

# The FIFA World Cup puts climate change on the global agenda

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, June 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico is by far the most carbon-intensive tournament in football history.

An estimated 9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – driven largely by air travel from 48 national teams and millions of spectators – is roughly double the footprint of the Qatar World Cup and equivalent to around one quarter of Denmark's annual greenhouse gas emissions.



Mathare 2024, Copyright: Jesper Houborg/DanChurchAid

At the same time, the tournament is helping put climate change on the global agenda.

“Extreme weather, rising temperatures, floods and droughts affect everyone – but they hit the world’s most vulnerable communities the hardest. Yet when climate change starts disrupting the World Cup, it attracts far more attention than when scientists, NGOs and activists try to raise the alarm. For the first time, a Football World Cup is taking place where climate change is not merely a future risk but a real operational challenge,” said Jonas Nøddekær, Secretary General of [DanChurchAid](#).

He continued:

“It is absurd, but when players from France and Iraq and 60,000 spectators have to seek shelter from severe thunderstorms over Philadelphia, billions of football fans suddenly realise that extreme weather cannot be solved with an extra cooling break after 22 minutes of play. It requires action. At some point, football’s most powerful organisations – led by FIFA – will have to respond if football is to remain a viable outdoor sport in a changing climate.”

DanChurchAid is partnering with the organisation [Football for Future](#) to highlight the need for

climate adaptation of football pitches and local communities in connection with the World Cup.

Football for Future's report, Pitches in Peril, shows that 14 of the 16 World Cup host stadiums have already experienced conditions that exceed recognised safe-play thresholds due to extreme heat, severe thunderstorms and lightning, flooding and extreme rainfall.

At the same time, the two organisations are drawing attention to the need for climate adaptation in Nairobi, where devastating floods in 2024 claimed hundreds of lives, displaced hundreds of thousands of people and left football pitches in the Mathare informal settlement under water. Today, with support from local communities, these pitches have been restored.

Elliot Arthur-Worsop, Founder of Football for Future, says:

"Mathare reminds us that the future of football is not only decided in stadiums. It is shaped on community pitches, in local neighbourhoods and through the opportunities football creates for young people every day. As East Africa prepares to host AFCON 2027, we have a unique opportunity to ensure the tournament leaves a legacy that strengthens and protects the places where the game begins."

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