

Universal Vulnerability Index

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Forward

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UVI
Framework

Key Points

Background



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Background

- UVI project in response to Foreign Ministers 2018 mandate to achieve universal agreement on vulnerability

Why UVI?

- Another small states index will not achieve mandate (Comsec, CDB, UN)
 - Global consensus requires inclusion
 - Relativity needed for proof of focus on small states
-
- Secretariat sought to achieve:
 - An inclusive index
 - Move from a static to dynamic approach (time series)
 - Factor multiple dimensions
 - Account for resilience
 - Foster consensus - seeking to achieve a marrying of technical and political views

Small States, SIDS & LDCs

Other Indices



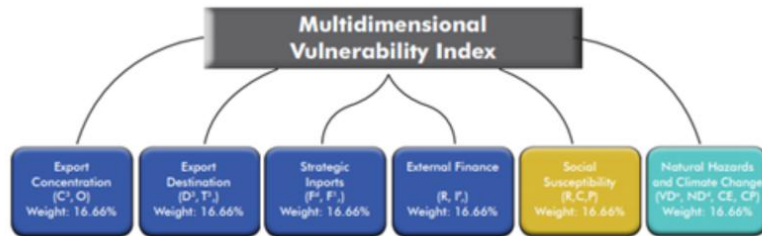
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Other Indices

Caribbean Development Bank (2019)

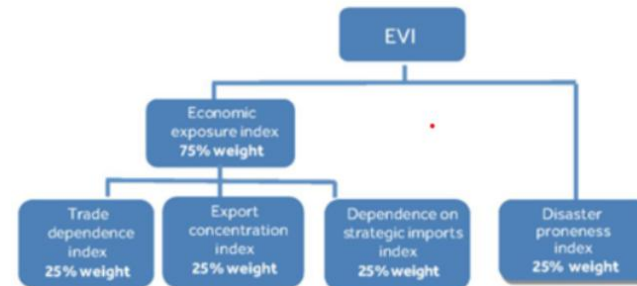


The proxy indicators in the Vulnerability Index are as follows:

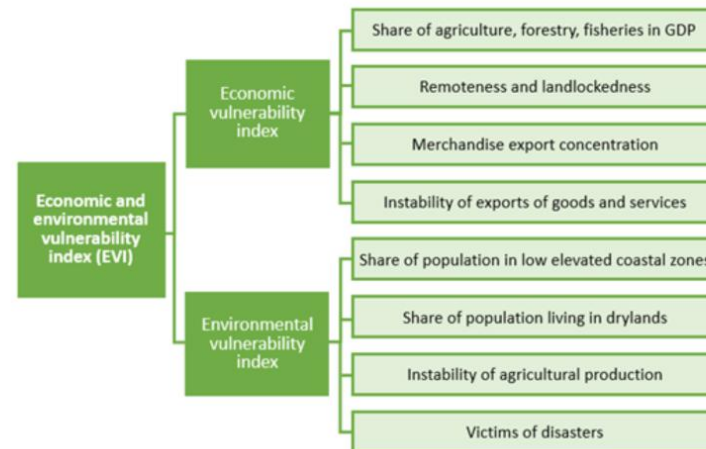
Vulnerability = average (E³, O); (D³, T³); (F⁴, F); (R, I); (C, U, P); (ND^a, ND^a; CE, CP)

- C³ = the proportion of total exports of goods and services represented by the top three export categories.
- O = total exports of goods and services¹⁰ as a percentage of GDP.
- D³ = the proportion of total exports of goods converging on the top three export destinations.
- T³ = the proportion of total tourists from the top three source countries.
- F⁴ = Food imports as a percentage of total imports.
- F = Fuel imports as a percentage of total imports.
- R = the ratio of annual remittances to GDP.
- I = the ratio of the annual flow of FDI to GDP.
- C = the number of intentional homicides per 100,000 population.
- U = the rate of unemployed persons in the labour force.
- P = the rate of persons living in poverty.
- ND^a = the number of persons affected by natural disasters, as a proportion of total population.
- ND^d = the number of deaths resulting from natural disasters, as a proportion of total population.
- CE = the economic losses or gains of climate change (Dara Climate Index).
- CP = the economic losses or gains of carbon (Dara Climate Index).

Commonwealth Secretariat (2014)



UN Committee for Development Policy (2020)



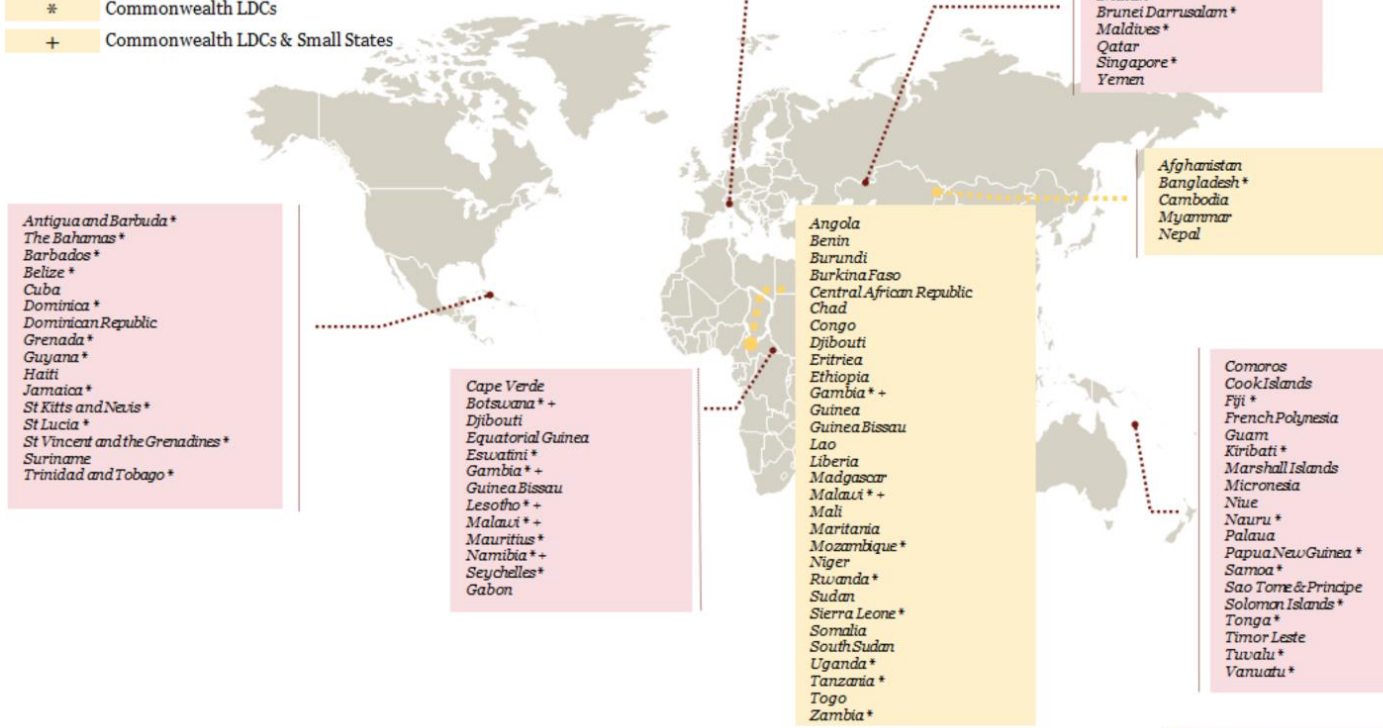
The key publications which exemplify the Commonwealth Secretariat's contributions to the vulnerability dialogue are:

- 1985: *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*. Commonwealth Consultative Group Report
- 1996: *Measurement of the Vulnerability of Small States*. Chander, R.
- 1997: *Composite Vulnerability Index: A Revised Report*. Wells, J.
- 1997: *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*. Commonwealth Advisory Group Report
- 1998: *A Study on the Vulnerability of Developing and Island States: A Composite Index*. Atkins et al
- 2000: *Commonwealth Vulnerability Index for Developing Countries: The Position of Small States*. Atkins et al
- 2004: *Vulnerability and Resilience of Small States*. Eds. Briguglio, L. and EJ Kisanga
- 2006: *Building the Economic Resilience of Small States*. Eds. Briguglio, L. G Cordina, and E Kisanga
- 2010: *Profiling Vulnerability and Resilience: A Manual for Small States*. Briguglio et al
- 2014: *Building the Resilience of Small States: A Revised Framework*. Ed. Lewis-Bynoe, D

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- Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- * Commonwealth SIDS & Small States
- + Commonwealth Small States Only
- Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
- * Commonwealth LDCs
- + Commonwealth LDCs & Small States



Small States

Countries with populations less than 1.5 million (few exceptions) which face severe vulnerabilities to economic and environmental shocks.

Small Island Developing States

Island countries with populations less than 1.5 million (few exceptions) which face severe vulnerabilities to economic and environmental shocks.

Least Developed Countries

Low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, and have low levels of human assets.

Key Points

- Vulnerability more precisely **defined**: exposure, shocks and resilience
- UVI is all encompassing and is best opportunity to centralise definition and measurement of vulnerability
- Index can be adapted to needs of all groups: small states; LDCs, regions (replacing other indices in time)
- Can track changes in vulnerability across time
- Assesses both structural and non-structural factors

Technician

Policymaker



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Policy Maker

Points to note

The model/index seeks to explain vulnerability using (constrained by) best available data

The objective is to build an index which, given constraints, best estimates countries' **real** (factoring resilience) exposure to shocks



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Technician

Points to note

In designing the framework, we were careful to:

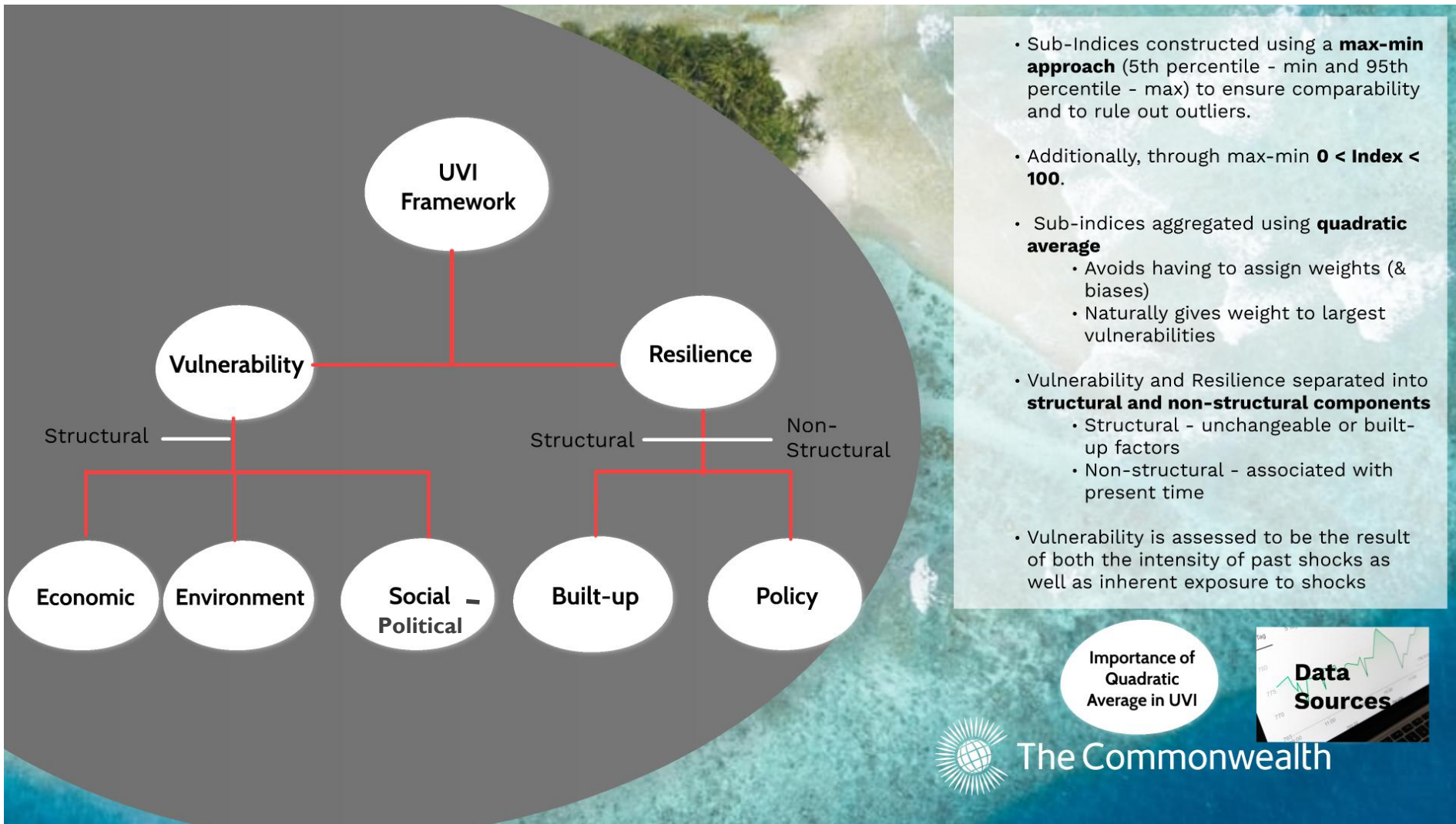
- Build on existing work, including indices by Comsec, CDB and UN GDP
- Avoid redundancy in components of indicators
- Use internationally recognised indicators (legitimacy) with broad data coverage



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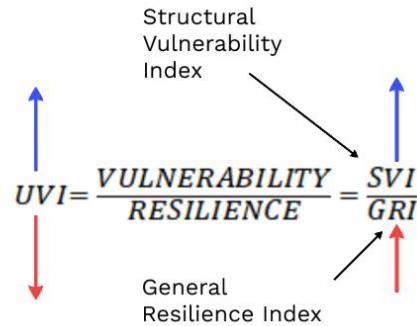


- Sub-Indices constructed using a **max-min approach** (5th percentile - min and 95th percentile - max) to ensure comparability and to rule out outliers.
- Additionally, through max-min **0 < Index < 100**.
- Sub-indices aggregated using **quadratic average**
 - Avoids having to assign weights (& biases)
 - Naturally gives weight to largest vulnerabilities
- Vulnerability and Resilience separated into **structural and non-structural components**
 - Structural - unchangeable or built-up factors
 - Non-structural - associated with present time
- Vulnerability is assessed to be the result of both the intensity of past shocks as well as inherent exposure to shocks



Universal Vulnerability Index

Multiplicative Approach



Where,

$UVI > 1.5$	→ Vulnerability significantly exceeds Resilience	→ Extremely Vulnerable
$1.5 < UVI < 1$	→ Vulnerability somewhat less than Resilience	→ Highly Vulnerable
$1 < UVI < 0.5$	→ Vulnerability > partially matched by Resilience	→ Vulnerable
$UVI < 0.5$	→ Vulnerability fully compensated by Resilience	→ Resilient

Definition

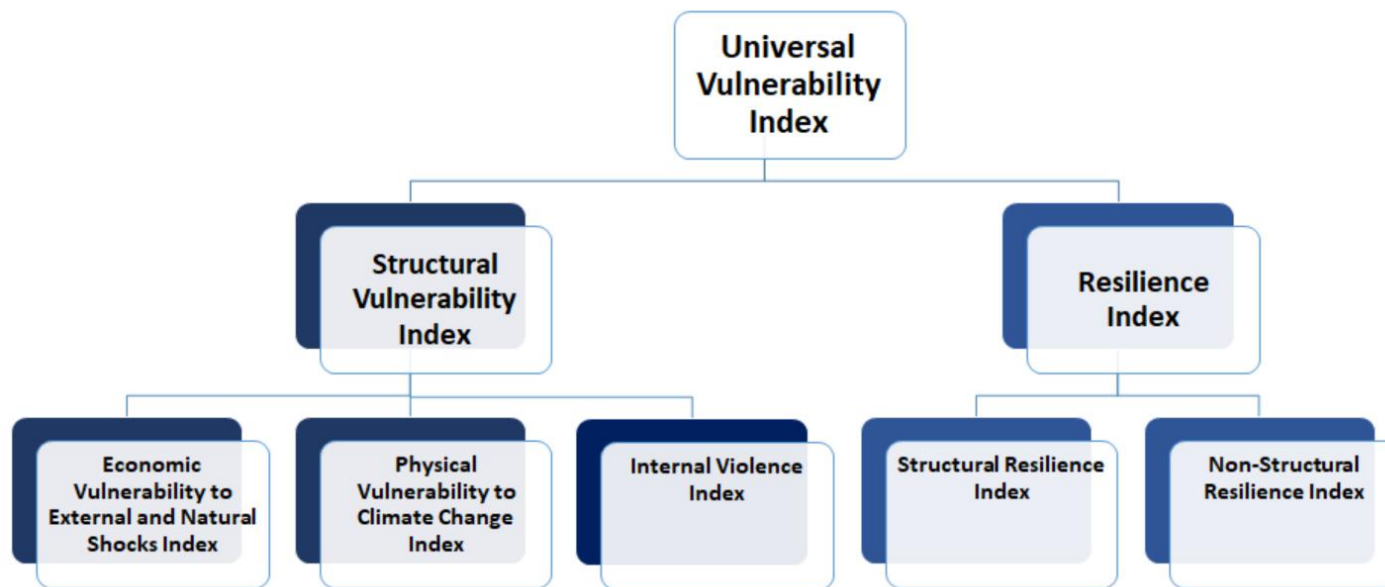
A country's net/real exposure to harm factoring their vulnerability and level of resilience (response) to shocks.

- Such that an **increase** in resilience (GRI) **reduces** UVI
- In contrast, an **increase** in vulnerability (SVI) **increases** UVI
- The multiplicative approach is intuitive and good for interpretation of vulnerability
- Scores lower than one are not be taken literally to mean resilience, as it only implies that the country has some ability to respond to shocks, not that they are totally resilient
- UVI scores closer to zero are more in line with the concept of full resilience and where countries should aspire to be



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Universal Vulnerability Index



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Structural Vulnerability Index

$$SVI = \sqrt{\frac{EVENSI^2 + PVCI^2 + IVI^2}{3}}$$

Vulnerability to External and Natural Shocks Index (Economic)

Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change (Environmental)

Internal Violence Index (Social)

Definition:

Structural vulnerability is natural/inherent exposure to shocks and probability of being harmed due to the frequency and intensity of past exogenous shocks



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General Resilience Index

$$GRI = \sqrt{\frac{SRI^2 + NSRI^2}{2}}$$

Structural Resilience Index (Built-up)

Non-Structural Resilience Index (Policy Performance)

Definition

Resilience is the ability of a country to respond to shocks .

Structural resilience does not affect the size or intensity of the shock but rather the impact on sustainable development.

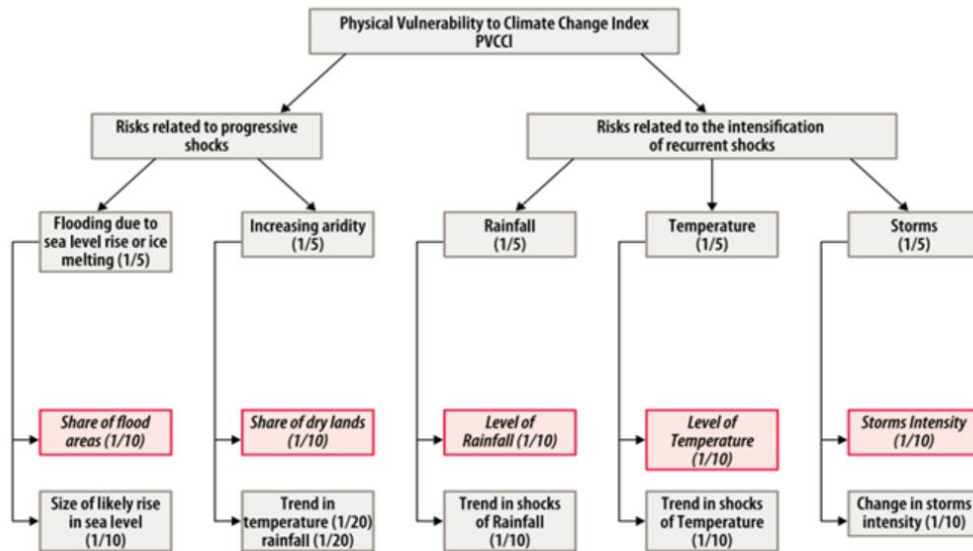
Non-structural resilience is reflected in current policy and can also determine the impact of shocks on sustainable development.

- Note that non-structural resilience (NSRI) by definition is the inverse equivalent of non-structural vulnerability (NSVI)
- For this reason and in line with the need to eliminate redundancy, a NSRI is not included directly since it is already captured. Hence why the index is not symmetrical along the structural and non-structural axes



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Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change Index (PVCII)



Notes: The boxes corresponding to last rows of the graph respectively refer to exposure components (red boxes, in italics) and to size of the shocks components.

- PVCII aggregated using quadratic average of risks related to progressive shocks (Exposure) and Risks related to intensification of recurrent shocks (Intensity). Exposure factors and intensity calculated using 10-year average.
- Similarly risks related to progressive shocks and risks related to intensification of recurrent shocks aggregated using QA

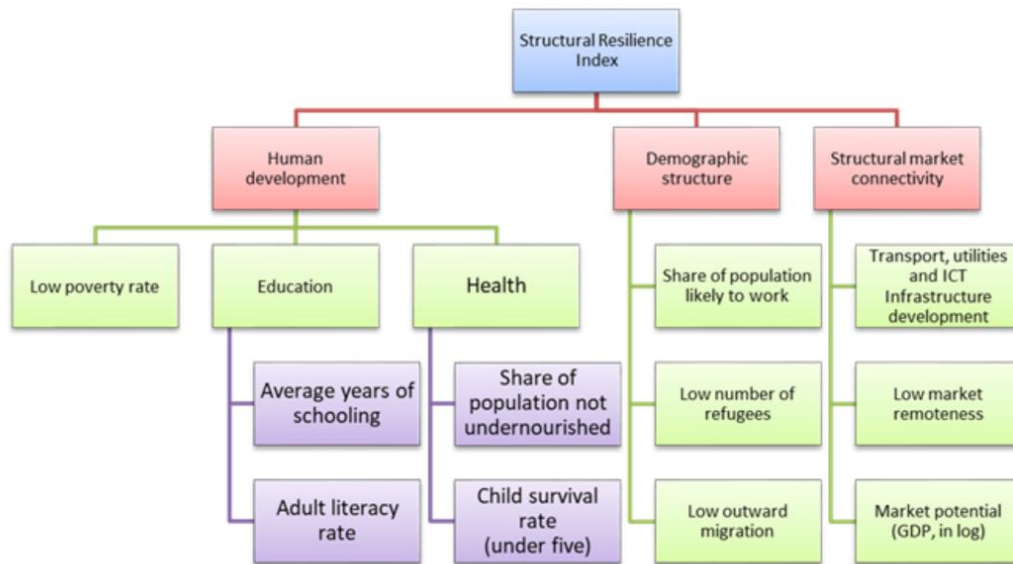


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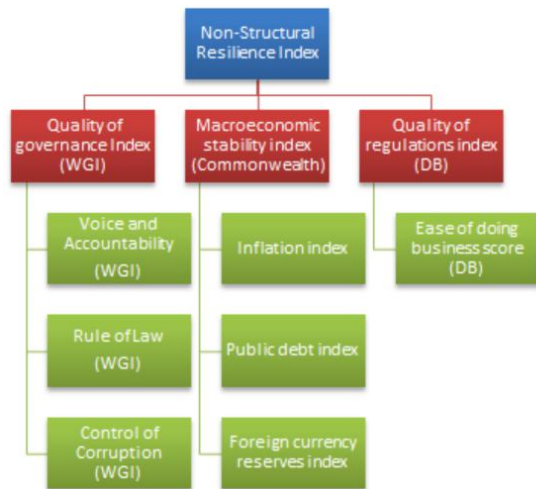
Structural Resilience Index (SRI)



- SRI aggregated using quadratic average of HDI, DS and SMC.
- Structural resilience is defined in the UVI framework as elements built-up over time that help to mitigate the impact of shocks
- As is reflected in the index these elements include structural connectivity and infrastructure; human development and its state of maturity; demography.



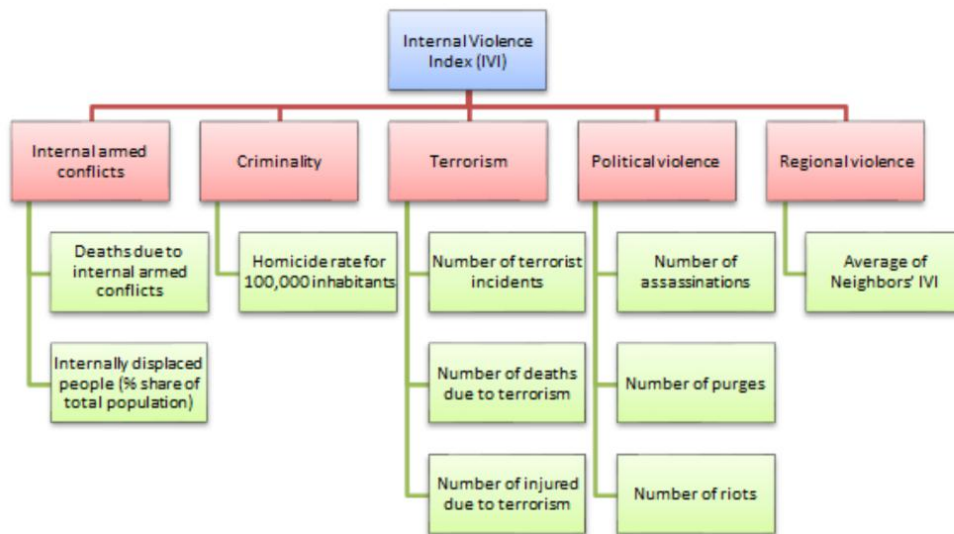
Non-Structural Resilience Index (NSRI)



- NSRI aggregated using quadratic average of QGI, MSI and QRI.
- Non-Structural Resilience is defined in the UVI framework as policy performance factors and is a near term rather than long term indicator



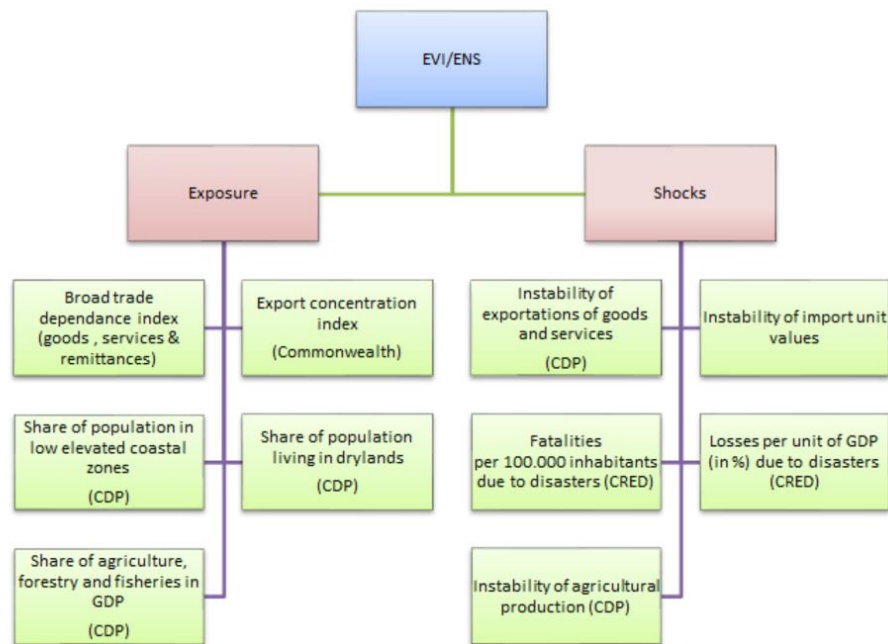
Internal Violence Index (IVI)



- The approach taken here is based on the core idea that vulnerability has to be as structural/exogenous as possible and that there must be as little overlap between indices as possible
- The main manifestation of social/ political vulnerability is the recurring existence of conflicts and violent events that the organisation of society is unable to ward off. What is then missing from the current framework is a measure of the intensity of past violent events
- Aggregation of IVI consistent with that of EVENSI and PVCI



Economic Vulnerability to Economic and Natural Shock Index (EVENSI)



- EVENSI aggregated using quadratic average of Exposure and Shock Indices. Computed using 10-year average.
- Exposure index captures traditional factors reflecting a country's inherent exposure to economic shocks
- Shocks index accounts for the fact that past shocks reflects an increased probability of future shocks. This index includes shocks related to the economy and natural disasters. Computed using 10-year average.



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Data Sources

Component	Variable	Source
Exposure	Broad trade dependence index defined as $(X + M + \text{Remit}) / (\text{GDP} + M)$	WB WDI and UNCTAD
	Export concentration index (Commonwealth method)	UNCTAD
	Share of population in LECZ	UN CDP
	Share of population in living in drylands	UN CDP
Shocks	Share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in GDP	UN CDP
	Instability of exportations	UN CDP
	Instability of import unit values	WB WDI
	Fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants due to disasters (Log)	EM-DAT, CRED
Internal armed conflicts	Losses per unit of GDP (in %) due to disasters (Log)	EM-DAT, CRED
	Instability of agricultural production	UN CDP
	Deaths due to internal armed conflicts per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	Prio, UCDP Battle-related Deaths Dataset
Criminality	Internally displaced people per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
	Homicide rate for 100,000 inhabitants	United Nations office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) and WHO
Terrorism	Number of terrorist incidents per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	Global Terrorism Database (GTD)
	Number of deaths due to terrorism per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	Global Terrorism Database (GTD)
	Number of injured due to terrorism per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	Global Terrorism Database (GTD)
Political violence	Regime transition Scaled violence	CSP PITF
Regional violence	Genocide/Politicide Scaled annual number of deaths	CSP PITF
	Average of neighbor's IVI	
Quality of governance index	Voice and accountability	WB WGI
	Rule of Law	WB WGI
	Control of corruption	WB WGI
Macroeconomic stability index	Inflation index growth rate $(\text{Log}(\text{SqRoot}(1 + I^2 + 1)))$	IMF WEO
	General government gross debt as % of GDP	IMF WEO
	Current Account Bal. As % of GDP	IMF WEO
Quality of regulations index	Ease of doing business	WB DoingBusiness
Human development	Low poverty rate	WB PovcalNET
	Average years of schooling	UNDP
	Adult literacy rate	UN CDP
	Share of pop. not undernourished (stunting)	UN CDP
Structural market connectivity	Child survival rate (under five)	UN CDP
	Transport, utilities and ICT infrastructure development (Road density, Access elec, Access water, Access Internet)	WB WDI and WRS 2015
	Low market remoteness	UN CDP
	$(V1.3 \ \& \ V1.4)$ Market potential (GDP in Log)	WB WDI, Unstats, IMF
Demographic structure	Share of pop. Likely to work (15-64)	WB WDI
	Low number of refugees per 100,000 inhabitants (Log)	UNHCR
	$(V1.4)$ Structural outward migration (median net migration rate over 1970-2020, positive rates set to zero)	UN DESA

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Results from the UVI Framework

- Based on 138 developing countries and for data up to 2018
- Reflect vulnerability of small states and LDCs
- Show high vulnerability and mix of high & low resilience among small states

Overview

Country Groups

Regions

Income Groups

Vulnerability Classifications

Global Rankings

Vulnerability Trends

Test for Redundancies

Heat Map

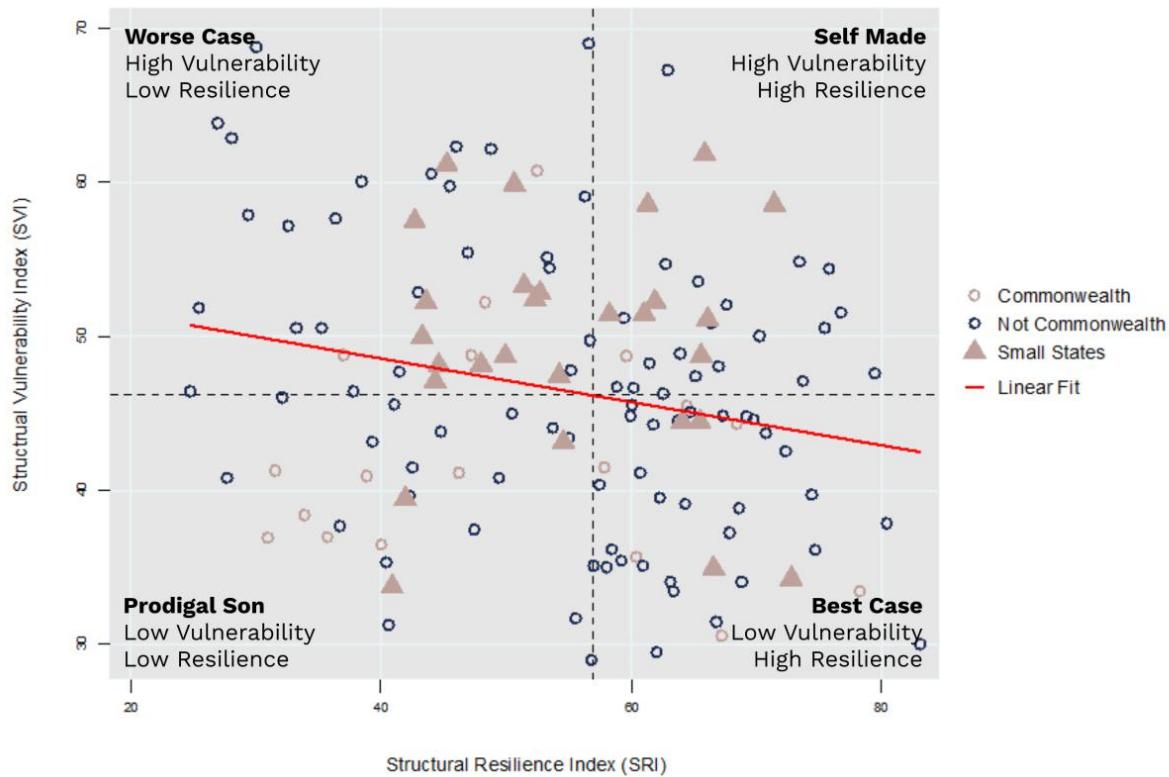


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Overview of UVI Results



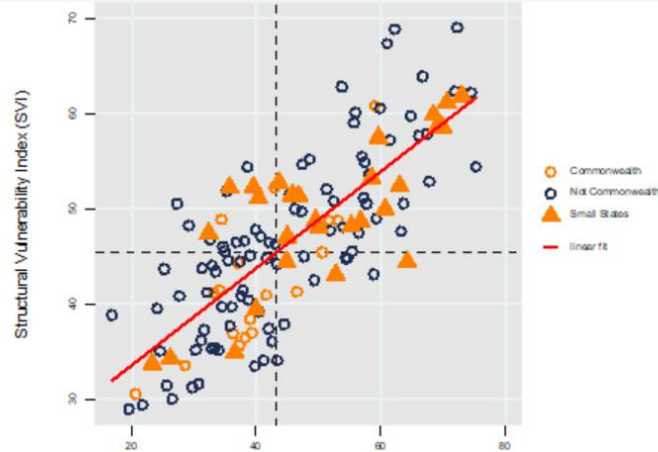
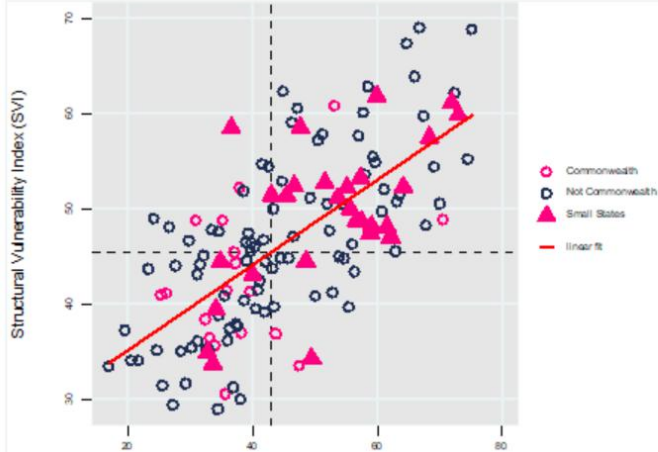
- Using analogy by Briguglio (2014) to categorise the interaction between vulnerability and resilience - Prodigal son; **Worse case**; **Best case**; and **Self-made**
- A significant proportion of Commonwealth **small states** in the worst case
- Quite a few **small states** are also in the self-made category
- Other SIDS results display similar dispersion
- A majority of **Commonwealth** countries (particularly LDCs) lie above the median (**red line**) and fall into either prodigal son or worse case categories

Contributions to
SVI

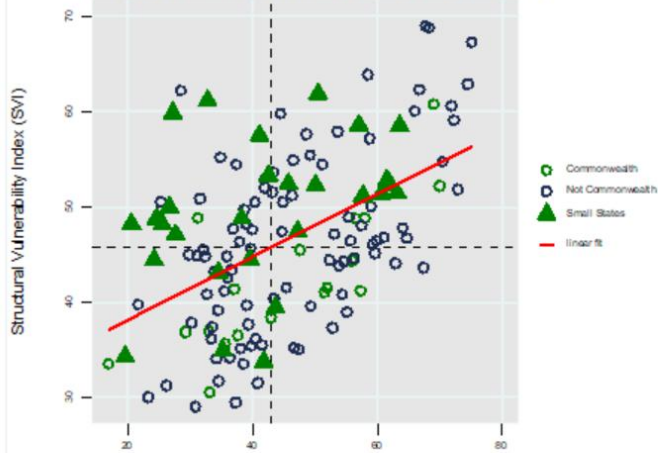
Contributions to
GRI

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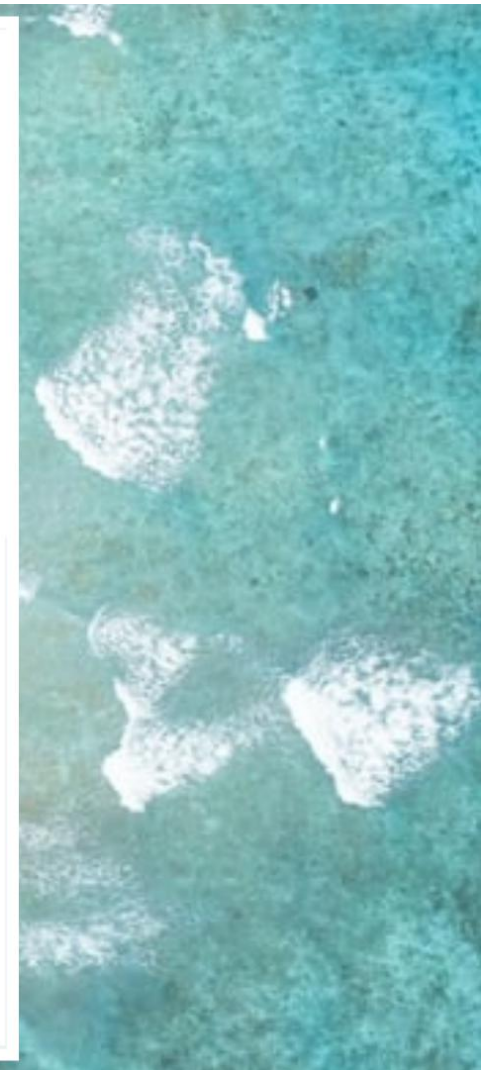


Economic Vulnerability to External and Natural Shocks (EVENS)



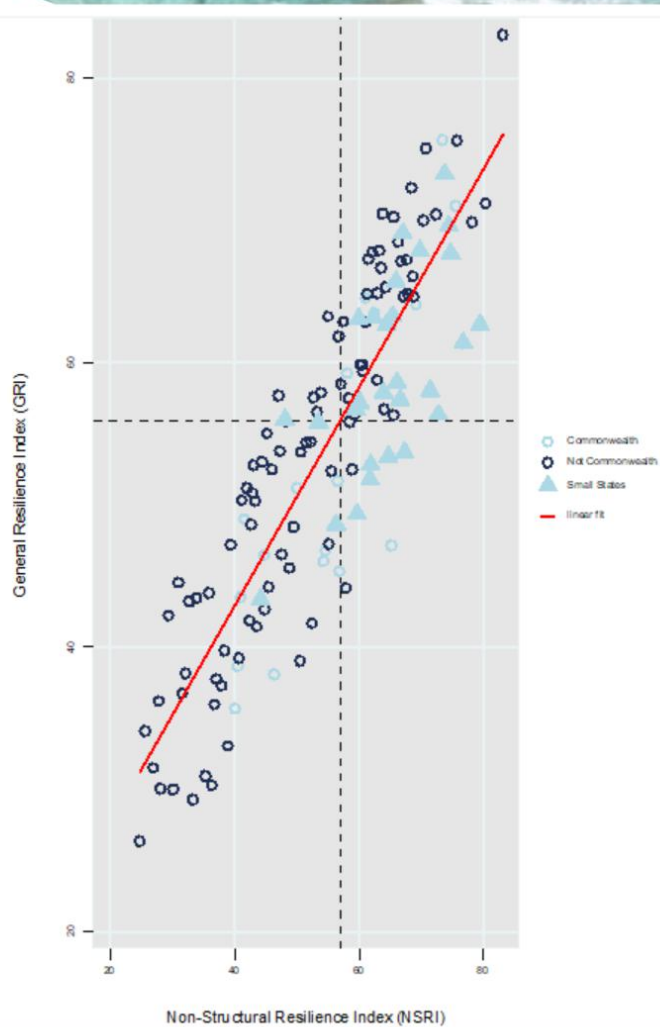
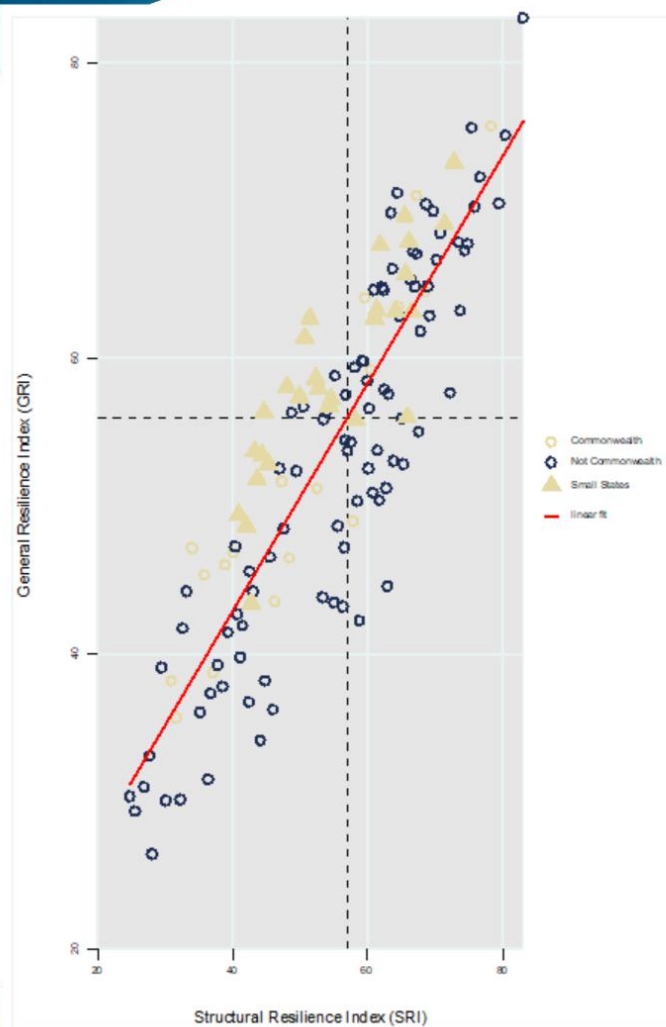
Internal Violence Index (IVI)

Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change Index (PVCI)



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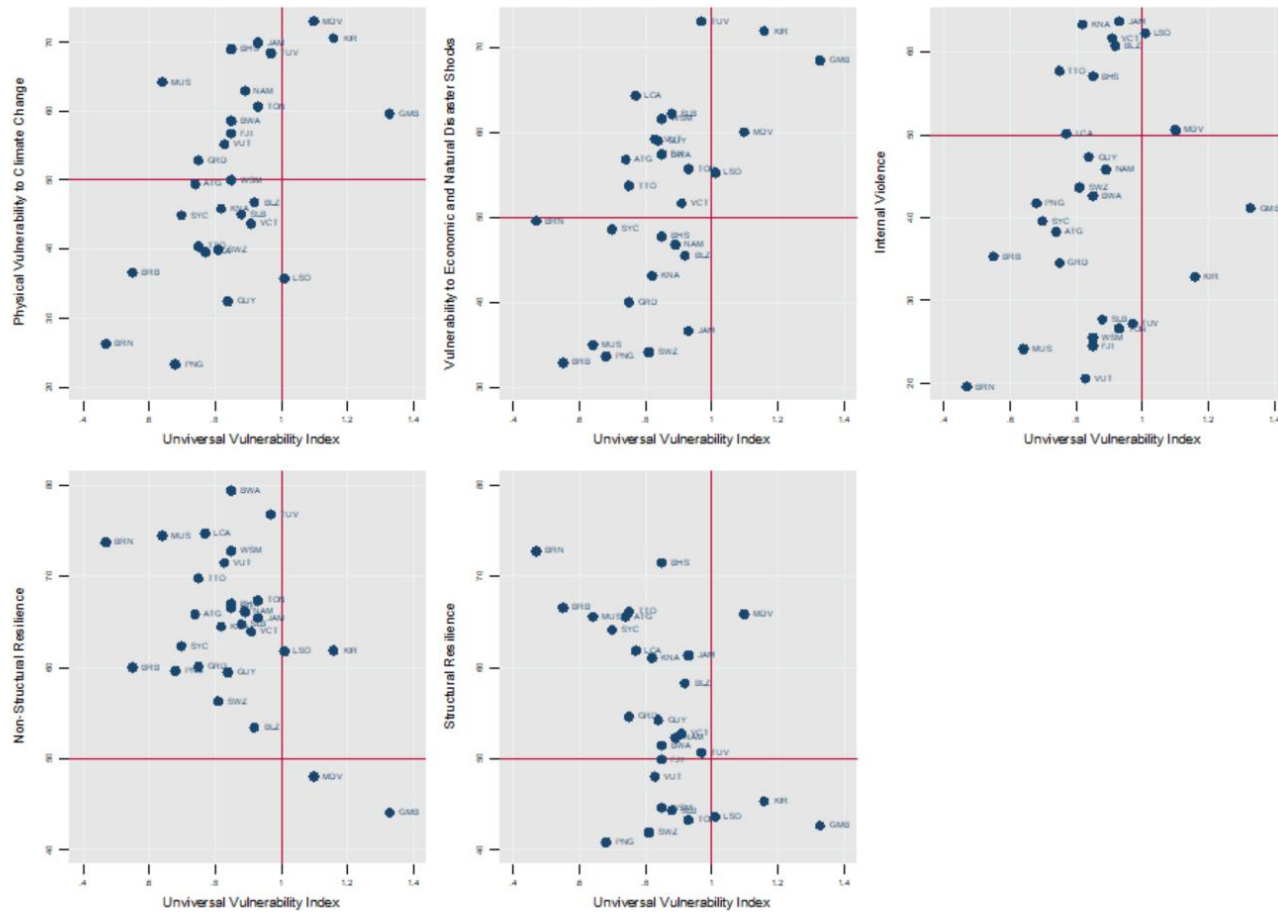
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Small States Results



- Small states display highest vulnerability to climate change and economic and external shocks
- LDCs show highest vulnerability to internal violence
- Overall Commonwealth small states show highest structural vulnerability
- LDCs show lowest structural and non-structural resilience, while small states account for highest levels of resilience (GRI) across the group

LDCs

SIDS

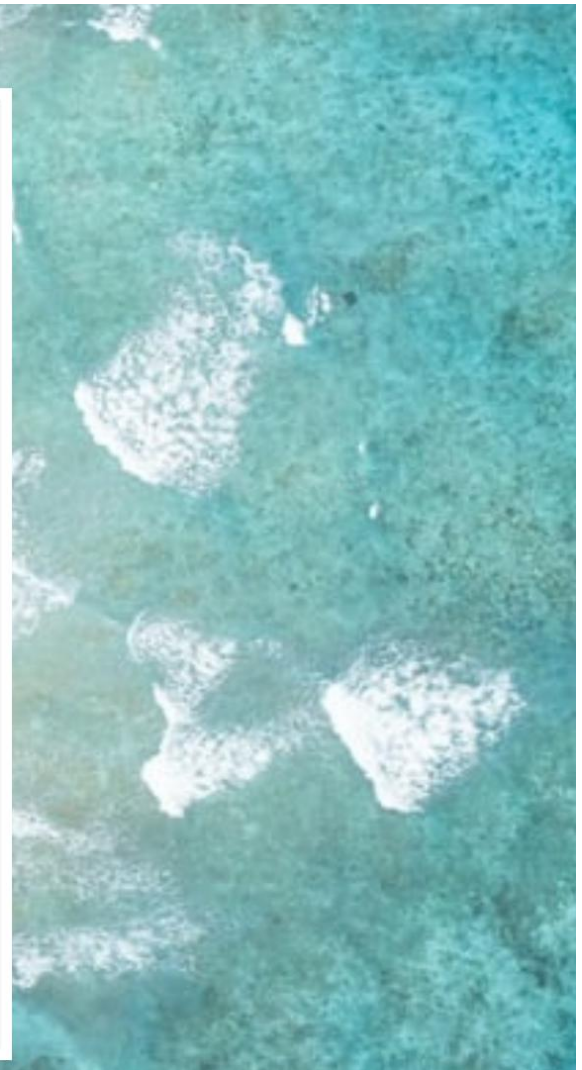
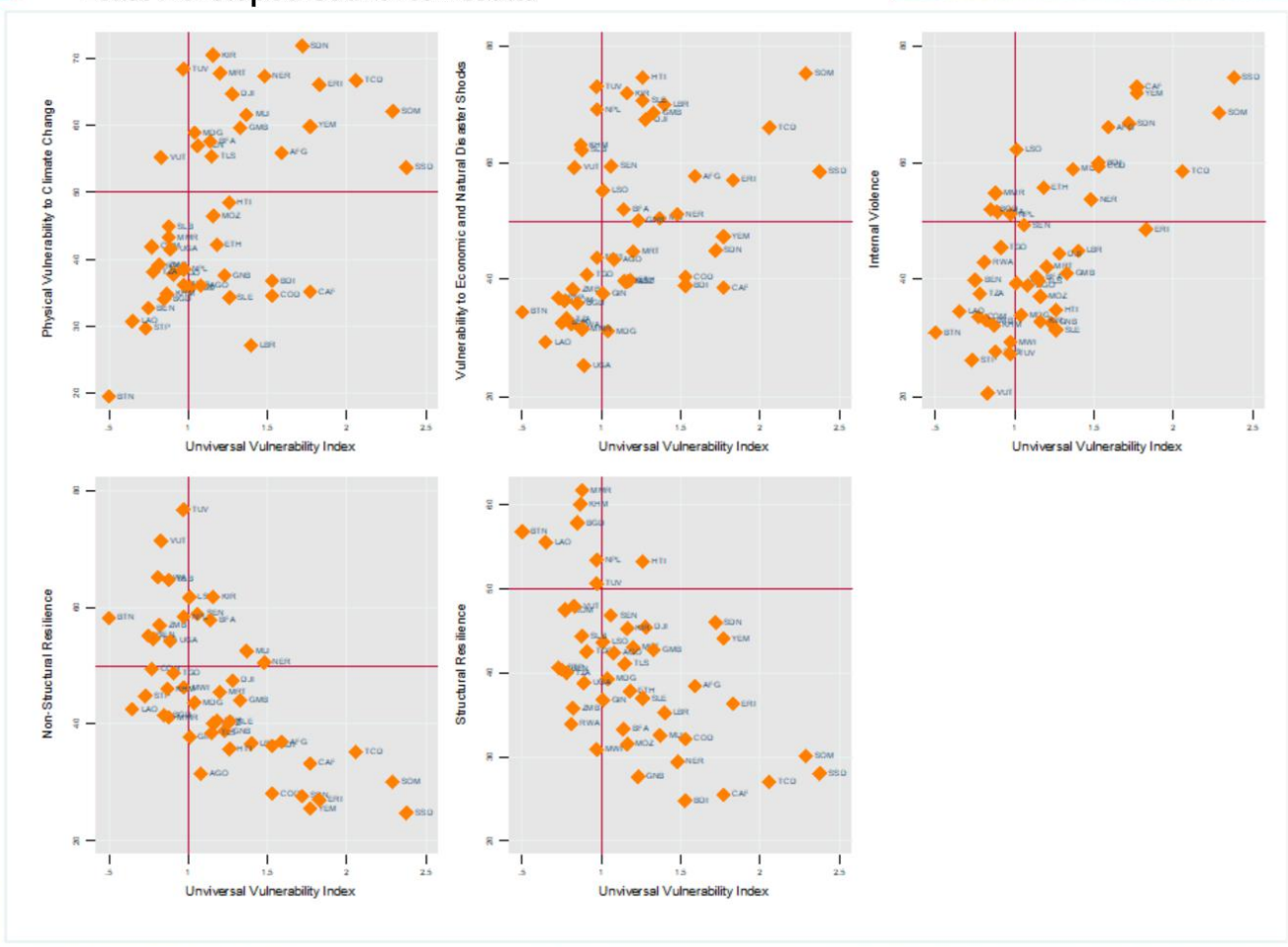


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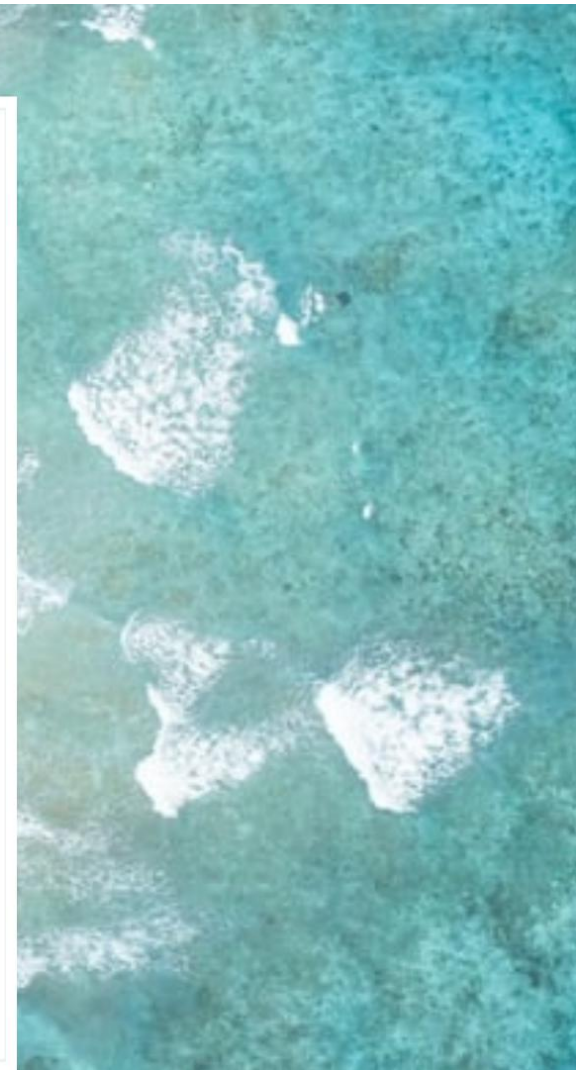
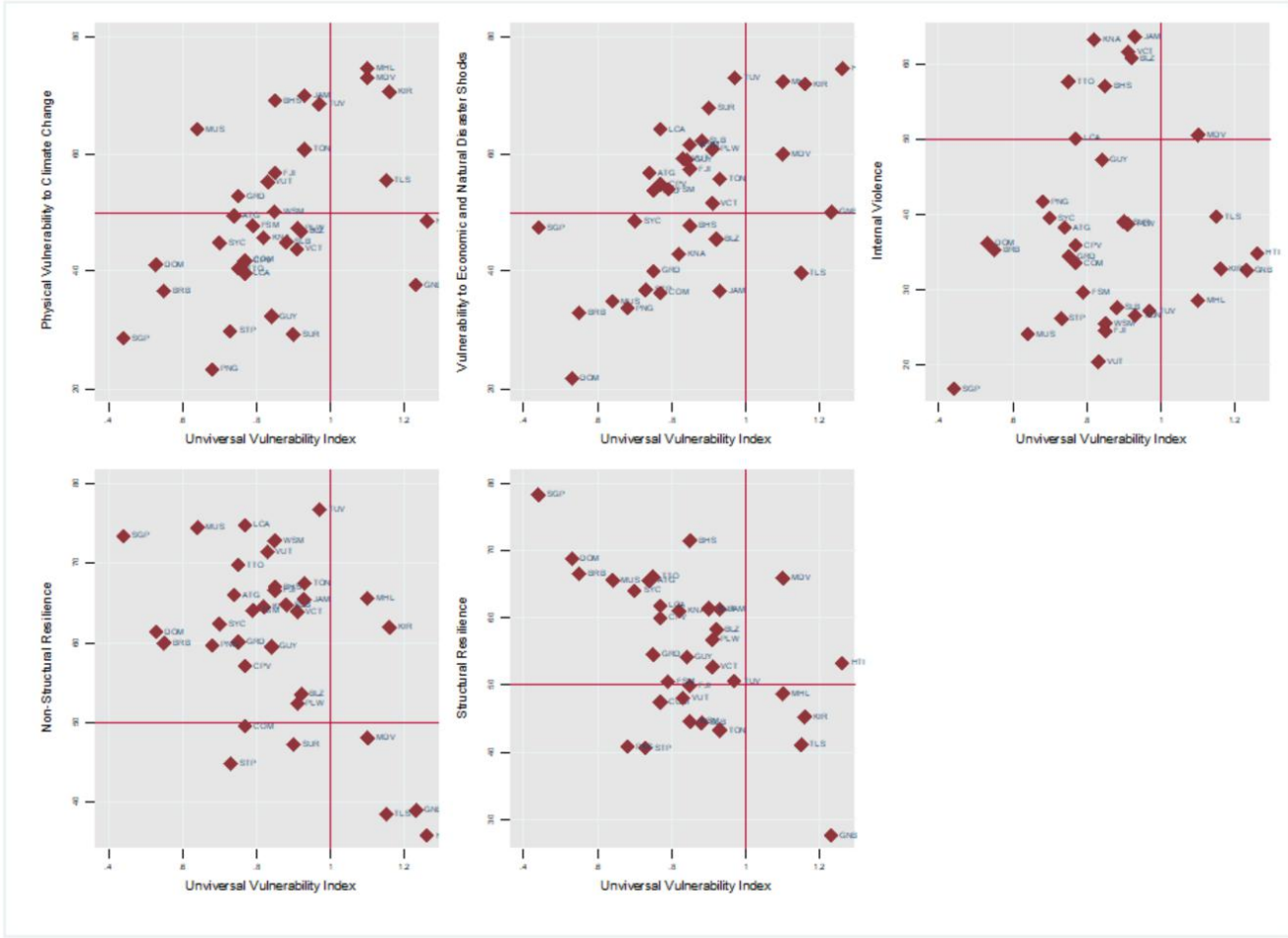
Least Developed Countries Results



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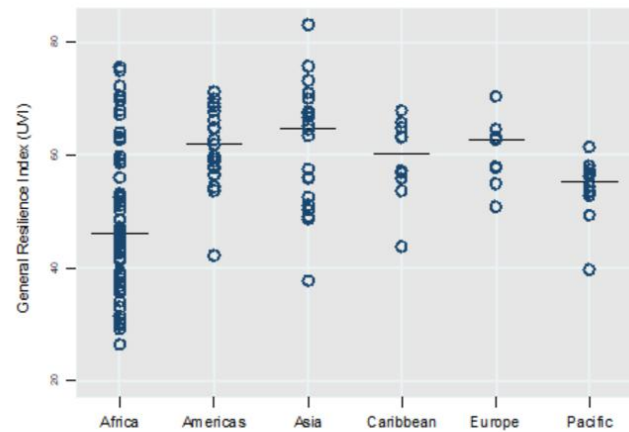
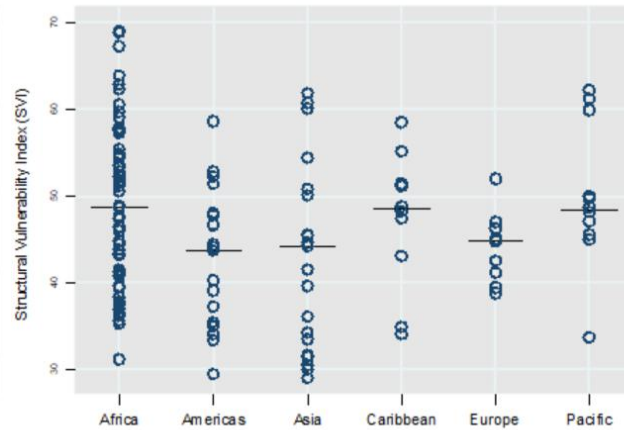
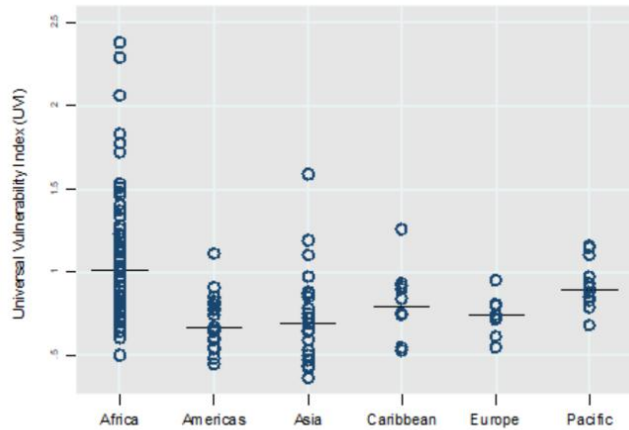
Small Island Developing States Results



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Results by Region



- Vulnerability to climate change and economic and external vulnerability driven by Pacific region
- Social/political vulnerabilities more pronounced in Asia region
- Lowest levels of resilience observed in Africa region (LDCs)

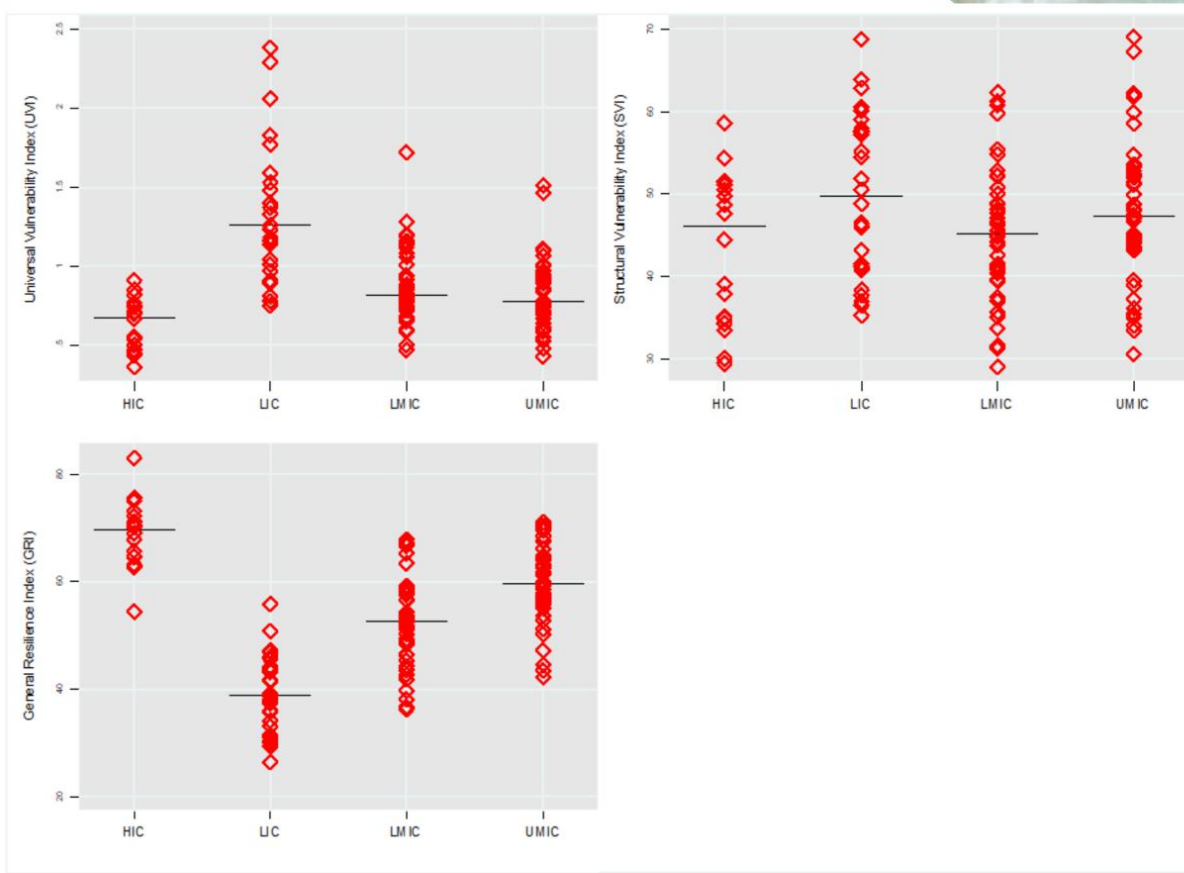


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Results by Income Group

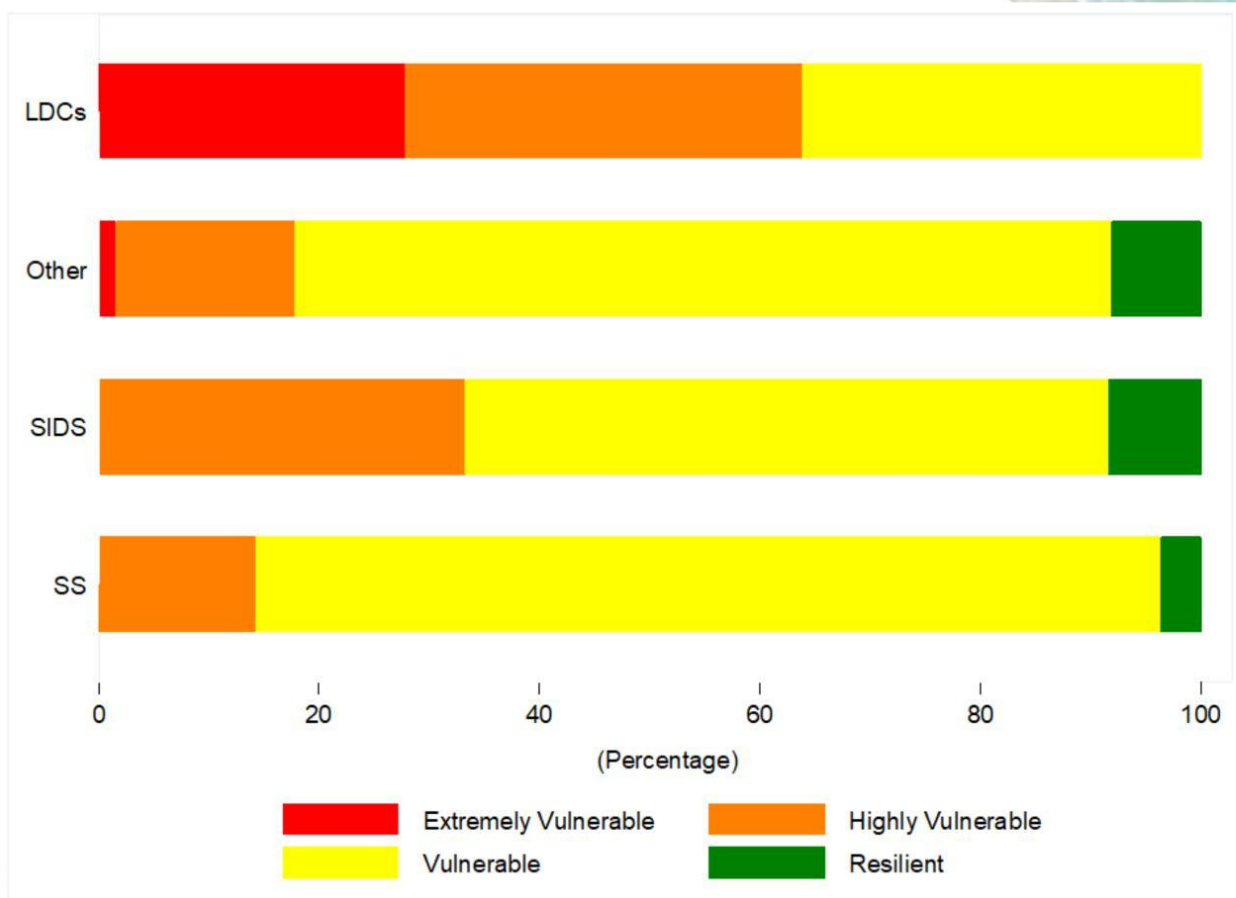


- Results reflect highest vulnerabilities across LIC group (LDCs) but also that UMIC more vulnerable than LMIC, affirming income not decisive predictor of vulnerability
- Resilience seems associated with levels of income



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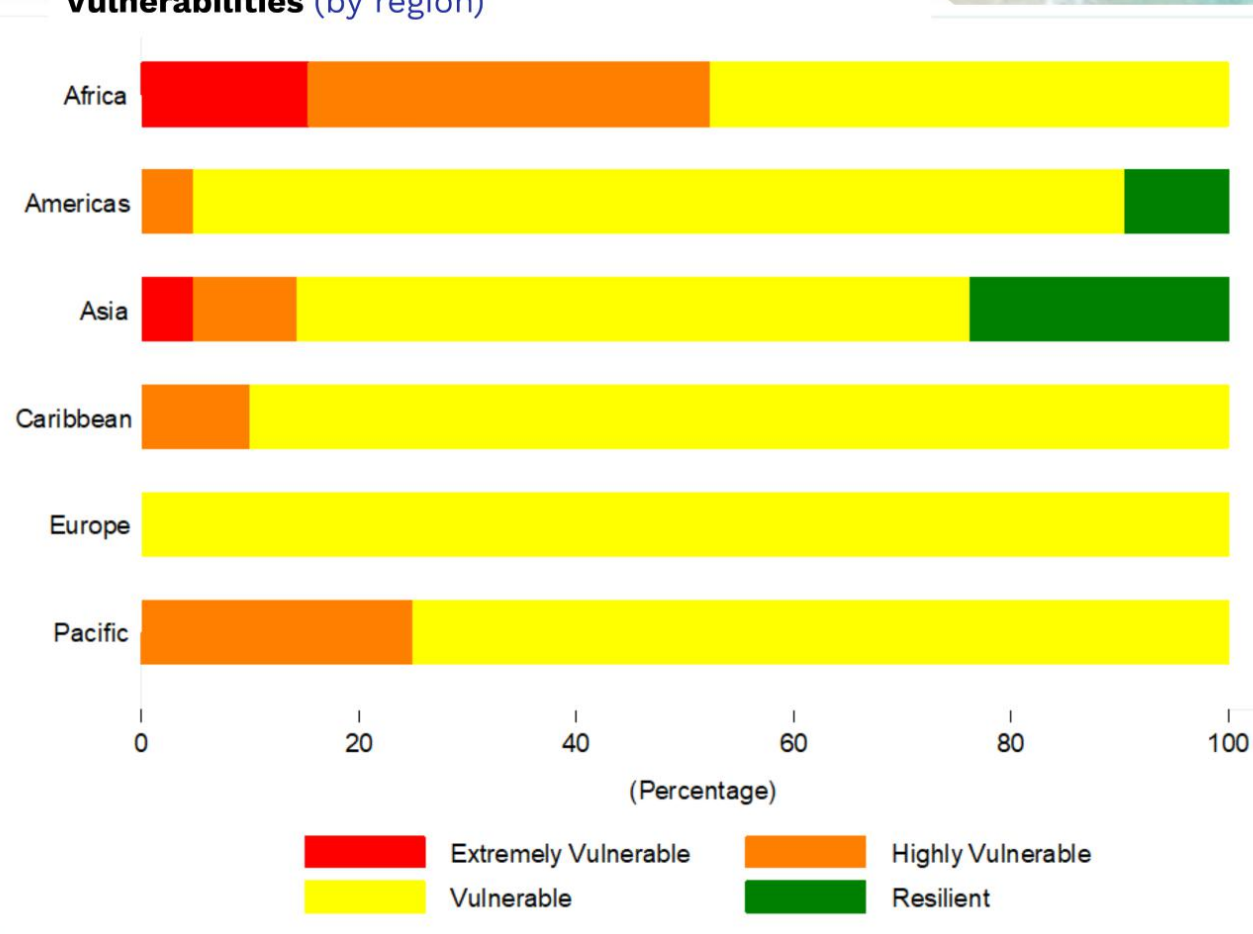
Classification of Developing Countries' Vulnerabilities (by country group)



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Classification of Developing Countries' Vulnerabilities (by region)

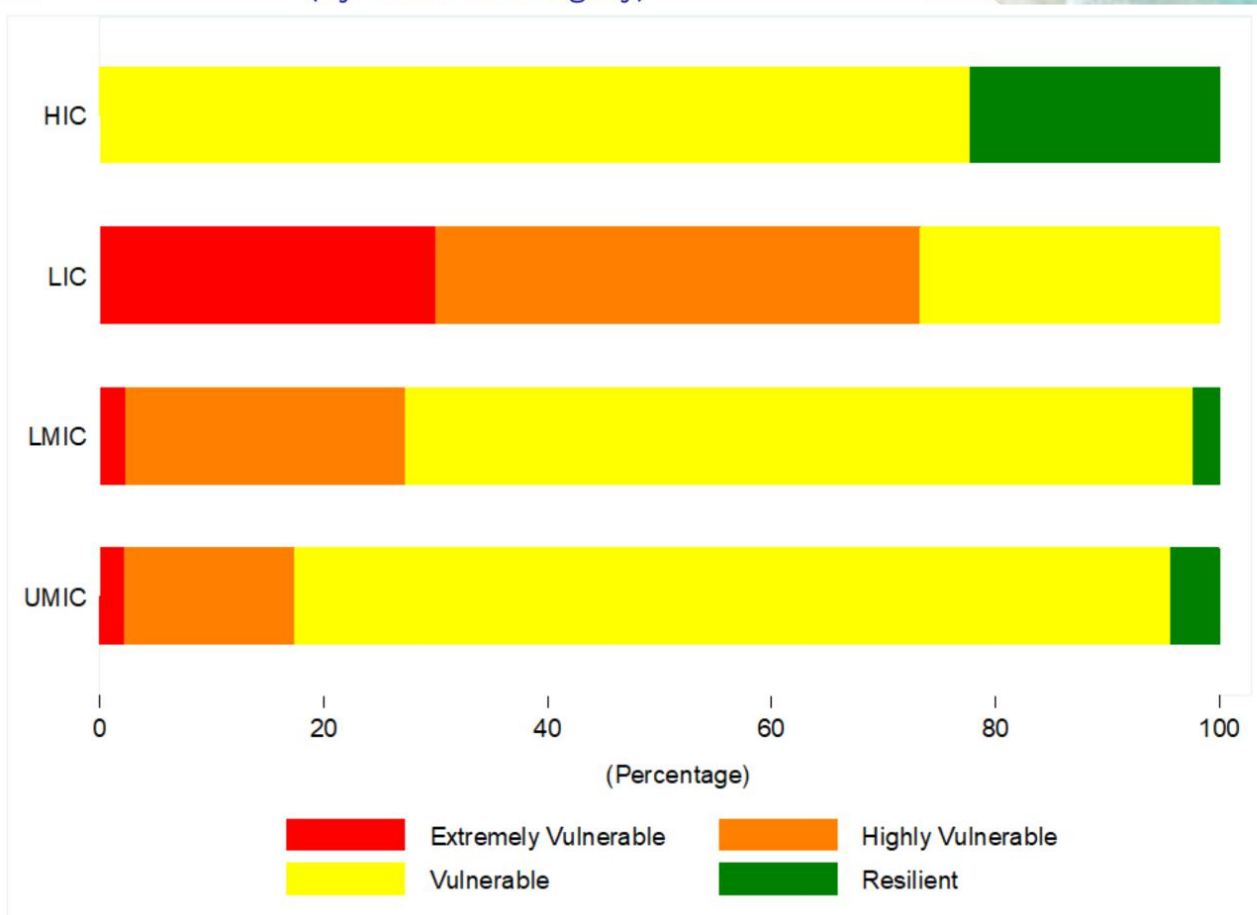


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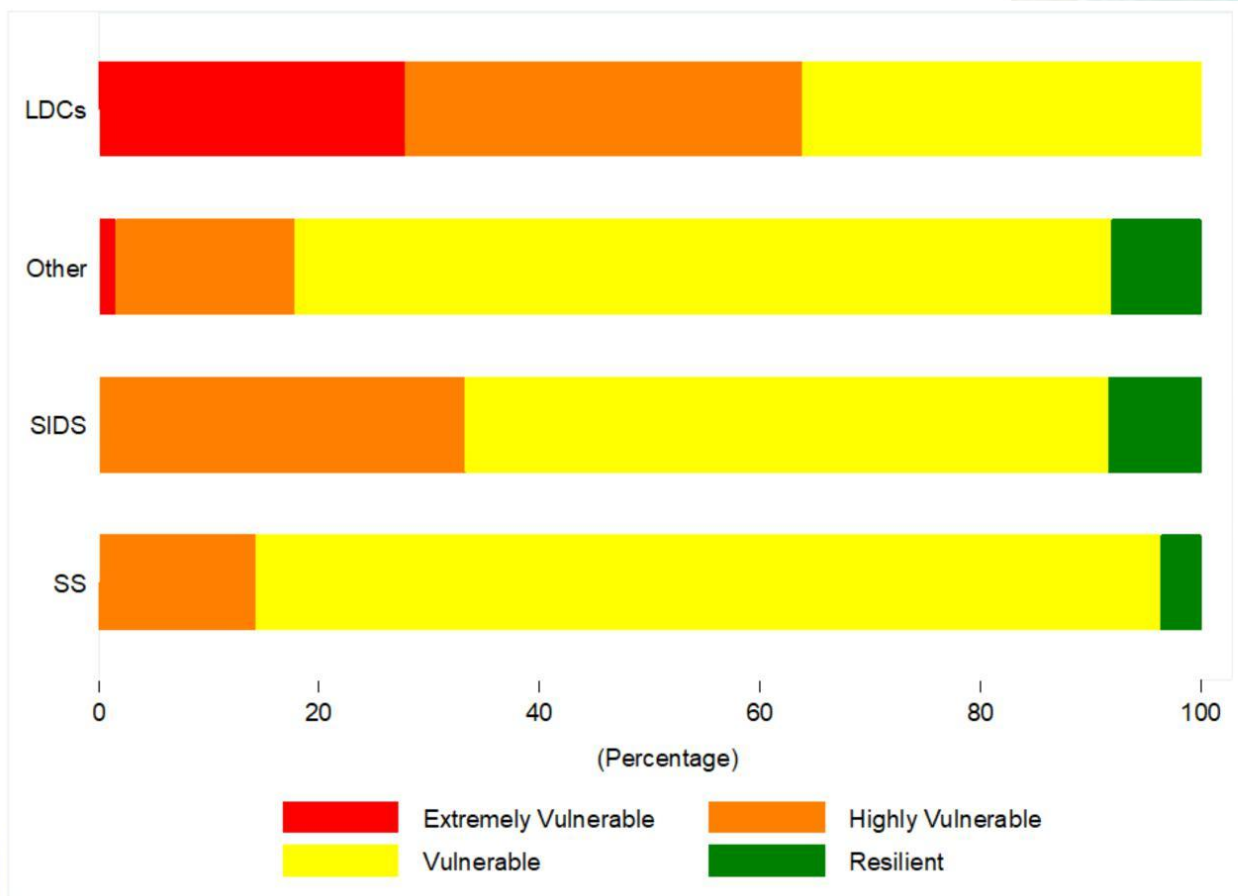
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Classification of Developing Countries' Vulnerabilities (by income category)



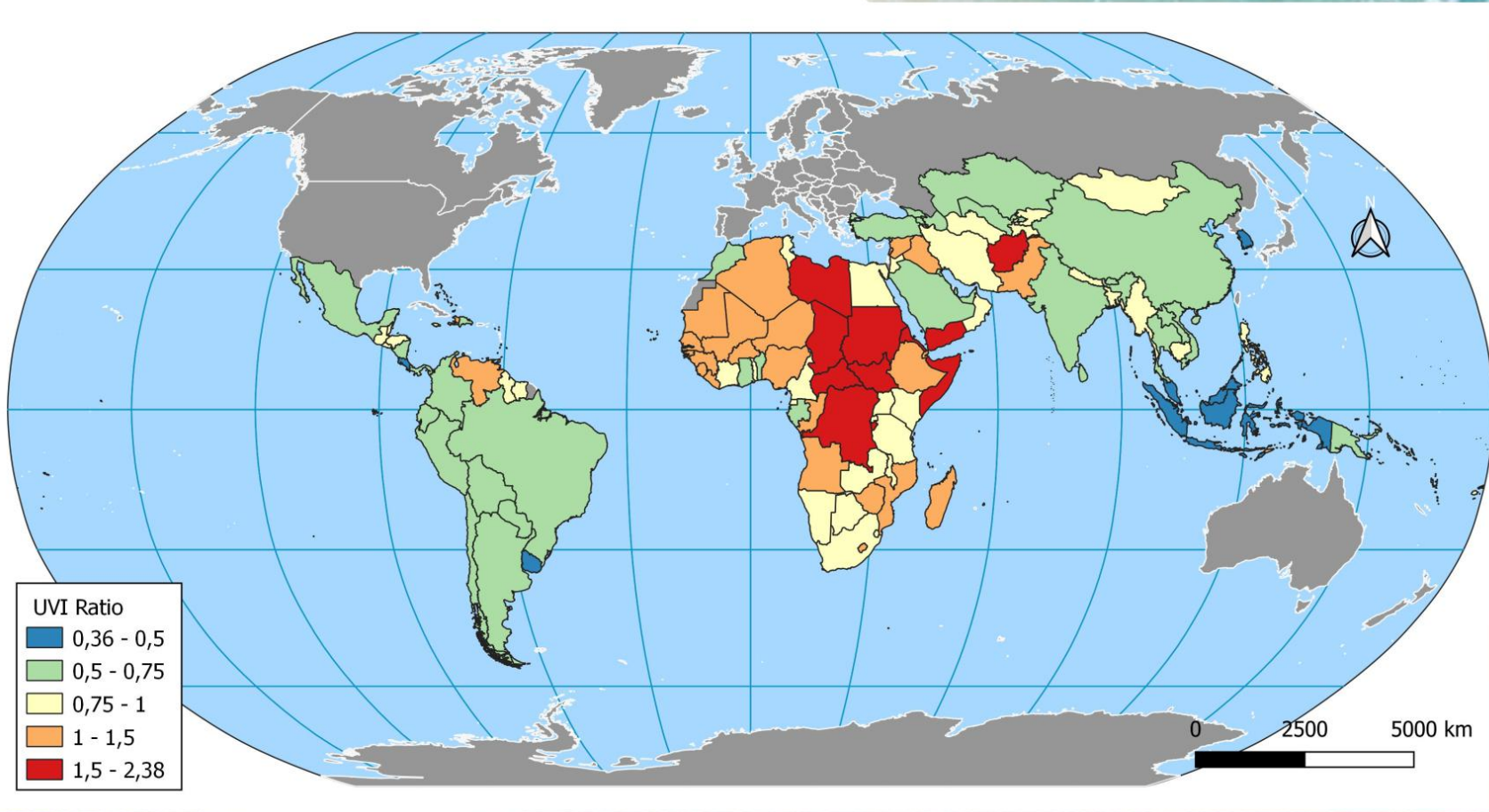
Classification of Developing Countries' Vulnerabilities (by country group)



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Universal Vulnerability



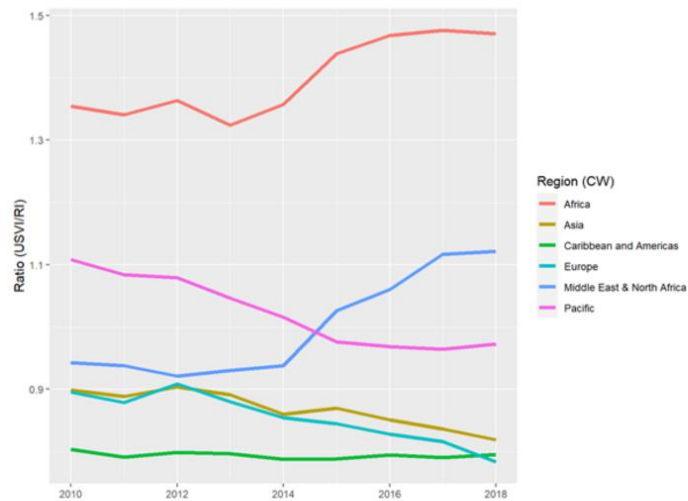
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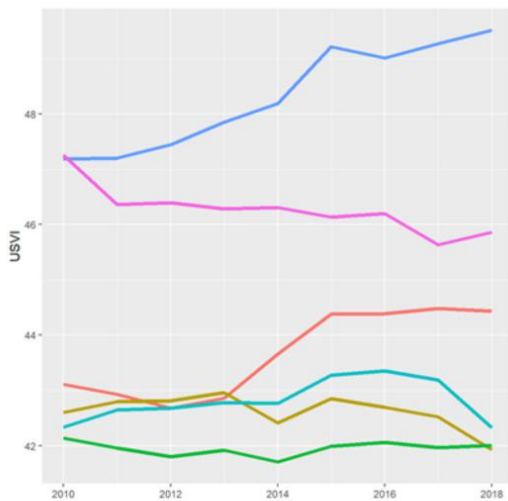
Trends (by region)

Country Level

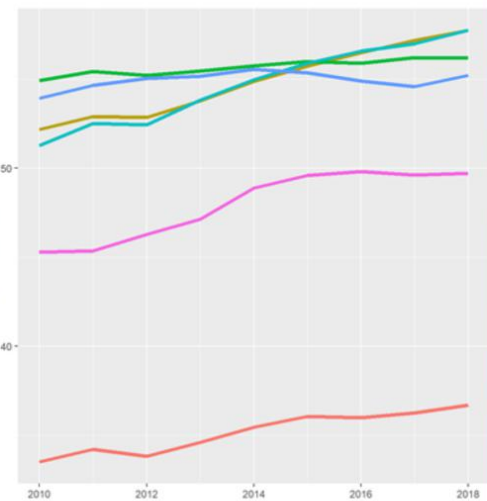
Universal Vulnerability



Structural Vulnerability



Resilience

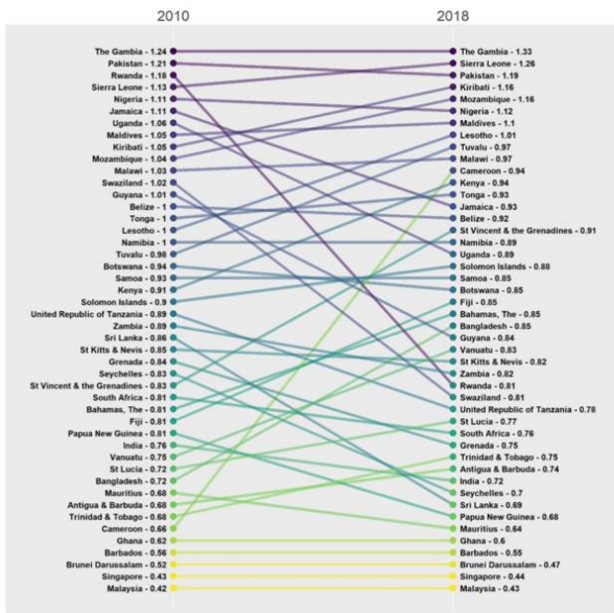


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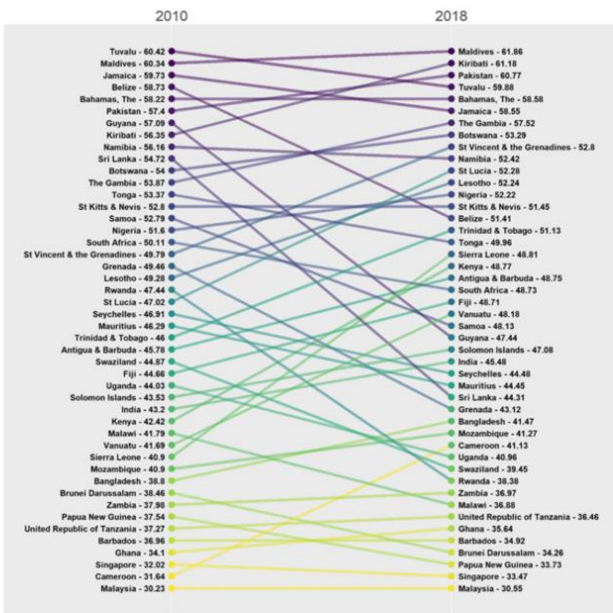
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Trends (by country)

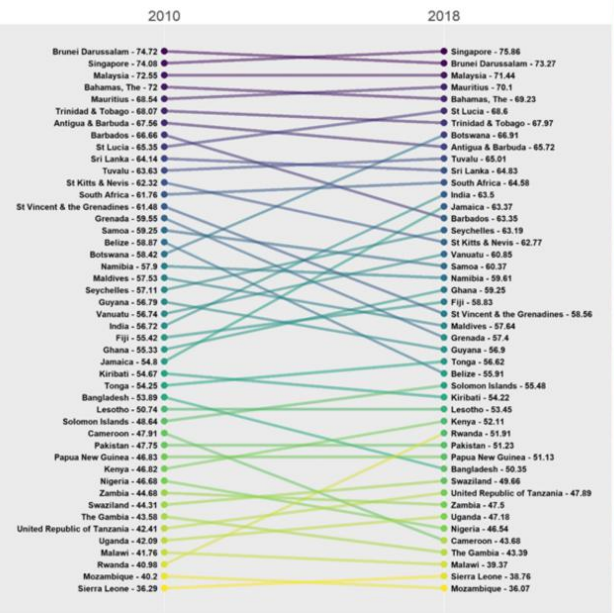
Universal Vulnerability



Structural Vulnerability



Resilience



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Correlations of Variables and Indices

Vulnerability to Economic and Natural Disaster Shocks				
0.424 0.000	Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change			
-0.101 0.238	0.111 0.196	Internal Violence		
-0.184 0.031	-0.101 0.238	-0.165 0.053	Structural Resilience	
-0.141 0.100	-0.095 0.267	-0.398 0.000	0.540 0.000	Non-Structural Resilience

- Correlation matrix confirms absence of redundancies amongst indices and variables



Way Forward

- Wide consultations to begin the process of brokering consensus and to refine UVI if necessary:
 - Member Countries
 - International Institutions
 - Experts
- Seek member countries endorsement at CHOGM 2021
- Launch of a Commonwealth UVI Report
- Seek global endorsement via UN-CW Advocacy Strategy (Goal 1 - Vulnerability)

Use of
UVI?

Conclusions

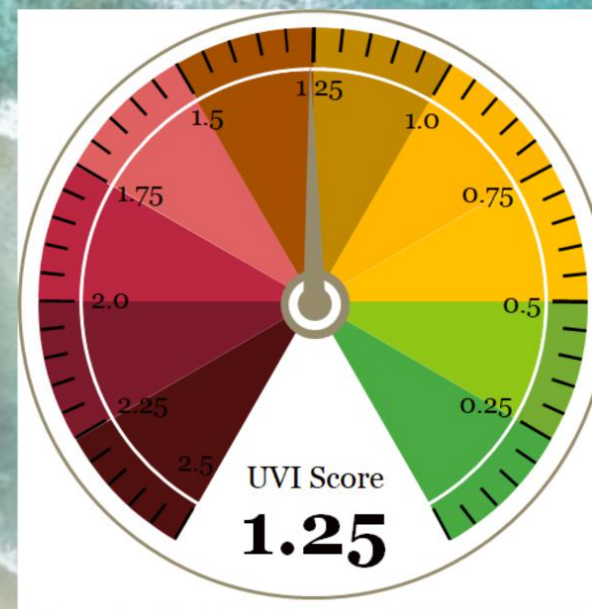


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Uses of the Universal Vulnerability Index

- Evidence base for small states and other vulnerable countries
- Vehicle for consensus amongst countries and multilateral institutions on the definition and measurement of vulnerability
- Additional instrument/criterion for the allocation of aid and concessional finance to developing countries
- Tool for addressing specific structural issues and for identifying appropriate assistance - for example, technical assistance, loan guarantees, policy advice
- Tool for countries self-assessment of vulnerability and resilience issues and policy measures needed to address these
- Vehicle for Commonwealth advocacy - for e.g by way of the UN-CW Small States Advocacy Strategy
- Commonwealth tool for continuous monitoring and reporting on vulnerability
- Instrument to help guide Commonwealth/other multilateral programming
- Signalling device and motivator for countries and multilaterals - helping to shift countries away from the vulnerability to resilience spectrum (or towards UVI scores of 0.5 or below.)



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Conclusions

- Second to LDCs Small states most vulnerable group in the world
- LDCs vulnerability driven both by high structural vulnerability and low non-structural resilience
- Small states have high structural vulnerability, as well as high non-structural resilience/policy performance - vulnerability outcomes not stemming from poor governance/policy
- Vulnerability not necessarily predetermined by income level, though resilience has high correlation. Eg. HICs with extremely high vulnerabilities.
- Africa most vulnerable region in 2018, followed by Pacific and Caribbean
- Small states structural vulnerability driven mainly by vulnerability to economic and natural disaster shocks & climate change rather than internal violence(social/political issues)
- Structural resilience in several small states lacking. Policy initiatives from multilaterals should focus on reducing structural vulnerabilities and improving structural resilience in small states and SIDS
- UVI good way to measure impact of targeted policies over time, including improved access to concessional financing



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