

# UN report: Older people at particular risk from climate change

Elderly people are at particular risk from the consequences of climate change, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a report on Thursday.

“Heat waves are among the most frequent and deadly impacts of climate change, along with floods and shrinking ice cover,” said Inger Andersen, the UNEP’s executive director. “We must be prepared for the risks these impacts pose, especially for society’s most vulnerable, including older persons.”

Annual heat-related deaths among older people have risen by around 85% since the 1990s.

Older people – especially those suffering from chronic illnesses or frailty and with limited mobility – are particularly susceptible to heat-related health problems, including respiratory, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. The mortality rate is also higher in this group.

The combination of heat and high humidity, which is already being observed during heatwaves in some tropical regions, is particularly dangerous for elderly people.

Warming cities are also increasingly problematic, especially as the urban population is increasing worldwide.