

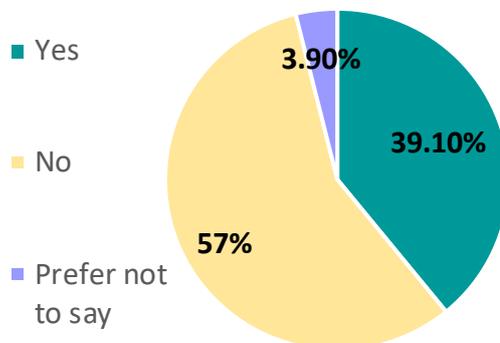
## Human population growth is not the main driver of climate change

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Climate anxiety is widespread in children and young people in countries across the world, many believing that population growth is the root cause. However, what does the data show?

**But**, studies show that global resource use is primarily driven by increases in affluence, not population growth<sup>2</sup>

Proportion of young people hesitant to have children due to climate change<sup>1</sup>



Global survey of 10,000 people aged 16 to 25<sup>1</sup>

When asked what climate change made them think of having children, **39.1%** of young people said they are **hesitant**

**High- to upper-middle-income nations account for 78% of material consumption**, despite having slower population growth rates than the rest of the world.

## Confronting carbon inequality: Putting climate justice at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery<sup>3</sup>

### Objective

❖ To demonstrate the extent of global carbon inequality by estimating and comparing the lifestyle consumption emissions of rich and poor citizens in different countries.

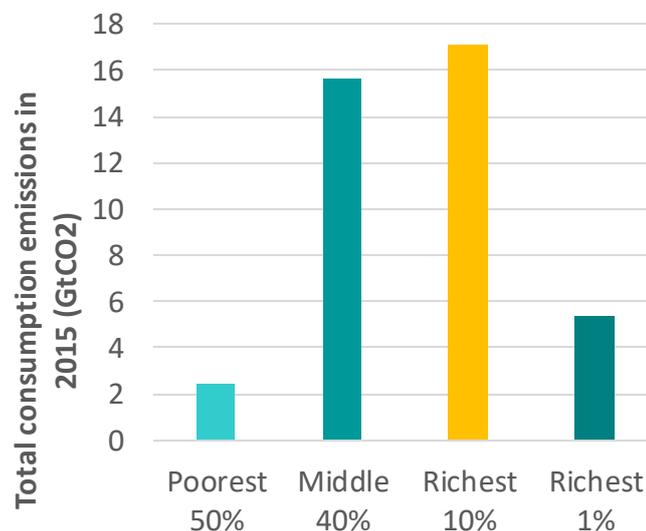
### Methods

- National income distribution data are obtained from analysis by Branko Milanovic, which provided percentile-level estimates of income for 118 countries in the benchmark year 2008, based on household surveys.
- CO2 emissions for 2007 from a Multi-Regional Input-Output model. Data are based on Le Quéré et al. (2014). The dataset covers 121 countries.

### Results

- ✓ The richest 10% of the population accounted for 46% of the total emissions growth in 2015.
- ✓ Over a third of the emissions of the richest 1% (5.7% of global emissions) are today linked to citizens in the US, with the next biggest contributions coming from residents of the Middle East and China.
- ✓ Reducing the per capita footprint of the richest 10% to the 1.5C-consistent level by 2030 would cut annual carbon emissions by over a third.

### Total emissions of individuals in different global income groups in 2015<sup>3</sup>



### Our interpretation:

- Climate change is not primarily driven by population growth, but by the lifestyles of the most wealthy members of society.
- More focus needs to be placed on how to adjust lifestyle choices (such as transport and housing) to slow the rate of climate change.

### References

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2. IRP (2019). Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want. Oberle, B., Bringezu, S., Hatfeld-Dodds, S., Hellweg, S., Schandl, H., Clement, J., et al. A Report of the International Resource Panel, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022, <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27518>
3. Extreme Confronting carbon Inequality: Putting climate justice at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery. Oxfam media briefing, accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/confronting-carbon-inequality>