand and recover from crises need to be founded on more in-depth, subnational data.<sup>11</sup> An example of this can be drawn from northern Kenya, an area prone to drought and flooding, made worse by the current El Niño weather phenomenon. Food insecurity and malnutrition are rife, as are insecurity and displacement; livelihoods are fragile and access to services is poor.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 1.3 maps poverty in Kenya against indicators of risk compiled by the INFORM Index for Risk Management.<sup>13</sup> It shows that three counties in northern Kenya have a poverty incidence over 80%

– Turkana (88%), Mandera (86%) and Wajir (84%) – each bordering either Ethiopia or Somalia. This is much higher than the aggregate national poverty incidence of 45%. At the same time, these counties have the second, third and fourth highest risk ratings respectively of all counties in Kenya. Garissa County, also bordering Somalia, has the highest INFORM risk rating of all Kenyan counties and an above average poverty rate of 59%.

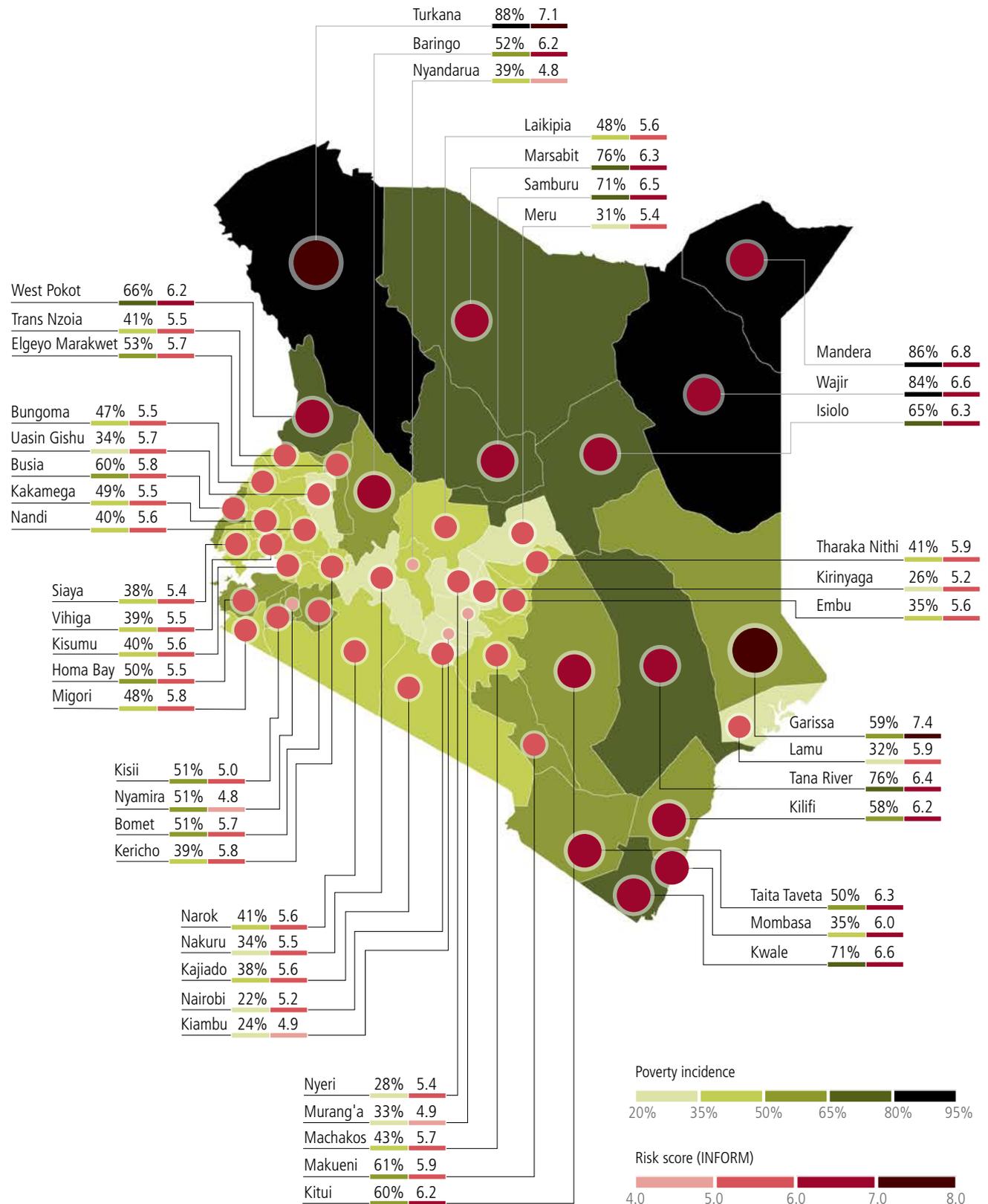
Even this basic level of subnational data is important for assessing whether efforts and resources are being directed to the right places and whether domestic and international development and humanitarian support is genuinely targeting the poorest and most at risk populations.

## SUBNATIONAL RISK PROFILES

The INFORM Index for Risk Management has developed a number of subnational risk profiles. In 2015, individual risk models were created for Colombia and Lebanon, and subnational risk breakdowns for countries in the Sahel and the Greater Horn of Africa regions. More subnational models are planned in 2016 and will be developed and managed by national-level actors with global support from the INFORM initiative.<sup>14</sup>

FIGURE 1.3

Subnational data: poverty incidence and composite categories of crisis risk in Kenya



Source: Development Initiatives based on the INFORM Subnational risk index 2015 and the Kenya Population and Housing Census 2009 (population data) and Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2005–2006 (poverty data), Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

Notes: Poverty data is based on the Kenyan national poverty line. The INFORM subnational risk score combines INFORM indicators 'hazard' (including natural and human hazards), 'vulnerability' (including socio-economic vulnerability and vulnerable groups) and 'lack of coping capacity' (including institutional and infrastructural). Circles are different sizes for different INFORM risk scores. Map image © www.d-maps.com

## Case study: Poverty in the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon and Jordan

Refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrant populations are often not covered by national poverty statistics. National poverty estimations and World Bank poverty calculations are based on household surveys that can leave such population groups excluded.<sup>15</sup>

Refugees, both inside and outside camps, often have very different poverty profiles to those of host populations. These of course change according to the length of displacement, the causes, manner and means of their displacement, the economic background from which and to which they have fled, and the socioeconomic circumstances of exile.

The income and expenditure opportunities for refugees are also very different to those of the resident host population. Refugees have largely lost their assets and livelihoods – resources that may have already been depleted by a series of shocks culminating in their final compulsion to leave. They are typically obliged to seek informal livelihood opportunities in unfamiliar contexts, where the means, rights and opportunities to work are officially limited, as may be their access to services. Measuring the poverty and welfare of refugees, therefore, demands a multi-dimensional understanding of both their financial and non-financial deprivation.

According to the latest national poverty surveys, 14% of the host population in Jordan (2010) and 27% in Lebanon (2011) were living under the national poverty lines. However, recent refugee populations

are missing from this data. And while these figures pre-date the arrival of large numbers of Syrians, both countries were already hosting significant refugee populations, particularly Palestinian refugees who are not included in the surveys.<sup>16</sup>

### Over 90% of Syrian refugees in Jordan (97%) and Lebanon (93%) are poor if measured against national poverty lines.

From 2014 to 2015, the World Bank and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) jointly undertook the first poverty and welfare assessment of a UNHCR-assisted refugee population, focusing specifically on Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>17</sup> The World Bank/UNHCR study gathered household data for refugees in Lebanon and Jordan registered with UNHCR. The poverty line was set at the threshold that UNHCR uses for its cash programming eligibility – equivalent to US\$5.25 in 2005 PPP – while the national poverty line in Jordan is \$8.20 PPP, and \$10.30 PPP in Lebanon.<sup>18</sup> The survey found that 70% of registered refugees in Lebanon and Jordan are

poor (measured against the UNHCR poverty threshold), rising to over 90% (97% in Jordan and 93% in Lebanon) if national poverty lines are used.

The report also showed the relationship between poverty and other demographic indicators, as well as the places where people had fled from and to. Poverty levels were highest among the 35- to 49-year-old age group, as they had the largest numbers of dependent children. People fleeing from Aleppo and Damascus and living in the Jordanian governorate of Talifah were the poorest overall, with virtually all living under the poverty line and often already disadvantaged by previous shocks and stresses. Prolonged drought had already forced many rural Syrians into deprivation in the outskirts of major cities, where heavy fighting later forced the same people to flee both internally and across borders. Poverty was therefore a factor in a complex chain of movement that culminated in people seeking cross-border asylum.

Like displaced people elsewhere, Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon are living in precarious legal and material circumstances, which combined with their previous status and experiences, keeps them locked in a state of poverty that generally goes uncounted. The complexity of their deprivation demands not only a more in-depth understanding of poverty but also an equally sophisticated repertoire of political, humanitarian and socioeconomic responses (see Chapter 2).

## People affected by conflict and disaster

Currently, there is no way of counting the number of people affected by conflict or the severity of their needs. There are a number of databases and indices that track, for example, the location, duration and intensity of conflicts worldwide or the number of battle-related deaths.<sup>19</sup> Experts have gathered extensive data to estimate the global economic cost of conflict and violence, amounting to US\$14.3 trillion in 2014.<sup>20</sup> However, there is no estimate of the overall human cost of violent conflict on civilian populations. Many people go uncounted and the real impact of conflict on the lives of those affected is difficult to quantify.

That said, the number of displaced people can provide an indication of the impact of conflict. In 2015, displacement increased for a fifth year running, with an estimated 65.3 million people forced to flee their homes because of violence and persecution. Many more people remain displaced within their own countries (40.8 million) than have fled across

borders (24.5 million). A close look at the latest data shows a number of important shifts in the geographic location and economic situation of displaced populations, all of which have implications for who takes responsibility for providing assistance and how.<sup>21</sup>

Europe saw a rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers between 2014 and 2015 of 50%, from 3.8 million people to 5.7 million – 23% of the displaced population globally. Within the region of Europe (as classified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), the majority of people displaced in 2015 were in Turkey (2.75 million people), the vast majority of whom are Syrian refugees.

However, the numbers of displaced people in the Middle East and North of Sahara and South of Sahara regions are significantly higher than those in Europe.

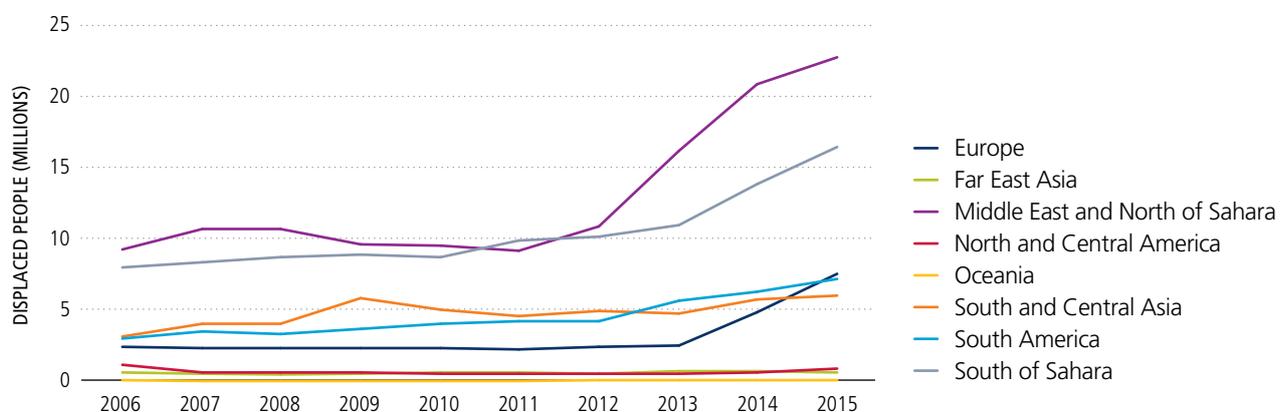
---

In 2015 displacement increased for a fifth year running with an estimated 65.3 million people forced to flee their homes.

---

FIGURE 1.4

### Number of displaced people by region of host country, 2006–2015

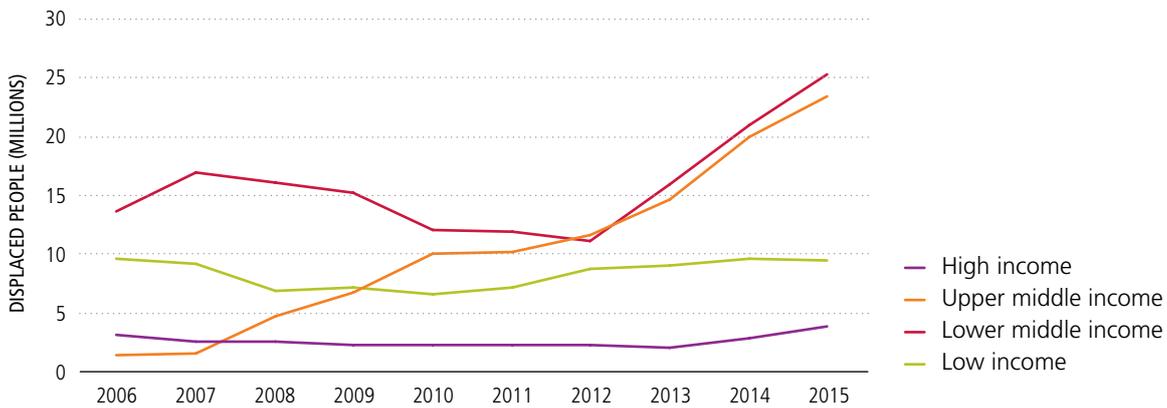


Source: Development Initiatives based on UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East data

Notes: 'Displaced people' includes refugees and people in refugee-like situations, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers. IDP numbers include only people protected/assisted by the UNHCR. End of year data from UNHCR is used for all years except 2015, which uses mid-2015 data. Data is organised according to UNHCR's definitions of country/territory of asylum. Countries are organised according to the OECD's classification of regions, except for the Middle East and North of Sahara regions, which have been combined.

FIGURE 1.5

Number of displaced people by income group of host country, 2006–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East data

Notes: ‘Displaced people’ includes refugees and people in refugee-like situations, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers. IDP numbers include only people protected/assisted by UNHCR. End of year data from UNHCR is used for all years except 2015, which uses mid-2015 data. Data is organised according to UNHCR’s definitions of country/territory of asylum. Income groups are classified by the World Bank on an annual basis.

Over one-third of displaced people – refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs – were living in the Middle East and North of Sahara in 2014 (39%) and 2015 (37%), and a further quarter (27%) in the South of Sahara region in 2015. Most of the people displaced in the Middle East and North of Sahara were in Syria (7.1 million), Iraq (4.7 million), Jordan (2.8 million), Yemen (2.8 million), Palestine (2.1 million) and Lebanon (1.5 million).

In the South of Sahara region, Sudan (3.5 million people displaced), Nigeria (2.2 million), South Sudan (2.1 million) and Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.9 million) accounted for the majority of displaced people.

In 2015, 94% of displaced people were living in countries that were either classified as middle income countries (MICs – 79%) or low income countries (LICs – 15%). Continued and intensified conflict in the Middle East and North of Sahara, particularly in Syria, meant that there were more displaced people in MICs than in LICs in both 2014 and 2015. Lower middle income countries (LMICs) such as Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Pakistan, Palestine and Nigeria accounted for a large proportion of the total (41%); as did upper middle income countries (UMICs) such as Colombia, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey (38%).<sup>22</sup>

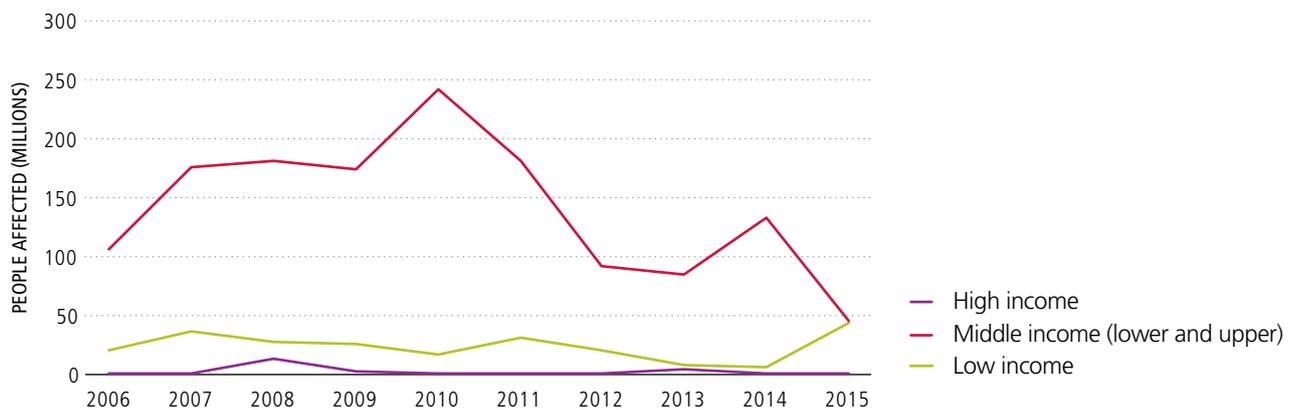
Although country income levels are wide groupings and a crude indicator of poverty and coping capacity, they

can be a determinant of the kind of aid a country is able to access, with the World Bank’s previously applied income criteria making most MICs ineligible for concessional loans. As explored in Chapters 2 and 4, the fact that the largest proportion of refugees are now in MICs is impelling a new approach to the repertoire of financing instruments to support refugees, their host communities and national authorities.

In 2015, an estimated 89.4 million people were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards, a decrease of 51.7 million from the previous year. Not all of those affected need humanitarian assistance. People themselves may have the resources to survive and recover, and in many

FIGURE 1.6

## Number of people affected by disasters caused by natural hazards by country income group, 2006–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on EM-DAT: International Disaster Database

Notes: Income groups are classified by the World Bank on an annual basis. Lower middle income countries (LMICs) and upper middle income countries (UMICs) have been combined because China moved from LMIC to UMIC group between 2009 and 2010, resulting in a dramatic shift in the numbers of people within those groups affected by disasters caused by natural hazards between those years.

instances national and local authorities are able to cope without the need to call on international support. As Figure 1.6 shows, people affected by natural hazards over the last decade have predominantly been in MICs. However, in 2015, the number of people affected by disasters who were living in LICs significantly increased, reaching 43 million – 48% of the total – placing further strain on already poor and vulnerable populations.<sup>23</sup>

The vast majority of people affected by disasters over the last decade were in countries in the Far East Asia region (see Figure 1.6). South and Central Asia followed with the second largest number of people affected; latest figures show that this number nearly

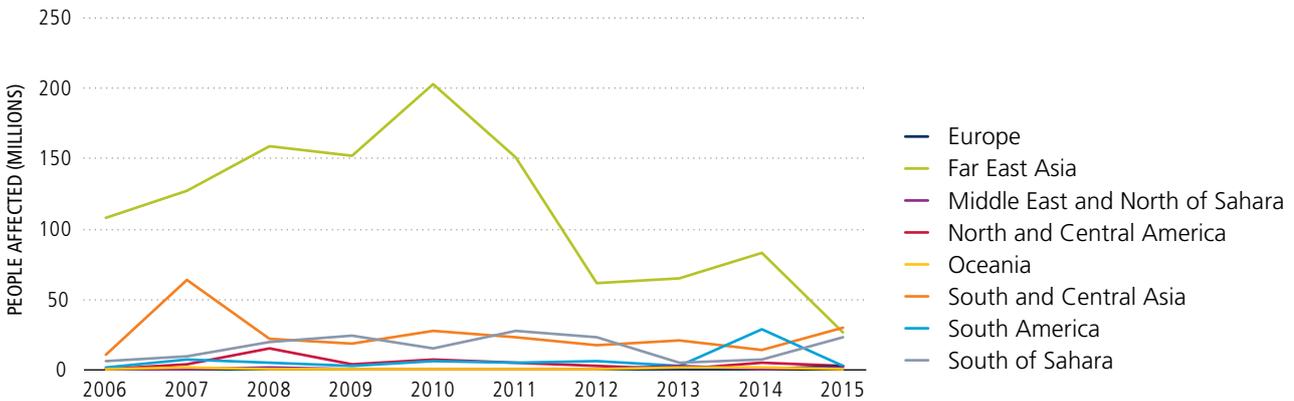
doubled between 2014 and 2015 to 30 million people, over half (55%) of whom were affected by widespread flooding in India.

The South of Sahara region also witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of people affected by natural hazards in 2015, increasing from 7.6 million people in 2014 to 23.5 million. Almost all (99%) were affected by drought and flooding across 22 countries in the region, approximately half of whom (44%, 10.2 million people) were in Ethiopia. Ethiopia ranked third in 2015 for the number of people affected by disasters, behind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (18 million people) and India (16.6 million people).

In 2015 an estimated 89.4 million people were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards.

FIGURE 1.7

Number of people affected by disasters caused by natural hazards by region, 2006–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on EM-DAT: International Disaster Database

Notes: Countries are organised according to the OECD's classification of regions, except for the Middle East and North of Sahara regions, which have been combined.

Three major accords – the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on climate change – all identify actions to build resilience against hazards. As Chapters 2 and 5 explore, a wider and more sophisticated set of tools and resources is needed to inform appropriate investments in risk reduction. Governments, civil society and other actors will need to work together within these frameworks to ensure that strengthening disaster preparedness and management is an integral part of sustainable development. This should happen not only in the case of large-scale emergencies, but also where frequent and localised disasters continue to impact heavily on livelihoods and exacerbate poverty.

**THE IMPACT OF EL NIÑO**

The global increase in numbers of drought- and flood-affected people in the South of Sahara region in 2015 is likely to be associated with the current El Niño weather phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> The extreme conditions that this creates can exacerbate weather patterns that are already volatile, unpredictable and subject to extremes. The impact of El Niño continues to be felt in 2016, with the UN estimating that the number of people likely to be affected during the year in high risk developing countries could reach 60 million.<sup>25</sup>