

NCC: Global warming will elevate relief costs: Reduced availability of food and water expected

News in the [May 6, 2008](#) issue

Global warming will force faith organizations to significantly increase spending on humanitarian efforts—including refugee resettlement, food distribution and disaster relief—according to a new study by the National Council of Churches.

More financial resources and volunteer services will be needed due to global climate change, which is expected to reduce the availability of food, shelter and water, especially among the poor, the study said.

“Individuals or communities living in poverty in developing countries tend to rely on their surroundings more for their day-to-day needs,” said Tyler Edgar, associate director of the NCC’s Climate and Energy Campaign. “These people are more likely to go down to a local river or stream to bring water for their family. With climate change, those systems are extremely vulnerable.”

The report uses data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to quantify the financial effects of global climate change on church ministry efforts.

The NCC’s Church World Service and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, for example, will need to increase funding sixfold to support nearly 83,000 additional refugees coming to the U.S.

The current trend indicates that over the next 30 years, more than half of all hurricanes will be category four or five.

“Our churches contributed over \$150 million to Katrina relief alone. In the aftermath, we decided we had to do some hard financial planning for future humanitarian efforts,” said NCC general secretary Michael Kinnamon. “If we, as churches, are to fulfill our call to minister to those in need, we have to wake up to the implications of global warming.”