

Advancing resilience and sustainability in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

GCCED Fragile States Portfolio 2026

Pakistan — Water Stress and Climate Risk

Snapshot: Population ~241 million | GDP per capita ~US\$1,505 | Fragility context: Climate-vulnerable developing state | Region: South Asia

Integrated Context

Pakistan is among the countries most exposed to the intensifying impacts of climate change, where environmental stress is closely linked to development pressures and systemic vulnerabilities. The country faces a complex mix of climate risks, including recurrent flooding, accelerated glacial melt, prolonged droughts, and increasingly severe heatwaves. The 2022 floods underscored the scale of this exposure, affecting millions of people and highlighting critical gaps in disaster preparedness and infrastructure resilience.

At the same time, rapid urbanization and growing population pressures are placing significant strain on water resources, infrastructure systems, and environmental quality. Groundwater depletion, inefficient water use, and weak coordination across water management institutions are compounding long-term water insecurity. Urban areas are particularly vulnerable, with heat stress, air pollution, and inadequate planning increasing risks for densely populated communities.

Addressing these challenges requires integrated adaptation strategies that connect water governance, climate-resilient agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and urban climate planning.

Key Climate and Environmental Challenges

- Recurrent flooding and accelerating glacial melt
- Water scarcity and unsustainable groundwater use
- Intensifying heatwaves and urban climate vulnerability
- Air pollution and broader environmental degradation

GCCED Engagement Priorities

- Strengthening flood-risk management and early warning systems
- Promoting climate-resilient and water-efficient agriculture
- Advancing integrated water governance and resource management
- Supporting urban climate adaptation and resilient infrastructure planning

Strategic Note

Pakistan's climate resilience will depend on its ability to manage water as a central pillar of development while strengthening disaster preparedness and urban systems. Coordinated investments across sectors—particularly in water governance, agriculture, and cities—will be essential to reducing risk and supporting long-term, climate-resilient growth.

SDG Alignment: 6 • 11 • 13 • 15