

World Fire Congress Communities of Practice

Topic Abstracts — 2026 London Congress

4. Fire in Low- and Middle-Income Nations (LMICs)

Fire is one of the world's most inequitable killers. It is estimated that more than 150,000 people die from fires or burn-related injuries every year, and over 95% of those deaths and burn injuries occur in low- and middle-income countries. Death rates in LMICs are nearly six times higher than in high-income countries, driven by a combination of dense informal settlements, combustible construction materials, open-flame cooking, unreliable electricity, and severely under-resourced fire and rescue services. Urban fires in LMICs are an everyday disaster — and fire outcomes are consistently worse for those of lower socioeconomic status wherever they live, reflected in greater fatalities, permanent disabilities, and damage to livelihoods with long-term consequences for community development. This is not a problem that high-income nations observe from a distance: it is a shared global failure, and a shared global responsibility. This Community of Practice centers the voices, experience, and leadership of fire service practitioners and researchers from LMICs, while engaging the full breadth of the WFC membership in honest conversation about capacity building, technology transfer, community-based fire risk reduction, informal settlement safety, and how the global fire community can work in genuine partnership — not charity — to close the gap between where fire risk is highest and where fire service investment is lowest. [UNDRR](#) [PMC Improved Fire Risk Assessment](#) [IFSC](#)