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2 **Global meteorological drought and severe drought affected**
3 **population in 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds**

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26 **Abstract.** In Paris Agreement of 2015, a more ambitious climate change mitigation target, on
27 limiting the global warming at 1.5°C instead of 2°C above pre-industrial levels, has been proposed.
28 Scientific investigations are necessary to investigate environmental risks associated with these
29 warming targets. This study is the first risk-based assessment of changes in global meteorological
30 drought and the impact of severe drought on population at 1.5°C and 2°C additional warming
31 conditions using the CMIP5 (the fifth Coupled Model Intercomparison Project) climate models.
32 Our results highlight the risk of meteorological drought at the globe and in several hotspot
33 regions such as Amazon, Northeastern Brazil, South Africa and Central Europe at both 1.5 °C and
34 2 °C global warming relative to the historical period. Correspondingly, more people would be
35 exposed to severe droughts in many regions (i.e., total and urban population in East Asia,
36 Southeast Asia, Central Europe and rural population in Central Asia, South Africa and South Asia).
37 By keeping the warming at 1.5°C above the pre-industrial levels instead of 2°C, the risks of
38 meteorological drought would decrease (i.e., less drought duration, drought intensity and
39 drought severity but relatively more frequent severe drought) and the affected total and urban
40 population would decrease (the exposed rural population would increase in most regions) at
41 global and sub-continental scales. Whilst challenging for the rural areas, the benefits of limiting
42 warming to below 1.5°C are significant for reducing the risks and societal impacts of global
43 meteorological drought.

44

45 **1 Introduction**

46 Drought is a major natural hazard which could lead to adverse impacts consequences on water
47 supplies, food productions and the environment (Wang et al., 2011; Sheffield et al., 2012).



48 Because of these serious consequences, the occurrence of severe droughts has gained wide
49 attentions, these include the Millennium drought in southeast Australia (van Dijk et al., 2013;
50 Kiem et al., 2016), the once-in-a-century droughts in southwest China (Qiu, 2010, Zuo et al.,
51 2015), the Horn of Africa drought (Masih et al., 2014; Lyon, 2014) and the recent California
52 drought (Aghakouchak et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2016). In the context of climate change, drought
53 risks (i.e., drought duration and intensity) are likely to increase in many historical drought-prone
54 regions with global warming (Dai et al., 2012; Fu and Feng, 2014; Kelley et al., 2015; Ault et al.,
55 2016). A better understanding of changes in global drought characteristics and their
56 socioeconomic impacts in the 21st century should feed into long-term climate adaptation and
57 mitigation plans.

58

59 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to establish a
60 long-term temperature goal for climate projection of “*pursue efforts to limit the temperature*
61 *increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the*
62 *risks and impacts of climate change*” (UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, 2015) in the 2015 Paris
63 Agreement, and invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to announce a
64 special report “*On the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related*
65 *greenhouse gas emission pathways*” in 2018 (Mitchell et al., 2016). Regardless of the
66 socio-economic and political achievability of this goals (Sanderson et al., 2017), there is a paucity
67 of scientific knowledge about the relative risks (i.e., drought risks and their potential impacts)
68 associated with the implications of 1.5°C and/or 2°C warming, this naturally attracted
69 contributions from scientific community (Hulme 2016, Schleussner et al., 2016, Peters 2016, King



70 et al., 2017).

71

72 To target on the impact assessments of 1.5°C and/or 2°C warming, there are currently several
73 approaches (James et al., 2017). For example, (1) to enable impact assessments at
74 near-equilibrium climate of 1.5°C and/or 2°C warmer worlds designed specifically using a set of
75 ensemble simulations with a coupled climate model (i.e., Community Earth System Model, CESM)
76 (Sanderson et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017). Although similar results of drought response to
77 warming were obtained as that conducted by Coupled Model Intercomparison Project-style
78 experiments (i.e., CMIP5, Taylor et al., 2012), the structural uncertainty and robustness of change
79 in droughts among different models cannot be fully evaluated in this kind of single-model study
80 (Lehner et al., 2017). (2) The HAPPI (Half a degree Additional warming, Projections, Prognosis and
81 Impacts) model intercomparison project provided a new assessment framework and a dataset
82 with experiment design target explicitly to 1.5°C and 2°C above the pre-industrial levels (Mitchell
83 et al., 2017). However, the analysis/calculation of meteorological drought characteristics needs
84 data with longer duration (typically >20 consecutive years), the ten-year period HAPPI dataset
85 (i.e., 2005-2016 for the historical period and 2105-2116 for the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds) is
86 relatively short (consecutive samples are too short for calculating a drought index, i.e., Palmer
87 drought severity index, PDSI, Palmer, 1965) for an index-based meteorological drought
88 assessment. (3) Outputs from CMIP5 climate models under the RCP2.6 scenarios were also
89 applied for this kind of “risk assessment-style” studies, but only a handful of General Circulation
90 Models (GCMs) simulations end up showing 1.5°C global warming by end of the 21st century.
91 Alternatively, transient simulations from multiple CMIP5 GCMs at higher greenhouse emissions



92 (i.e., the RCP4.5 and RCP8.5) (Schleussner et al., 2016; King et al., 2017) could be analyzed in
93 order to evaluate the potential risks of meteorological drought under different warming targets,
94 albeit the long-duration drought years might be underestimated due to insufficient sampling of
95 extended drought events (Lehner et al., 2017).

96

97 Here, we quantify the changes in global and sub-continental meteorological drought
98 characteristics (i.e., drought duration, intensity and severity) at 1.5°C and 2°C above the
99 pre-industrial levels and whether there are significant differences between them. We perform
100 this analysis using a drought index-PDSI forced by a suite of latest CMIP5 GCMs. To evaluate the
101 societal impacts, we incorporate the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 1 (SSP1) spatial explicit
102 global population scenario and examine the exposure of population (including rural, urban and
103 total population) to severe drought events. This paper is organized as follows: Section 2
104 introduces the CMIP5 GCMs output and SSP1 population data applied in this study. The definition
105 of the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds, and the calculation of PDSI-based drought
106 characteristics and population exposed to severe drought are also described in this section.
107 Section 3 shows the results (i.e., hotspots and risks) of changes in drought characteristics and the
108 impacts of severe drought on people under these warming targets. Detailed discussions are
109 performed in Section 4, followed by the conclusions in Section 5.

110

111 **2 Material and Methods**

112 **2.1 Data**



113 In this study, we use the CMIP5 GCMs output (including the monthly outputs of surface mean air
114 temperature, surface minimum air temperature, surface maximum air temperature, air pressure,
115 precipitation, relative humidity, surface downwelling longwave flux, surface downwelling
116 shortwave flux, surface upwelling longwave flux and surface upwelling shortwave flux as well as
117 the daily outputs of surface zonal velocity component (*uwnd*) and meridional velocity
118 component (*vwnd*) under two Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5)
119 archived at the Earth System Grid Federation (ESGF) Node at the German Climate Computing
120 Center-DKRZ (<https://esgf-data.dkrz.de/projects/esgf-dkrz/>) over the period 1850-2100. Based on
121 data availability, we select 11 GCMs to perform the analysis (see details of these GCMs in Table 1).
122 In the CMIP5 archive, the monthly *uwnd* and *vwnd* were computed as the means of their
123 daily values with the plus-minus sign, the calculated wind speed from the monthly *uwnd* and
124 *vwnd* would be equal to or, in most cases, less than that computed from the daily values (Liu
125 and Sun, 2016). To get the monthly wind speed, we average the daily values ($\sqrt{uwnd^2 + vwnd^2}$)
126 over a month. We rescale all data to a common spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$ using the bilinear
127 interpolation.

128 <Table 1, here, thanks>

129 To consider the people affected by severe drought events, we use the spatial explicit global
130 population scenarios developed by researchers from the Integrated Assessment Modeling (IAM)
131 group of National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and the City University of New York
132 Institute for Demographic Research (Jones and O'Neil, 2016). They included the gridded
133 population data for the baseline year (2000) and for the period of 2010-2100 in ten-year steps at
134 a spatial resolution of 0.125 degree, which are consistent with the new Shared Socioeconomic



135 Pathways (SSPs). We apply the population data of the SSP1 scenario, which describes a future
136 pathway with sustainable development and low challenges for adaptation and mitigation. We
137 upscale this product to a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$. For the global and sub-continental scales
138 analysis, we use the global land mass between 66°N and 66°S (Fischer et al., 2013; Schleussner et
139 al., 2016) and 26 sub-continental regions (as used in IPCC, 2012, see Table 2 for details).

140 <Table 2, here, thanks>

141 **2.2 Definition of a baseline, 1.5°C and 2°C worlds**

142 To define a baseline, 1.5°C and 2°C worlds, we first calculate the global mean surface air
143 temperature (GMT) for each climate model and emission scenario over the period 1850-2100.
144 We note that the surface air temperature field need be weighted by the square root of cosine
145 (latitude) to consider the dependence of grid density on latitude (Liu et al., 2016). The
146 Multi-model Ensemble Mean (MEM) GMT were computed and smoothed using a 20-year moving
147 average filter for the RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 scenarios, respectively. Following the method in Wang et
148 al. (2017), we select a baseline period of 1986-2005 when the observed GMT was 0.6°C warmer
149 (the MEM GMT was 0.4~0.8 °C warmer during this period in 11 climate models used) than the
150 pre-industrial levels (1850-1900, IPCC, 2013). This is also a common reference period for climate
151 impact assessment (e.g., Schleussner et al., 2016). Next, for each emission scenario (RCP4.5 or
152 RCP8.5), we define the periods (Figure 1) during which the 20-year smoothed GMT increase by
153 1.3~1.7 °C (2027-2038 under the RCP4.5 and 2029-2047 under the RCP 8.5) and by 1.8~2.2 °C
154 (2053-2081 under the RCP4.5 and 2042-2053 under the RCP 8.5) above the pre-industrial period
155 as the 1.5°C and 2°C warming worlds, respectively (as in King et al., 2017). To reduce the
156 projection uncertainty inherited from different emission scenarios, we combine (average) the



157 results of drought characteristics and population exposures calculated during different selected
158 periods under the RCP4.5 and RCP8.5, to represent the ensemble means meteorological
159 drought risk at 1.5°C or 2°C warmer worlds.

160 <Figure 1, here, thanks>

161 2.3 Characterize meteorological drought using PDSI

162 To quantify the changes in drought characteristics, we adopt the most widely used PDSI index,
163 which describes the balance between water supply (precipitation) and atmospheric evaporative
164 demand (required “precipitation” estimated under climatically appropriate for existing conditions,
165 CAFEC) at the monthly scale (Zhang et al., 2016). Briefly, it incorporates antecedent precipitation,
166 potential evaporation and the local Available Water Content (AWC, links:
167 https://daac.ornl.gov/cgi-bin/dsviewer.pl?ds_id=548) of the soil in the hydrological accounting
168 system. It measures the cumulative departure relative to the local mean conditions in
169 atmospheric moisture supply and demand on land surface. In the PDSI model, five surface water
170 fluxes, namely, precipitation (P), recharge to soil (R), actual evapotranspiration (E), runoff (RO)
171 and water loss to the soil layers (L); and their potential values \hat{P} , PR , PE , PRO and PL are
172 considered. All values in the model can be computed under CAFEC values using the precipitation,
173 potential evaporation and AWC inputs. For example, the CAFEC precipitation (\hat{P}) is defined as (Dai
174 et al., 2011),

$$175 \quad \hat{P} = \frac{\bar{E}_i}{\bar{PE}_i} PE + \frac{\bar{R}_i}{\bar{PR}_i} PR + \frac{\bar{RO}_i}{\bar{PRO}_i} PRO - \frac{\bar{L}_i}{\bar{PL}_i} PL, \quad (1)$$

176 Here the over bar indicates averaging of a parameter over the calibration period. The moisture
177 anomaly index (Z index) is derived as the product of the monthly moisture departure ($P - \hat{P}$) and



178 a climate characteristics coefficient K . The Z index is then applied to calculate the PDSI value for
179 time $t(X_t)$:

$$180 \quad X_t = pX_{t-1} + qZ_t = 0.897X_{t-1} + Z_t/3 \quad (2)$$

181 Where X_{t-1} is the PDSI of the previous month, and p and q are duration factors. The
182 calculated PDSI ranges -10 (dry) to 10 (wet). Details of PDSI are available in Palmer (1965) and
183 Wells et al. (2004).

184

185 As part of the PDSI calculation, we calculate the potential evaporation (PET) using the Food and
186 Agricultural Organization (FAO) Penman-Monteith equation (Allen et al., 1998),

$$187 \quad PET = \frac{0.408\Delta(R_n - G) + \gamma \frac{900}{T + 273} U_2 e_s \left(1 - \frac{Rh}{100}\right)}{\Delta + \gamma(1 + 0.34U_2)} \quad (3)$$

188 where Δ is the slope of the vapor pressure curve, U_2 is the wind speed at 2 m height, G is the
189 soil heat flux, Rh is the relative humidity, γ is the psychrometric constant, e_s is the saturation
190 vapor pressure at a given air temperature (T). R_n is the net radiation which can be calculated
191 using the surface downwelling/upwelling shortwave and longwave radiations. We estimate all
192 other parameters in the FAO Penman-Monteith equation using the GCM outputs through the
193 standard algorithm as per recommended by the FAO (Allen et al., 1998). In this study, we perform
194 this calculation for each GCM over the period 1850-2100 using the tool for calculating the Palmer
195 drought indices (the original MATLAB codes were modified for this case) developed by Jacobi et
196 al. (2013).

197

198 Based on the calculated global PDSI, we derive the drought characteristics (i.e., drought duration,
199 drought intensity and drought severity) using the run theory for the baseline, 1.5°C and 2°C



200 warming worlds, respectively. Briefly, the concept of “run theory” is proposed by Yevjevich and
201 Ingenieur (1967). The run characterizes the statistical properties of sequences in both time and
202 space. It is useful for defining drought in an objective manner. In the run theory, a “run”
203 represents a portion of time series X_i , where all values are either below or above a specified
204 threshold (we set the threshold $PDSI < -1$ in this study) (Ayantobo et al., 2017). We define a “run”
205 with values continuously stay below that threshold (i.e., negative run) as a drought event, which
206 generally includes these characteristics: drought duration, drought intensity and drought severity
207 (see Figure 2 for better illustration). We define the drought duration as a period
208 (years/months/weeks) which PDSI stays below a specific threshold. Drought severity indicates a
209 cumulative deficiency of a drought event below the threshold, while drought intensity is the
210 average value of a drought event below the threshold (Mishra and Singh, 2010). For each GCM,
211 we calculate the medians of drought duration, drought intensity and drought severity at each
212 grid-cell across all drought events for each selected period (i.e., the baseline, 1.5°C and 2°C
213 warming worlds). We generalize the results by evaluating the ensemble mean and model
214 consistency/inter-model variance across all climate models.

215 <Figure 2, here, thanks>

216 **2.4 Calculation of population exposure to severe droughts**

217 Following Wells et al. (2014), we assume that a severe drought event occurs when monthly PDSI
218 < -3 . If a severe drought occurs for at least a month in a year, we would take that year as a
219 severe drought year. For each GCM per period (i.e., the baseline, 1.5°C and 2°C warming worlds),
220 we quantify the population (including urban, rural and all population) affected by severe drought
221 per grid-cell as (population \times annual frequency of severe drought). We first compute the



222 affected population using the SSP1 data (see Section 2.1). For example, we used the SSP1 base
223 year (2000), 2030 (centered year in the 1.5°C warming period: 2027-2047 for both RCP
224 scenarios) and 2060 (centered year in the 2°C warming period: 2042-2081 for both RCP
225 scenarios) population data for the baseline period (1985-2005), 1.5°C and 2°C warming worlds,
226 respectively. To evaluate the climate impact on society without population growth, we estimate
227 the population exposure using the SSP1 data of the base year (2000). We repeat this
228 estimation using the constant SSP1 population data in 2100, which is consistent with the
229 original proposal of Paris Agreement on stabilizing global warming for the specified targets by
230 end of the 21st century.

231

232 **3 Results**

233 **3.1 Changes in PDSI and drought characteristics**

234 We present the changes in multi-model ensemble mean PDSI from the baseline period
235 (1986-2005) to each of the 1.5°C and 2°C scenarios and model consistency in Figure 3. For the
236 1.5°C warmer world, the PDSI would decrease (drought-prone) with relatively higher model
237 consistency (6~11 models in totally 11 climate models) in some regions, for example, Amazon
238 (0.7±0.8 -> -0.1±0.2), Northeastern Brazil (0.5±0.6 -> -0.1±0.3), Southern Europe and
239 Mediterranean (0.4±0.6 -> -0.3±0.2), Central America and Mexico (0.2±0.4 -> -0.2±0.1), Central
240 Europe (0.3±1.0 -> -0.1±0.4) as well as Southern Africa (0.5±0.5 -> -0.3±0.2); slightly increase (less
241 drought-prone) in Alaska/Northwest Canada (-0.01±0.5 -> -0.3±0.2) and North Asia (-0.1±1.0 ->
242 -0.2±0.2) but with relatively low model consistency. The geographic pattern of changes in PDSI for
243 the 2°C scenario is quite similar to that of 1.5°C warmer world, but the magnitude of change



244 would intensify (in both direction) East Canada, Greenland, Iceland ($-0.3\pm 0.2 \rightarrow -0.4\pm 0.2$), East
245 Africa ($-0.5\pm 0.2 \rightarrow -0.3\pm 0.2$), Northern Europe ($-0.3\pm 0.3 \rightarrow -0.2\pm 0.3$), East Asia ($-0.3\pm 0.1 \rightarrow -0.2\pm 0.4$),
246 South Asia ($-1.0\pm 1.2 \rightarrow -0.8\pm 0.3$) and West Africa ($-0.3\pm 0.2 \rightarrow -0.3\pm 0.3$). When global warming is
247 kept at 1.5°C instead of 2°C above the pre-industrial levels, the PDSI value would be larger at the
248 globe ($66^{\circ}\text{S}-66^{\circ}\text{S}$, $-0.4\pm 0.2 \rightarrow -0.3\pm 0.2$) and most regions (Alaska/Northwest Canada, East Africa,
249 West Africa, Tibetan Plateau, North Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia) (Figure 4).

250 <Figure 3, here, thanks>

251 <Figure 4, here, thanks>

252 We analyze the changes in meteorological drought characteristics such as its duration, severity
253 and intensity under the 1.5°C and 2°C warming conditions. In terms of the drought duration
254 (Figure 5 and Figure 6), we find robust large-scale features. For example, the drought duration
255 would generally increase at the globe ($2.9\pm 0.5 \rightarrow 3.1\pm 0.4$ months and $2.9\pm 0.5 \rightarrow 3.2\pm 0.5$ months
256 from the baseline period to the 1.5°C and 2°C scenarios) and most regions (especially for Amazon,
257 Sahara, Northeastern Brazil and North Australia) except for North Asia ($2.7\pm 0.6 \rightarrow 2.6\pm 0.5$ months
258 and $2.7\pm 0.6 \rightarrow 2.5\pm 0.4$ months) under both the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. The high model
259 consistency in most regions (i.e., Amazon, Sahara and Northeastern Brazil) for both warming
260 scenarios gives us more confidence on these projections. Relative to the 2°C warmer target, a
261 1.5°C warming target is more likely to reduce drought duration at both global and regional scales
262 (except for Alaska/Northwest Canada, East Africa, Sahara, North Europe, North Asia, South Asia,
263 Southeast Asia, Tibetan Plateau and West Africa).

264 <Figure 5, here, thanks>

265 <Figure 6, here, thanks>



266 Drought intensity and drought severity are commonly used for quantifying, to what extent, the
267 water availability significantly below normal conditions for a region. In this study, the drought
268 intensity is projected to increase at the globe ($0.9 \pm 0.3 \rightarrow 1.1 \pm 0.3$ and $0.9 \pm 0.3 \rightarrow 1.0 \pm 0.2$ from
269 the baseline period to the 1.5°C and 2°C scenarios) and in most of the regions except for North
270 Asia, Southeast Asia and West Africa under the 1.5°C and 2°C warming scenarios (Figures 7-8).
271 Compare to the 2°C scenario, the drought intensity would obviously be relieved at the global and
272 sub- continental scales except for East Canada, Greenland, Iceland ($1.0 \pm 0.6 \rightarrow 0.8 \pm 0.5$) and West
273 North America ($0.9 \pm 0.3 \rightarrow 0.8 \pm 0.2$) in the 1.5°C warmer world. In addition, the projected
274 drought severity would also increase in both 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds at the globe (3.0 ± 1.9
275 $\rightarrow 4.5 \pm 3.0$ and $3.0 \pm 1.9 \rightarrow 3.8 \pm 2.0$ from the baseline period to the 1.5°C and 2°C scenarios) and
276 in most regions except for North Asia ($1.8 \pm 0.6 \rightarrow 1.8 \pm 0.7$ and $1.8 \pm 0.6 \rightarrow 1.5 \pm 0.3$) (Figures 9-10).
277 When global warming is maintained at 1.5°C instead of 2°C above the pre-industrial levels, the
278 drought severity would weaken in most regions except for Sahara ($3.1 \pm 0.9 \rightarrow 3.5 \pm 1.3$), North Asia
279 ($1.5 \pm 0.3 \rightarrow 1.8 \pm 0.8$), Southeast Asia ($17.2 \pm 20.1 \rightarrow 35.8 \pm 57.2$), and West North America ($2.4 \pm 1.7 \rightarrow$
280 2.5 ± 1.4). The projected uncertainties are relatively low (6~11 models in totally 11 models) for
281 the changes of each drought character under different warming scenarios all over the world
282 except for some parts of Alaska/Northwest Canada, East Canada, Greenland, Iceland, West North
283 America, Central North America, East North America, Sahara, West Africa, East Africa and North
284 Asia.

285 <Figure 7, here, thanks>

286 <Figure 8, here, thanks>

287 3.2 Impact of severe drought on population



288 To understand the societal influences of severe drought, we combine the drought projection with
289 SSP1 population information and estimate the total, urban and rural population affected by
290 severe drought in the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds (Figures 11-13). Compare to
291 the baseline period, the frequency of severe drought (PDSI < -3), drought-affected total and
292 urban population would increase in most of the regions under the 1.5°C and 2°C warming
293 scenarios.

294 <Figure 9, here, thanks>

295 <Figure 10, here, thanks>

296 The projections suggest that more urban population would expose to severe drought in Central
297 Europe (16.4±8.5 million), Southern Europe and Mediterranean (13.3±4.7 million), West Africa
298 (26.7±15.7 million), East Asia (44.3±20.6 million), South Asia (17.7±37.6 million), West Asia
299 (14.9±7.8 million) and Southeast Asia (19.9±17.0 million) in the 1.5°C warmer world relative to
300 the baseline period. We also find that the number of affected people would escalate further in
301 these regions under the 2°C warming scenario (Table 3). In terms of the rural population, more
302 people in Central Asia (2.2±6.4 million and 1.2±3.5 million for the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds),
303 Central North America (0.8±1.7 million and 0.4±1.0 million), Southern Europe and Mediterranean
304 (0.9±3.4 million and 0.3±4.9 million), South Africa (1.9±1.9 million and 0.9±2.6 million), Sahara
305 (0.1±2.5 million and 0.3±3.2 million), South Asia (45.9±52.4 million and -23.1±26.9 million),
306 Tibetan Plateau (0.3±2.7 million and -1.03±2.1 million) and West North America (-1.2±0.9 million
307 and 0.1±0.1 million) would expose to the severe drought in the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds
308 relative to the baseline period (except for the globe, South Asia and Tibetan Plateau under the
309 2°C warming scenario and West North America under the 1.5°C warming scenario). Overall, the



310 multi-model projected uncertainty of affected population (including total, urban and rural
311 population) is quite small in most regions except for East Asia, South Asia and West Africa.

312 <Figure 11, here, thanks>

313 <Figure 12, here, thanks>

314 When global warming approaches 1.5°C (instead of 2°C) above the pre-industrial levels, relatively
315 less total (except for total population affected in North Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and South
316 Asia) and urban population would be affected despite more frequent severe drought. By contrast,
317 the affected rural population would increase in most regions (except for Amazon, East Canada,
318 Greenland, Iceland, North Australia, Northeastern Brazil, Sahara and South Australia/New
319 Zealand). This implies that the benefit of holding global warming at 1.5°C instead of 2°C is
320 apparent to the severe-drought affected total and urban population, but challenges remain in the
321 rural areas (especially in South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Africa and West Africa).

322 <Figure 13, here, thanks>

323 <Table 3, here, thanks>

324 We repeat similar analysis using the constant SSP1 population in 2100 (Figure 4). Relative to the
325 baseline period, we find that 38.6±272.7million (38.7±247.1 million urban population and
326 0.0±26.1million rural population) and 100.3±323.9 million (99.1±295.9 million urban population
327 and 1.5±28.5 million rural population) additional population would expose to severe droughts
328 in the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds on a global scale. The severe drought affected total, urban
329 and rural population would increase under these warming targets in most regions except for
330 Sahara (total and rural population under 1.5°C warming scenario and rural population under 2°C
331 warming scenario), East Africa, South Asia and West Africa (rural population under 1.5°C warming



332 scenario). Moreover, compare to the 2°C warming target, the severe drought affected total,
333 urban and rural population would decrease in the 1.5°C warmer world in most regions such as
334 East Asia, Southern Europe and Mediterranean, Central Europe and Amazon.
335
336 To exclude the role of population growth in the former analysis, we also repeat the analysis but
337 this time we keep the population constant in 2000 (Table 4). Globally, we estimate that
338 63.8±195.9 million (33.3±86.6 million urban population and 30.5±113.6 million rural population)
339 and 122.4±249.9 million (55.4±101.8 million urban population and 67.0±150.7 million rural
340 population) additional people would be exposed solely to severe droughts in the 1.5°C and 2°C
341 warmer worlds, respectively. In terms of percentage, about 75% and 50% of total affected
342 population (considers both severe droughts and population growth, including 86% and 88% of
343 the affected urban population as well as 114% and -67% of the affected rural population) are
344 attributable to population growth while others are solely due to climate change impact under the
345 1.5°C and 2°C warming scenarios, respectively. The climate change driven severe drought
346 affected total, urban and rural population would decrease in East Africa and South Asia but
347 increase (the climate change driven severe drought affected population constitutes >50% of that
348 considering both climate change and population growth) in most regions (for example, North
349 Australia, Southern Europe and Mediterranean, Central Europe, North Europe, West Coast South
350 America, Northeastern Brazil, Central North America and East Asia for total population as well as
351 West North America, Central North America, East North America, Central America and Mexico,
352 Amazon, Northeastern Brazil, West Coast South America, Southeastern South America, Northern
353 Europe, Central Europe, Southern Europe and Mediterranean, West Africa, South Africa, North



354 Asia, Central Asia, Tibetan Plateau, East Asia and Southeast Asia for rural population) under these
355 warming targets.

356 <Table 4, here, thanks>

357 **4 Discussions**

358 The changes in PDSI, drought duration, intensity and severity with climate warming (i.e., +1.5°C
359 and +2°C warmer worlds) projected in this study is in general agreement with that concluded by
360 IPCC (2013), although they vary among regions. For example, as revealed in this study, the
361 gradual decline of PDSI (drought-prone) in American Southwest and Central Plains was also
362 projected using an empirical drought reconstruction and soil moisture metrics from 17
363 state-of-the-art GCMs in the 21st century (Cook et al., 2015). The ascending risk of drought in
364 Sahara, North Australia and South Africa coincided with Huang et al. (2017), which projected that
365 global drylands would degrade under the 2°C global warming target. Moreover, the increases in
366 drought duration, intensity and severity in Central America, Amazon, South Africa and
367 Mediterranean are in agreement with the extension of dry spell length and less water availability
368 in these regions under the 1.5°C and/or 2°C warming scenarios (Schleussner et al., 2016; Lehner
369 et al., 2017). In addition, we find that the affected population attributes more (50%~75%) to the
370 population growth rather than the climate change driven severe drought in the 1.5°C and 2°C
371 warmer worlds. This figure is higher than that concluded by Smirnov et al. (2016), maybe due to
372 different study periods, population data, drought index and warming scenarios used.

373

374 This study illustrates some of the differences in drought characteristics at both global and
375 sub-continental scales that could be expected in a 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. These



376 projections inherited several sources of uncertainty. Firstly, there are considerable uncertainties
377 in the numerical projections from different climate models under varied greenhouse gas emission
378 scenarios, especially on a regional scale (i.e., Sahara, Alaska/Northwest Canada and North Asia).
379 However, the utility of multiple GCMs and emission scenarios should allow us to generalize future
380 projections than that using single model/scenario (Schleussner et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2017;
381 Lehner et al., 2017). On top of that, we performed uncertainty analysis such as understanding the
382 model consistency (e.g., increase/decrease) and inter-model variance (for magnitude changes).
383 These enable us to characterize regional and global projections which could vary due to different
384 model structure of GCMs and how they behave under different RCP scenarios. Secondly, there
385 are various ways of picking the 1.5°C or 2°C warming signals (King et al., 2017). In this study, we
386 consider both the influences of multi-model and multi-scenario for each warming scenario using
387 the 20-year smoothed multi-model ensemble mean GMT. The selected period of 1.5°C and/or
388 2.0°C world is close to that of King et al.(2017). Finally, the SSP1 population data and the single
389 drought index used might introduce uncertainties. Despite these sources of uncertainty, these
390 projections are quite robust with high model consistency across most regions.

391

392 **5 Conclusions**

393 Based on the CMIP5 GCMs output, we presented the first comprehensive assessment of changes
394 in meteorological drought characteristics and the potential impacts of severe drought on
395 population (total, urban and rural) under the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. We found that the
396 risk of meteorological drought would increase (i.e., decrease in PDSI, increase in drought duration,
397 drought intensity and drought severity) globally and most regions (i.e., Amazon, Northeastern



398 Brazil, Central Europe) for both 1.5°C and 2°C warming scenarios relative to the baseline period
399 (1986-2005). However, the amplitudes of change in drought characteristics vary among the
400 regions. Relative to the 2°C warming target, a 1.5°C warming target is more likely to reduce
401 drought risk (less drought duration, drought intensity and drought severity but relatively more
402 frequent severe drought) significantly on both global and regional scales. The high model
403 consistency (6~11 out of 11 GCMs) across most regions (especially Amazon, Sahara and
404 Northeastern Brazil) gives us more confidence on these projections.

405

406 Despite the uncertainties inherited from the GCMs and population data used, as well as the
407 definition of the 1.5°C and 2°C periods, we found significant changes of drought characteristics
408 under both warming scenarios and societal impacts of severe drought by limiting temperature
409 target at 1.5 °C instead of 2 °C in several hotspot regions. More total (+259.3±238.1 million and
410 +245.8±331.1 million globally) and urban population (+232.6±124.8 million and +468.3±228.0
411 million globally) would be exposed to severe drought in most regions (especially East Asia,
412 Southeast Asia and Central Europe) for both 1.5 °C and 2 °C warming scenarios, particularly for
413 the latter case. Meanwhile, more rural population (+26.7±119.0 million and -99.3±100.2million
414 globally) in Central Asia, East Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Central North America, Southern
415 Europe and Mediterranean, North Australia, South Africa, Sahara, South Asia, Tibetan Plateau
416 and West North America would be affected. When global mean temperature increased by 1.5 °C
417 instead of 2 °C above the pre-industrial level, the total (except for the global scale which would
418 increase by ~5.5%) and urban population (would decrease by ~50.3% globally) affected by severe
419 drought would decline but the affected rural population (would increase by ~73.1% globally)



420 would increase in most regions. This means that local governments should be prepared to deal
421 with meteorological drought-driven challenges in the rural areas (especially in South Asia,
422 Southeast Asia, East Africa and West Africa) relative to the urban areas.

423

424 **Data availability.** The datasets applied in this study are available at the following locations:

425 — CMIP5 model experiments (Taylor et al., 2012), [https://esgf-data.dkrz.de/projects/](https://esgf-data.dkrz.de/projects/esgf-dkrz/)
426 [esgf-dkrz/](https://esgf-data.dkrz.de/projects/esgf-dkrz/)

427 — Spatial population scenarios (Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 1, SSP1, Jones and O’Niell,
428 2016), <https://www2.cgd.ucar.edu/sections/tss/iam/spatial-population-scenarios>

429 **Competing interests.** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

430 **Acknowledgements.** This study was financially supported by the National Research and
431 Development Program of China (2016YFA0602402 and 2016YFC0401401), the National Natural
432 Sciences Foundation of China (41401037), the Key Research Program of the Chinese Academy of
433 Sciences (ZDRW-ZS-2017-3-1), the CAS Pioneer Hundred Talents Program (Fubao Sun) and the
434 CAS President’s International Fellowship Initiative (Wee Ho Lim, 2017PC0068).

435

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- 563



564 **Table 1:** Details of CMIP5 climate models applied in this study

565

Climate models	abbreviation	Horizontal Resolution	Future Scenarios
ACCESS1.0	ACCESS	1.300×1.900 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
BCC_CSM1.1	BCC	2.813×2.791 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
BNU-ESM	BNU	2.810×2.810 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
CanESM23	CANESM	2.813×2.791 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
CNRM-CM5	CNRM	1.406×1.401 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
CSIRO Mk3.6.0	CSIRO	1.875×1.866 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
GFDL CM3	GFDL	2.500×2.000 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
INM-CM4.0	INM	2.000×1.500 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
IPSL-CM5B-LR	IPSL	1.875×3.750 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
MRI-CGCM3	MRI	1.125×1.125 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5
MIROC-ESM	MIROC	2.813×2.791 degree	RCP4.5, RCP8.5



566 **Table 2:** Definition of regions in this study, after IPCC (2012)

567

568

ID	abbreviation	Regional Representation
1	ALA	Alaska/Northwest Canada
2	CGI	East Canada, Greenland, Iceland
3	WNA	West North America
4	CNA	Central North America
5	ENA	East North America
6	CAM	Central America and Mexico
7	AMZ	Amazon
8	NEB	Northeastern Brazil
9	WSA	West Coast South America
10	SSA	Southeastern South America
11	NEU	Northern Europe
12	CEU	Central Europe
13	MED	Southern Europe and Mediterranean
14	SAH	Sahara
15	WAF	West Africa
16	EAF	East Africa
17	SAF	Southern Africa
18	NAS	North Asia
19	WAS	West Asia
20	CAS	Central Asia
21	TIB	Tibetan Plateau
22	EAS	East Asia
23	SAS	South Asia
24	SEA	Southeast Asia
25	NAU	North Australia
26	SAU	South Australia/New Zealand
27	GLOBE	Globe



569 **Table 3:** Changes in population exposure (including total, urban and rural population, mean \pm standard deviation of multi-model projections, unit: million) to severe
 570 drought at the globe and in 27 world regions in the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds relative to the baseline period (1985-2006) using the SSP1 population dataset
 571

Regions	1.5°C warming			2.0°C warming		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
	ALA	0.0±0.1	0.0±0.1	0.0±0.0	-0.0±0.1	0.0±0.1
CGI	0.1±0.1	0.1±0.1	0.0±0.0	0.0±0.1	0.1±0.1	0.0±0.0
WNA	0.6±1.6	1.8±0.9	-1.2±0.9	1.5±2.6	-1.4±1.1	0.1±0.1
CNA	5.3±8.2	4.5±6.6	0.8±1.7	3.6±5.1	7.8±4.2	0.4±1.0
ENA	4.9±11.6	5.1±10.1	-0.1±1.6	-0.5±6.4	12.3±6.5	-0.6±1.0
CAM	7.1±9.1	10.3±7.9	-3.2±2.2	4.5±6.7	14.8±5.5	-4.6±2.4
AMZ	3.3±2.7	3.9±2.4	-0.6±0.7	4.1±5.6	7.1±4.5	-0.3±1.2
NEB	2.8±3.4	4.7±2.4	-1.9±1.4	4.4±5.4	7.6±4.0	-1.7±1.6
WSA	4.2±4.3	4.1±3.8	0.1±1.6	4.2±4.4	5.8±3.8	0.0±0.5
SSA	5.3±5.2	7.3±4.4	-2.0±1.5	0.6±5.2	8.6±4.8	-2.3±1.5
NEU	3.6±3.9	5.0±3.1	-1.5±1.5	2.6±9.6	8.1±8.1	-2.0±1.8
CEU	12.2±10.5	16.4±8.5	-4.2±3.5	0.7±29.3	27.2±24.2	-5.8±5.2
MED	14.1±6.8	13.3±4.7	0.9±3.4	20.8±21.9	30.6±16.9	0.3±4.9
SAH	2.9±3.7	2.8±1.9	0.1±2.5	6.3±6.7	6.4±4.0	0.3±3.2
WAF	26.6±32.0	26.7±15.7	-0.1±18.0	62.6±78.1	61.9±53.0	-4.5±23.0
EAF	9.3±23.8	11.4±4.0	-2.1±20.9	43.1±33.0	28.0±13.0	-9.4±23.0
SAF	9.2±3.6	7.3±2.1	1.9±1.9	18.9±10.2	18.9±7.8	0.9±2.6
NAS	1.4±6.2	3.0±4.0	-1.6±2.4	-7.9±7.2	3.0±5.2	-2.4±2.4
WAS	11.5±12.5	14.9±7.8	-3.4±5.8	27.1±17.6	28.8±12.8	-3.9±6.0
CAS	7.9±12.3	5.7±6.1	2.2±6.4	4.5±6.7	14.8±5.5	1.2±3.5
TIB	0.9±4.1	0.6±1.6	0.3±2.7	-3.7±3.5	2.4±2.5	-1.0±2.1
EAS	41.5±33.9	44.3±20.6	-2.8±19.8	-17.5±58.1	57.2±41.3	-21.5±24.7
SAS	63.6±86.3	17.7±37.6	45.9±52.4	0.5±72.7	68.5±52.3	-23.1±26.9
SEA	19.4±22.6	19.9±17.0	-0.5±8.2	41.3±21.1	26.1±21.9	-17.2±8.4
NAU	0.1±0.1	0.1±0.1	0.0±0.0	0.2±0.3	0.2±0.3	0.0±0.1
SAU	1.0±1.1	1.1±1.0	-0.1±0.2	3.2±2.0	3.2±1.8	-0.1±0.2
GLOBE	259.3±238.1	232.6±124.8	26.7±119.0	245.8±228.0	468.3±228.0	-99.3±100.2



572 **Table 4:** Changes in population exposure (including total, urban and rural population, mean ± standard deviation of multi-model projections, unit: million) to severe
 573 drought at the globe and in 27 world regions in the 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds relative to the baseline period using the fixed SSP1 population in 2100 (at the end
 574 of the 21st century). The italic numbers in the brackets show the people affected solely by severe droughts under two future warming scenarios, which were
 575 calculated using the fixed SSP1 baseline population in 2000 (do not consider the population growth with the development of socioeconomics in the future)
 576

Regions	1.5°C warming			2.0°C warming		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
ALA	0.0±0.1(-0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.1(-0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.0)	0.0±0.1(0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.1(0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.0)
CGI	0.1±0.1(0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.1(0.0±0.0)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.0)	0.1±0.1(0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.1(0.0±0.0)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.0)
WNA	0.2±1.1(0.2±1.5)	0.2±1.1(0.2±0.6)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.9)	0.8±1.8(1.1±2.3)	0.8±1.7(0.6±0.8)	0.0±0.1(0.5±1.5)
CNA	4.9±10.9(3.1±6.8)	4.5±10.2(2.2±5.0)	0.4±0.7(0.9±1.8)	6.1±6.6(3.8±4.1)	5.6±6.2(2.7±3.0)	0.5±0.4(1.1±1.1)
ENA	3.0±17.0(1.9±10.0)	3.0±16.8(1.3±8.2)	0.1±0.2(0.6±2.0)	7.5±9.9(3.4±4.8)	7.4±9.8(0.2±1.5)	0.1±0.1(0.1±1.3)
CAM	2.3±7.8(2.1±7.2)	2.2±7.6(0.6±4.0)	0.1±0.2(1.5±3.3)	8.5±9.4(7.8±8.6)	8.2±9.1(2.3±5.4)	0.3±0.3(4.3±4.3)
AMZ	2.1±2.0(2.0±2.1)	1.9±1.9(0.9±1.1)	0.2±0.2(1.1±1.1)	4.6±4.3(4.8±4.5)	4.1±3.9(1.6±1.8)	0.5±0.6(3.2±2.9)
NEB	1.4±2.3(2.0±3.1)	1.3±2.1(0.6±1.0)	0.1±0.2(1.4±2.1)	3.8±3.6(5.3±4.9)	3.4±3.3(1.4±1.5)	0.4±0.3(3.9±3.5)
WSA	4.2±15.1(2.3±3.4)	4.2±14.1(1.9±2.8)	0.1±1.1(0.5±0.7)	13.0±17.9(2.4±2.7)	12.5±16.7(1.8±2.2)	0.5±1.3(0.6±0.6)
SSA	2.5±4.1(2.6±4.3)	2.5±4.1(1.5±2.7)	0.0±0.1(1.2±1.9)	3.5±3.8(3.9±4.3)	3.4±3.7(1.9±2.1)	0.1±0.1(2.1±2.4)
NEU	3.0±4.7(2.4±3.7)	3.0±4.5(1.5±2.2)	0.1±0.2(0.9±1.5)	4.3±9.7(3.5±7.7)	4.2±9.5(2.2±4.8)	0.1±0.3(1.3±2.9)
CEU	10.5±8.7(12.0±10.3)	10.1±8.4(6.4±5.7)	0.4±0.3(5.5±4.7)	18.4±24.0(22.6±28.2)	17.7±23.0(11.5±14.9)	0.8±1.0(11.1±13.3)
MED	9.8±6.5(9.0±6.0)	9.2±6.1(3.6±2.2)	0.5±0.5(5.4±4.1)	22.5±17.8(21.1±16.5)	21.2±16.7(8.1±6.6)	1.3±1.1(13.0±9.9)
SAH	-0.3±7.0(0.2±3.6)	0.0±5.0(0.5±1.6)	-0.3±1.6(-0.3±2.5)	1.7±9.1(1.4±4.7)	1.8±7.2(1.3±2.3)	-0.2±2.1(0.1±3.2)
WAF	2.7±7.1(1.9±2.5)	2.9±6.6(3.0±7.3)	-0.2±5.5(1.2±19.5)	14.3±109.5(6.3±34.6)	14.0±101.2(1.9±5.1)	0.3±8.4(4.4±26.7)
EAF	-23.7±58.0(-9.2±23.5)	-20.7±51.1(-1.4±3.1)	-3.0±7.0(-7.8±20.6)	-26.3±63.8(-10.2±26.3)	-22.6±56.2(-1.8±3.0)	-3.7±7.7(-8.4±23.5)
SAF	5.8±4.2(3.2±2.1)	5.2±3.8(1.1±0.6)	0.6±0.5(2.1±1.8)	12.0±9.0(7.3±5.0)	11.0±8.2(2.9±1.5)	1.0±0.8(4.4±3.8)
NAS	1.1±4.1(1.7±6.3)	1.1±3.7(0.8±3.3)	0.0±0.4(0.9±3.0)	1.1±5.1(1.7±7.8)	1.0±4.6(0.6±4.1)	0.1±0.5(1.1±3.7)
WAS	4.2±15.1(4.7±10.4)	4.2±14.1(1.5±3.0)	0.1±1.1(3.2±7.6)	13.0±17.9(11.8±12.0)	12.5±16.7(3.8±3.5)	0.5±1.3(8.0±8.8)
CAS	1.7±15.3(1.6±10.6)	1.0±14.0(0.5±4.7)	0.7±1.5(1.1±6.1)	7.0±9.4(5.3±6.6)	5.5±8.8(1.7±3.2)	1.5±1.0(3.6±3.6)
TIB	0.1±3.2(0.3±2.6)	0.0±2.8(-0.0±1.2)	0.1±0.6(0.3±2.5)	0.6±2.9(1.0±3.4)	0.4±2.6(0.2±1.2)	0.2±0.7(0.8±2.5)
EAS	17.3±17.8(31.6±34.1)	16.6±16.2(16.4±15.6)	0.7±1.8(15.3±19.9)	24.8±32.8(46.2±64.2)	24.0±30.0(22.8±26.0)	0.9±3.0(23.4±39.3)
SAS	-15.9±68.8(-12.8±62.4)	-14.9±61.3(-7.7±34.9)	-1.0±8.1(-5.2±31.0)	-35.9±52.6(-31.9±47.7)	-32.3±47.1(-18.3±27.6)	-3.6±6.0(-13.6±24.3)
SEA	1.0±16.1(0.4±16.2)	0.8±15.1(-0.1±9.1)	0.2±1.4(1.0±5.8)	1.5±14.4(1.0±15.5)	1.4±13.2(0.7±7.2)	0.1±1.5(0.4±9.3)
NAU	0.1±0.1(0.1±0.1)	0.1±0.1(0.0±0.0)	0.0±0.0(0.0±0.1)	0.2±0.3(0.1±0.2)	0.1±0.2(0.0±0.1)	0.0±0.0(0.1±0.1)
SAU	0.8±1.7(0.3±0.8)	0.8±1.7(0.3±0.6)	0.0±0.0(0.1±0.2)	2.4±2.1(1.1±1.0)	2.4±2.1(0.8±0.7)	0.0±0.0(0.3±0.3)
GLOBE	38.6±272.7(63.8±195.9)	38.7±247.1(33.3±86.6)	0.0±26.1(30.5±113.6)	100.3±323.9(122.4±249.9)	99.1±295.9(55.4±101.8)	1.5±28.5(67.0±150.7)



577 **Figure captions:**

578 **Figure 1:** Definition of the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C worlds based on CMIP5 GCM-simulated
579 changes in global mean temperature (GMT, relative to the pre-industrial levels: 1850-1900). The
580 dark blue and dark yellow shadows indicate the 25th and 75th percentiles of multi-model
581 simulated GMT for RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 scenarios, respectively. Both the multi-model ensemble
582 mean and percentiles shown in the figure are smoothed using a moving average approach in a
583 20-year window

584
585 **Figure 2:** Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)-based drought characteristics definition through
586 the run theory

587
588 **Figure 3:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean PDSI (i) and model consistency (ii) on a spatial
589 resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from the baseline period to 1.5°C, (b) from the baseline period to 2°C
590 and (c) from 2°C to 1.5°C. Robustness of projections increases with higher model consistency and
591 vice-versa. The dark-gray boxes show the world regions adopted by IPCC (2012), which are
592 labeled in (a)(i) using the ID numbers defined in Table 2. Legend in (a)(i) applies to (b)(i) and (c)(i);
593 legend in (a)(ii) applies to (b)(ii) and (c)(ii).

594
595 **Figure 4:** Multi-model projected PDSI at the globe (66°N - 66°S) and in 27 world regions for the
596 baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. The projected uncertainty of multiple climate
597 models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period

598
599 **Figure 5:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean drought duration (i) and model consistency (ii)
600 on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from the baseline period to 1.5°C, (b) from the baseline
601 period to 2°C and (c) from 2°C to 1.5°C. The dark-gray boxes show the regions adopted by IPCC
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603 to (b)(i) and (c)(i); legend in (a)(ii) applies to (b)(ii) and (c)(ii).

604
605 **Figure 6:** Multi-model projected drought duration at the globe (66°N - 66°S) and in 27 world
606 regions for the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. The projected uncertainty of
607 multiple climate models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period

608
609 **Figure 7:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean drought intensity (i) and model consistency (ii)
610 on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from the baseline period to 1.5°C, (b) from the baseline
611 period to 2°C and (c) from 2°C to 1.5°C. The dark-gray boxes show the regions adopted by IPCC
612 (2012), which are labeled in (a)(i) using the ID numbers defined in Table 2. Legend in (a)(i) applies
613 to (b)(i) and (c)(i); legend in (a)(ii) applies to (b)(ii) and (c)(ii).

614
615 **Figure 8:** Multi-model projected drought intensity at the globe (66°N - 66°S) and in 27 world
616 regions for the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. The projected uncertainty of
617 multiple climate models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period

618
619 **Figure 9:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean drought severity (i) and model consistency (ii)
620 on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from the baseline period to 1.5°C, (b) from the baseline
621 period to 2°C and (c) from 2°C to 1.5°C. The dark-gray boxes show the regions adopted by IPCC
622 (2012), which are labeled in (a)(i) using the ID numbers defined in Table 2. Legend in (a)(i) applies
623 to (b)(i) and (c)(i); legend in (a)(ii) applies to (b)(ii) and (c)(ii).

624
625 **Figure 10:** Multi-model projected drought severity at the globe (66°N - 66°S) and in 27 world
626 regions for the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds. The projected uncertainty of
627 multiple climate models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period

628
629 **Figure 11:** Multi-model projected frequency (Freq.) and affected total population (Pop., million)
630 of severe drought ($\text{pdsi} < -3$) at the globe and in 27 world regions for the baseline period (black),



631 1.5°C (orange) and 2°C (red) warmer worlds. The projected uncertainties (standard deviation of
632 multiple-model results) of multiple climate models are shown by error bars (horizontal and
633 vertical)

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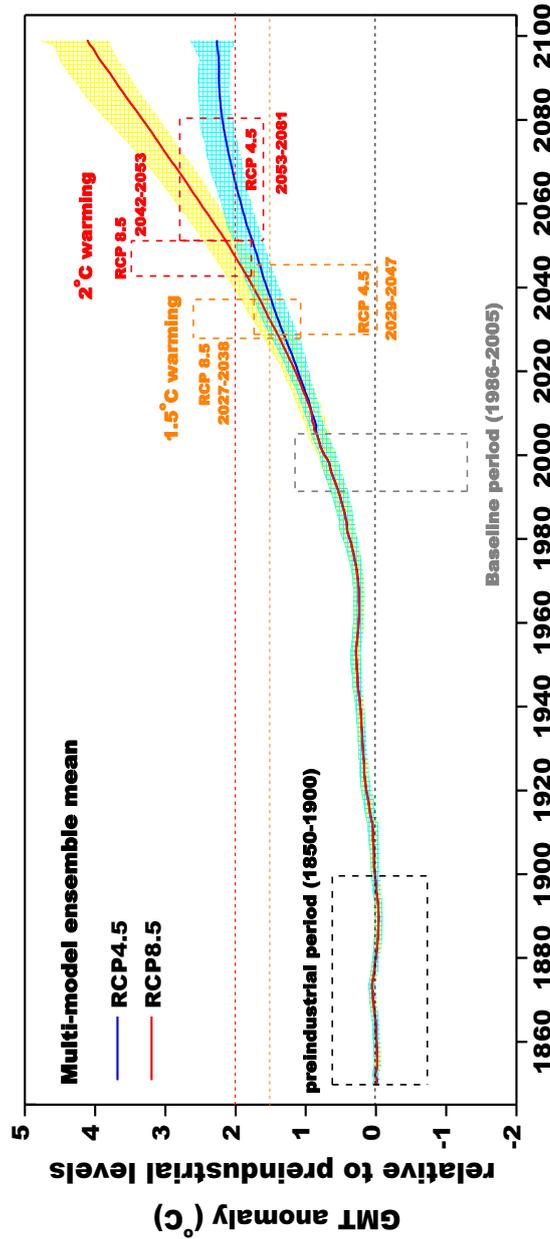
635 **Figure 12:** Multi-model projected frequency (Freq.) and affected urban population (Pop., million)
636 of severe drought ($pdsi < -3$) at the globe and in 27 regions for the baseline period (black), 1.5
637 °C (orange) and 2 °C (red) warmer worlds. The projected uncertainties (standard deviation of
638 multiple-model results) of multiple climate models are shown by error bars (horizontal and
639 vertical)

640

641 **Figure 13:** Multi-model projected frequency (Freq.) and affected rural population (Pop., million)
642 of severe drought ($pdsi < -3$) at the globe and in 27 regions for the baseline period (black), 1.5
643 °C (orange) and 2 °C (red) warmer worlds. The projected uncertainties (standard deviation of
644 multiple-model results) of multiple climate models are shown by error bars (horizontal and
645 vertical)



Figure 1: Definition of the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds based on CMIP5 GCM-simulated changes in global mean temperature (GMT, relative to the pre-industrial levels: 1850-1900). The dark blue and dark yellow shadows indicate the 25th and 75th percentiles of multi-model simulated GMT for RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 scenarios, respectively. Both the multi-model ensemble mean and percentiles shown in the figure are smoothed using a moving average approach in a 20-year window

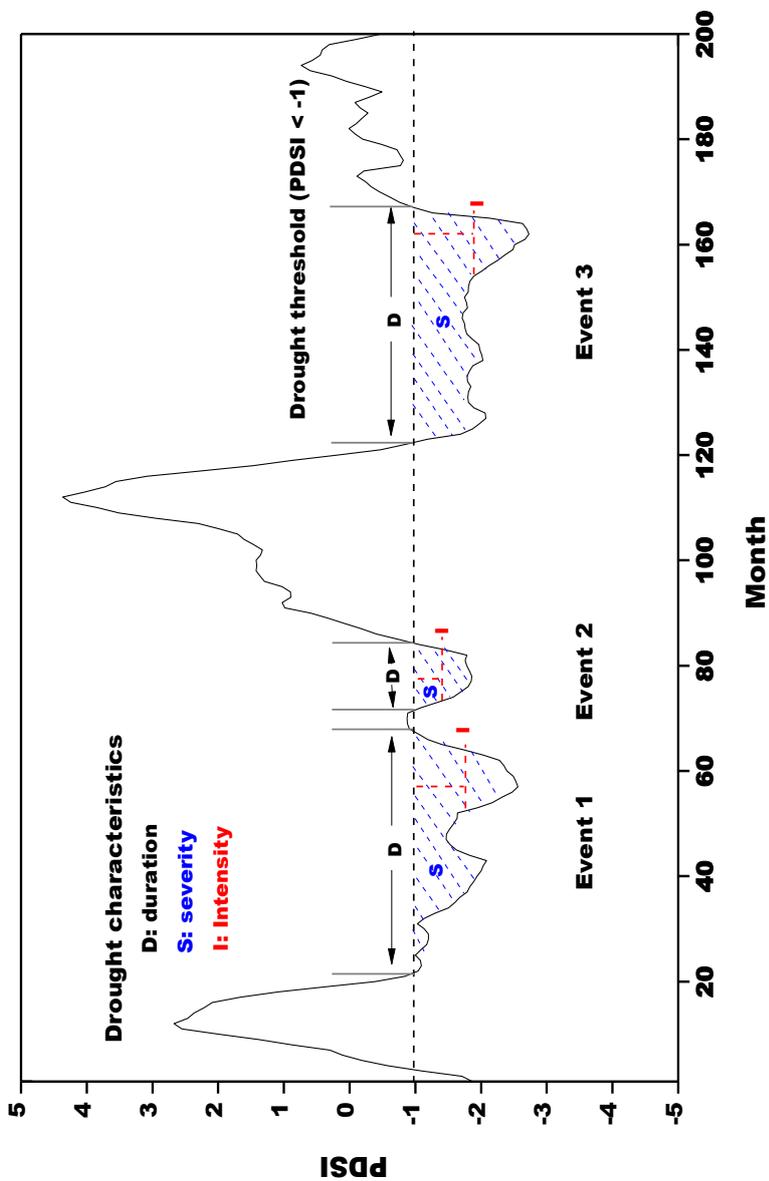


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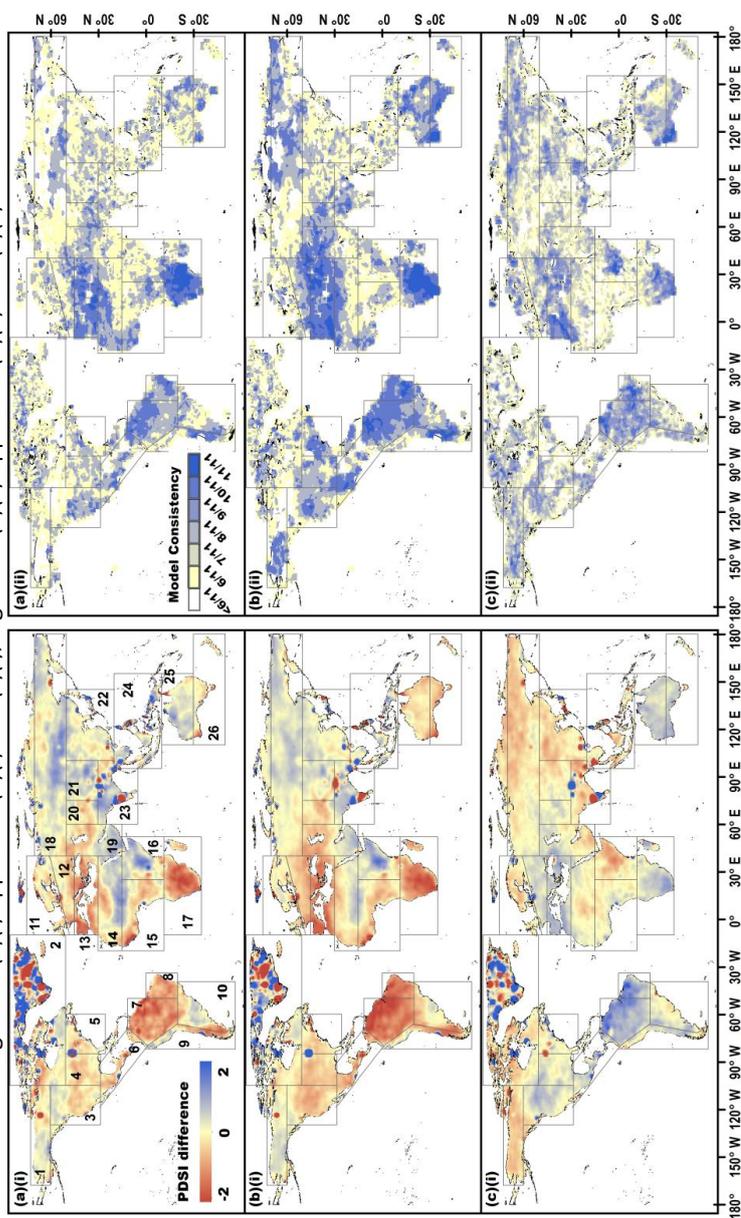


653 **Figure 2:** Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI)-based drought characteristics definition through the run theory



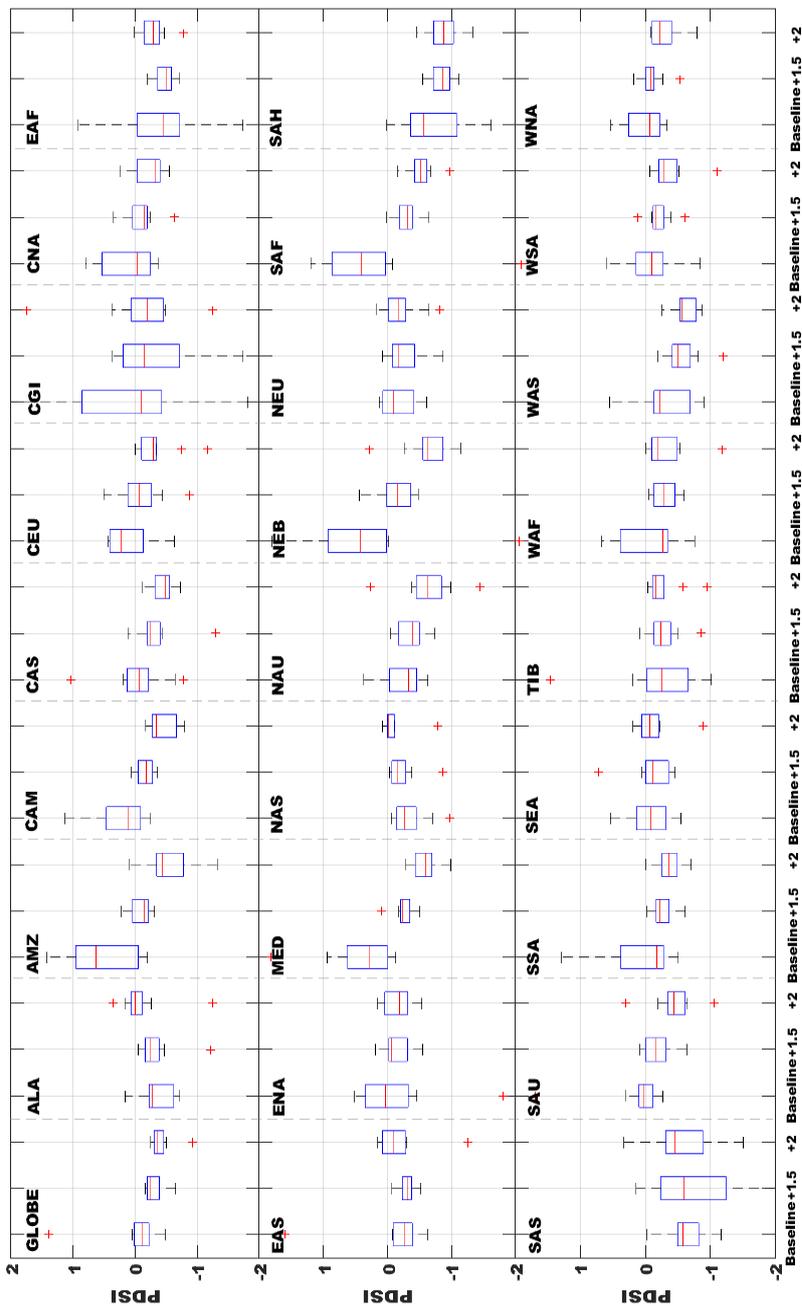


656 **Figure 3:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean PDSI (i) and model consistency (ii) on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from the baseline
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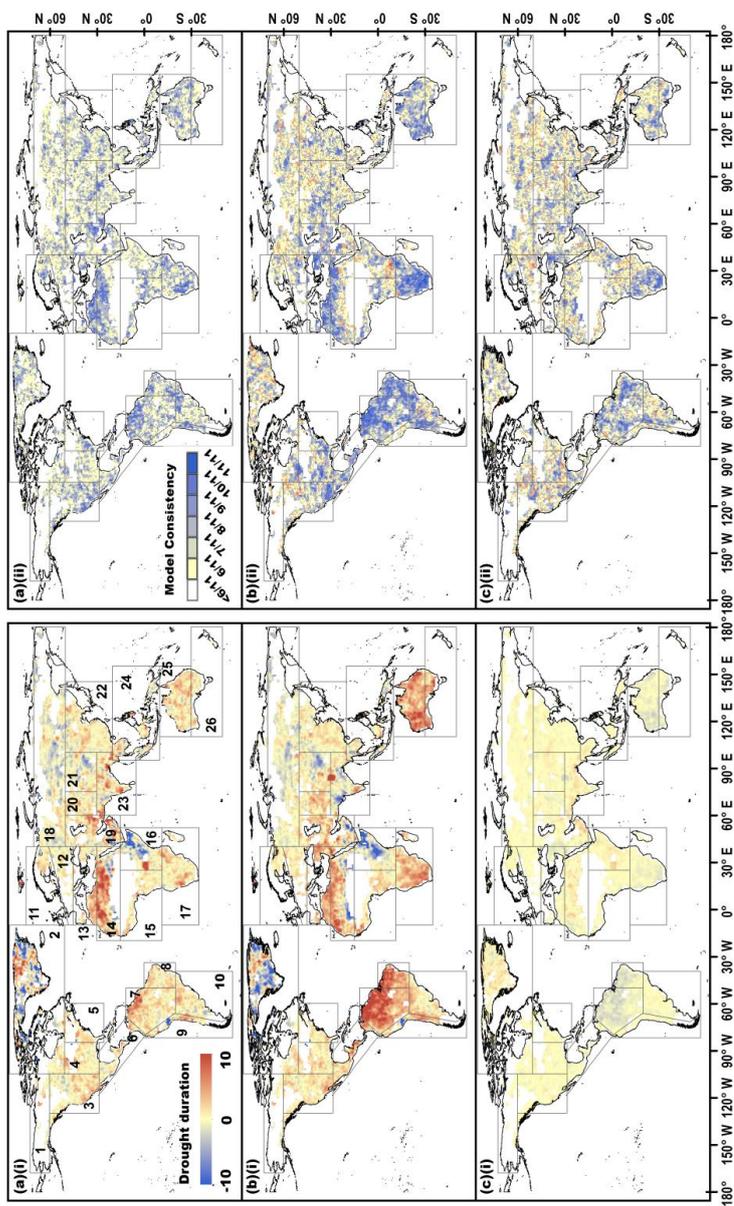


662 **Figure 4:** Multi-model projected PDSI at the globe (66°N-66°S) and in 27 world regions for the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer worlds.
 663 The projected uncertainty of multiple climate models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period



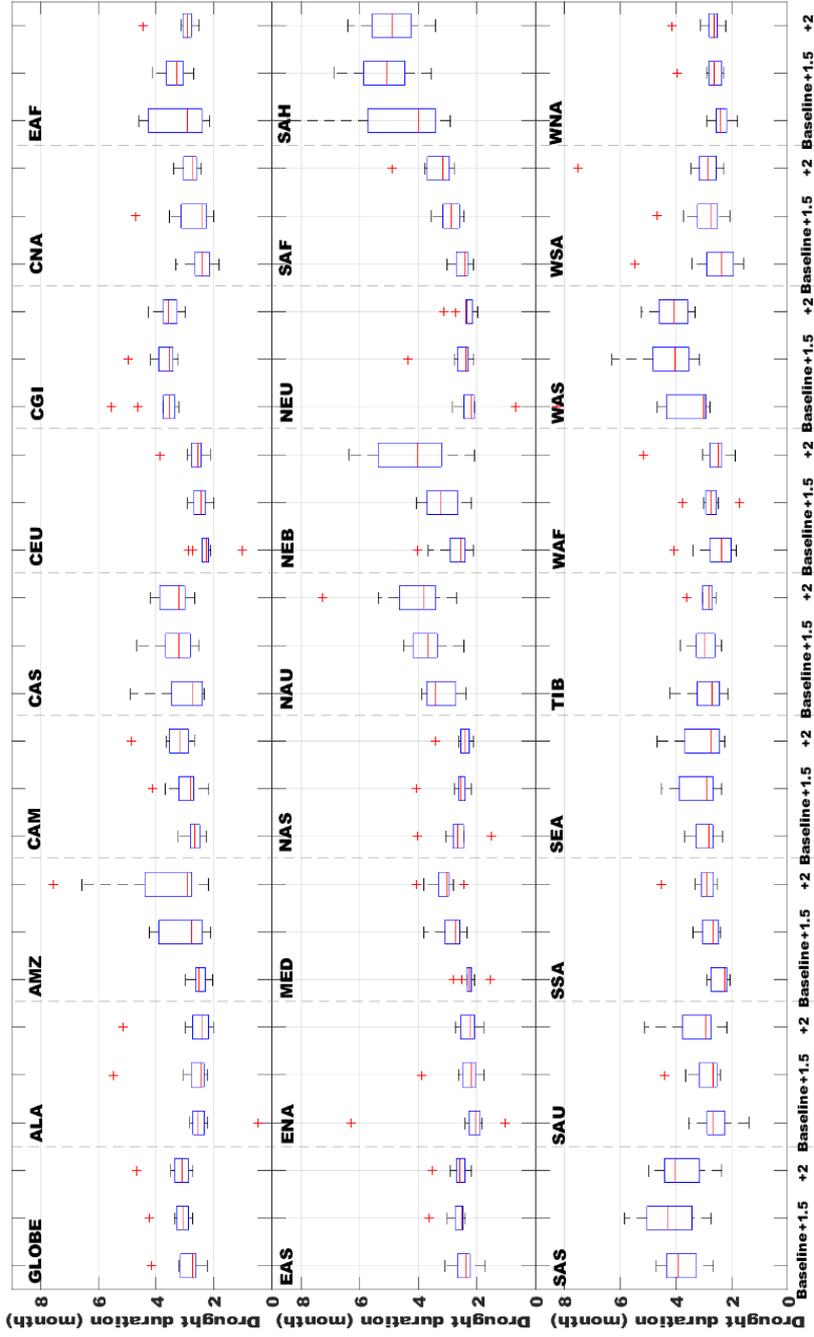


665 **Figure 5:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean drought duration (i) and model consistency (ii) on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from
 666 the baseline period to 1.5°C , (b) from the baseline period to 2°C and (c) from 2°C to 1.5°C . The dark-gray boxes show the regions adopted by
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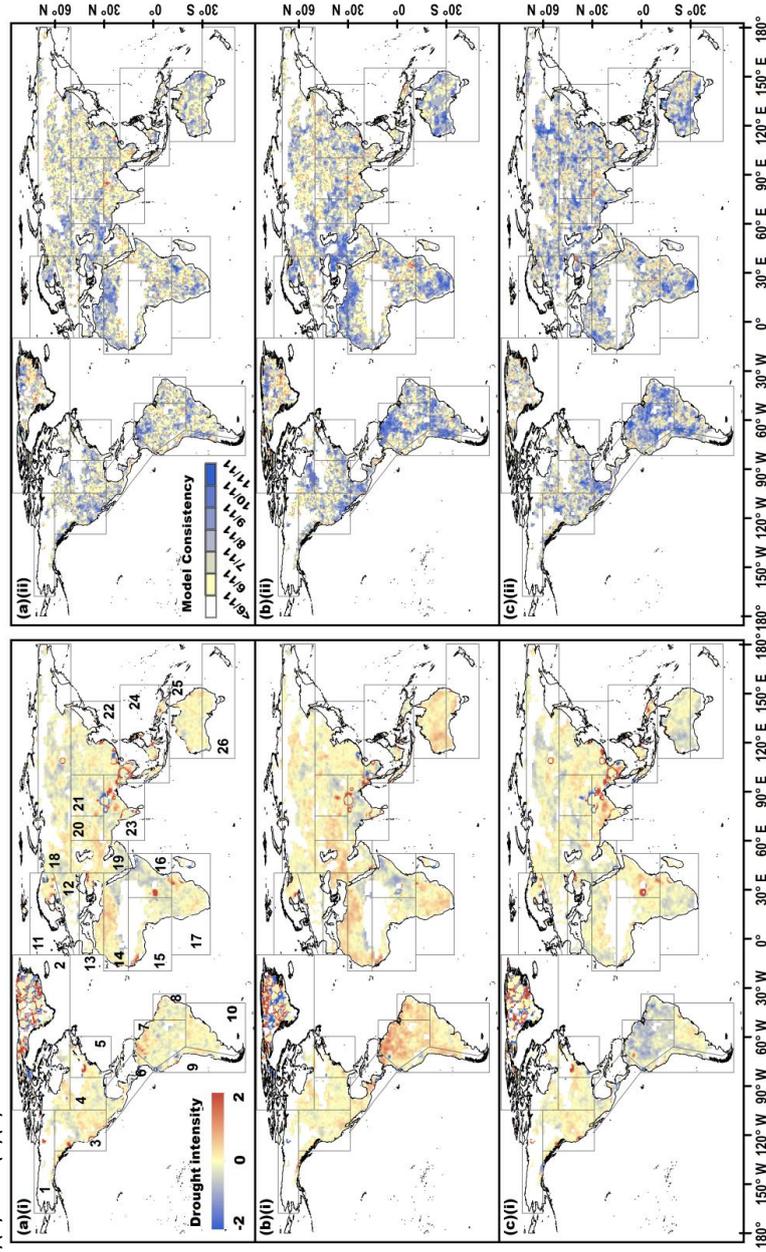


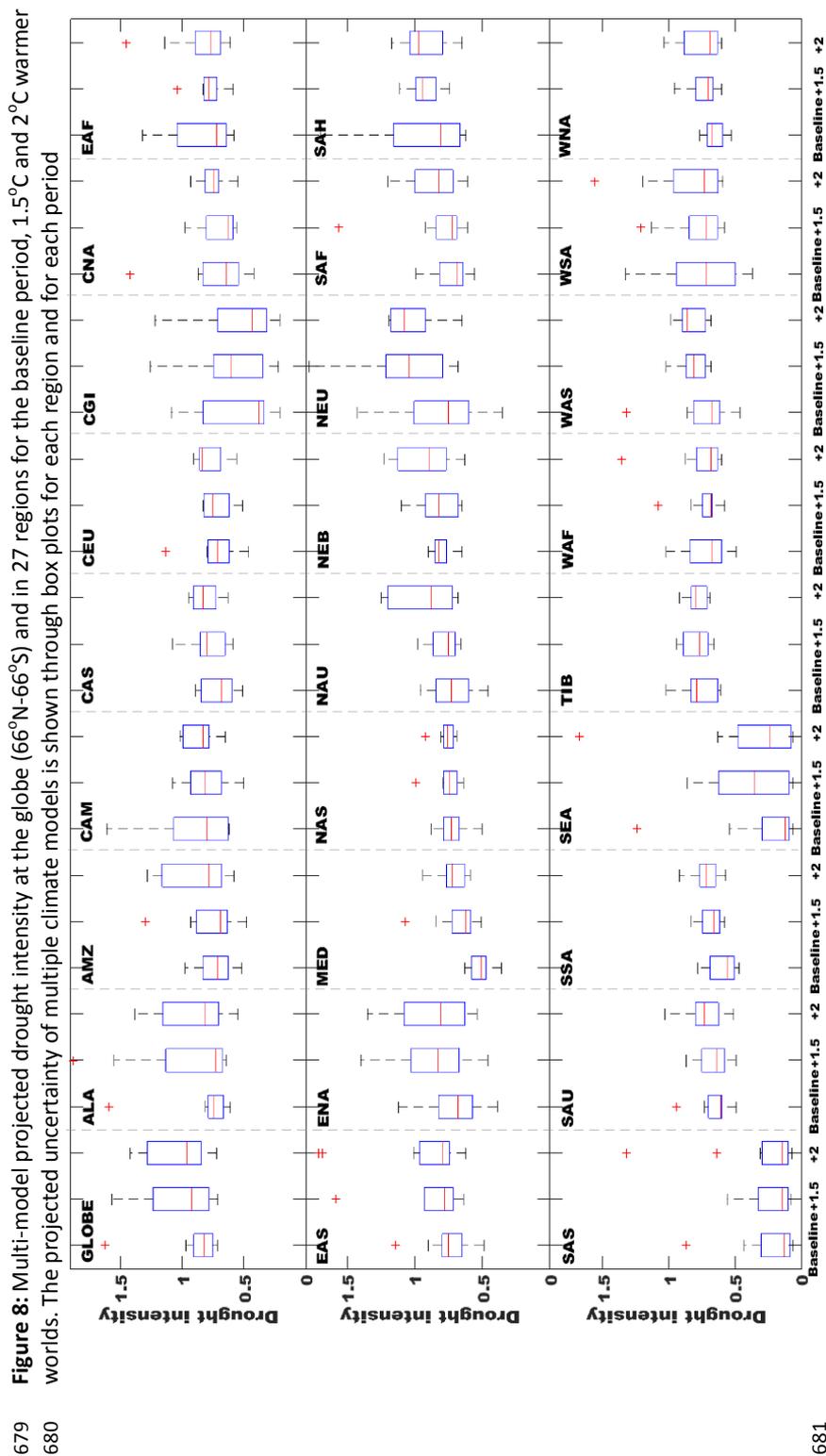
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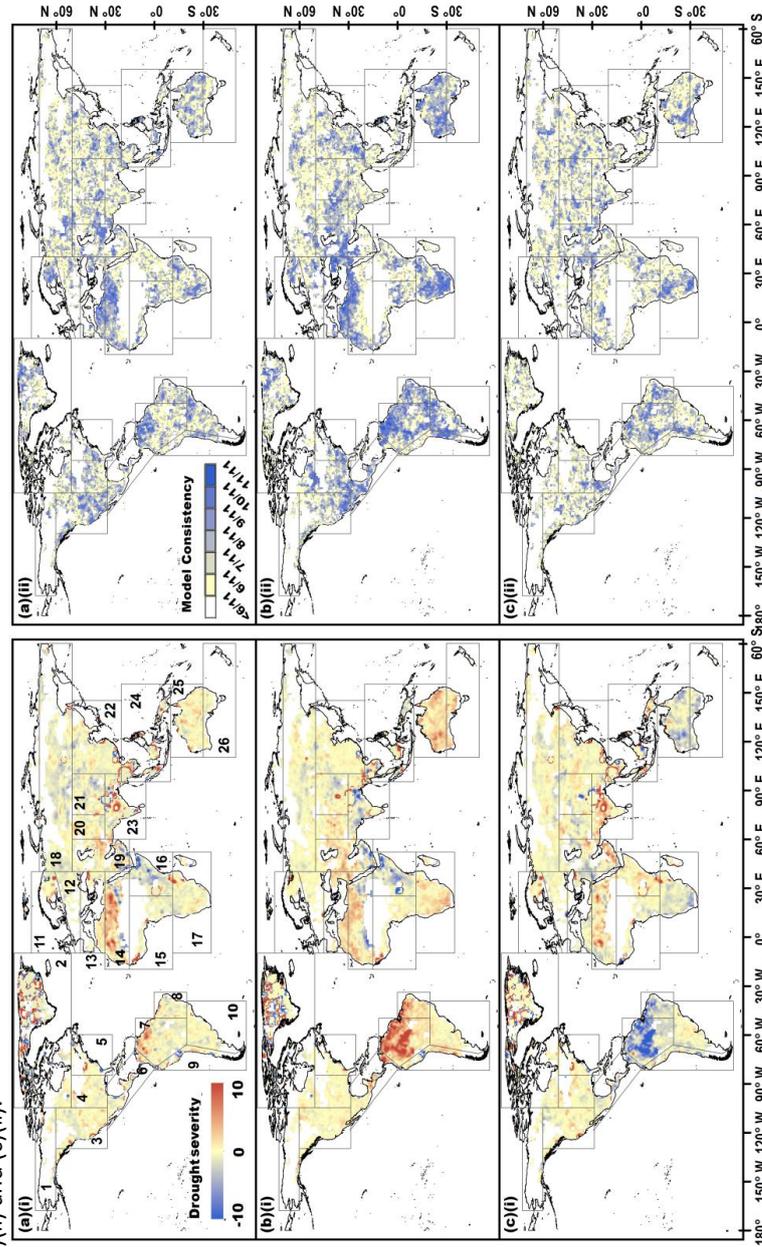
674 **Figure 7:** Changes in multi-model ensemble mean drought intensity (i) and model consistency (ii) on a spatial resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$, (a) from
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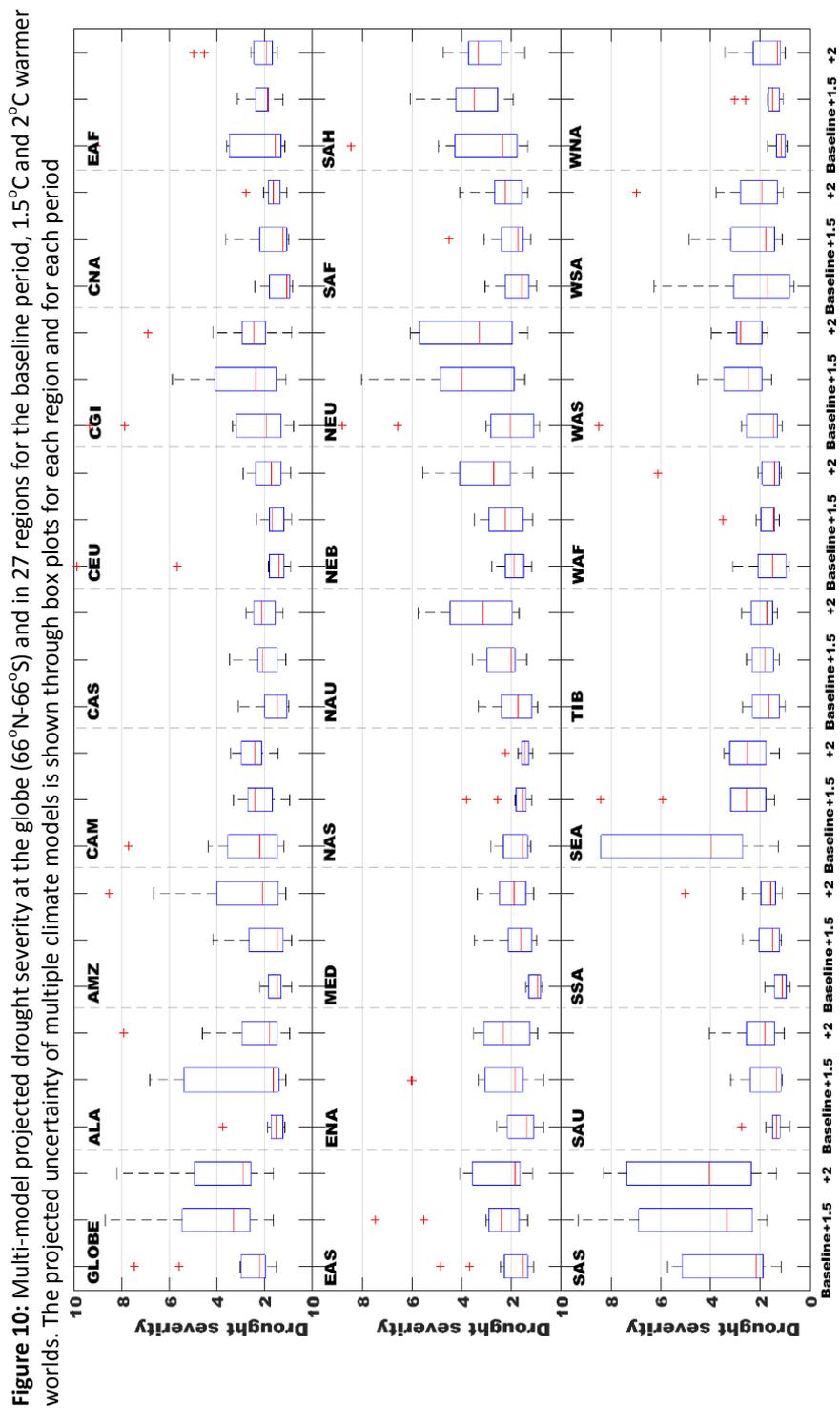




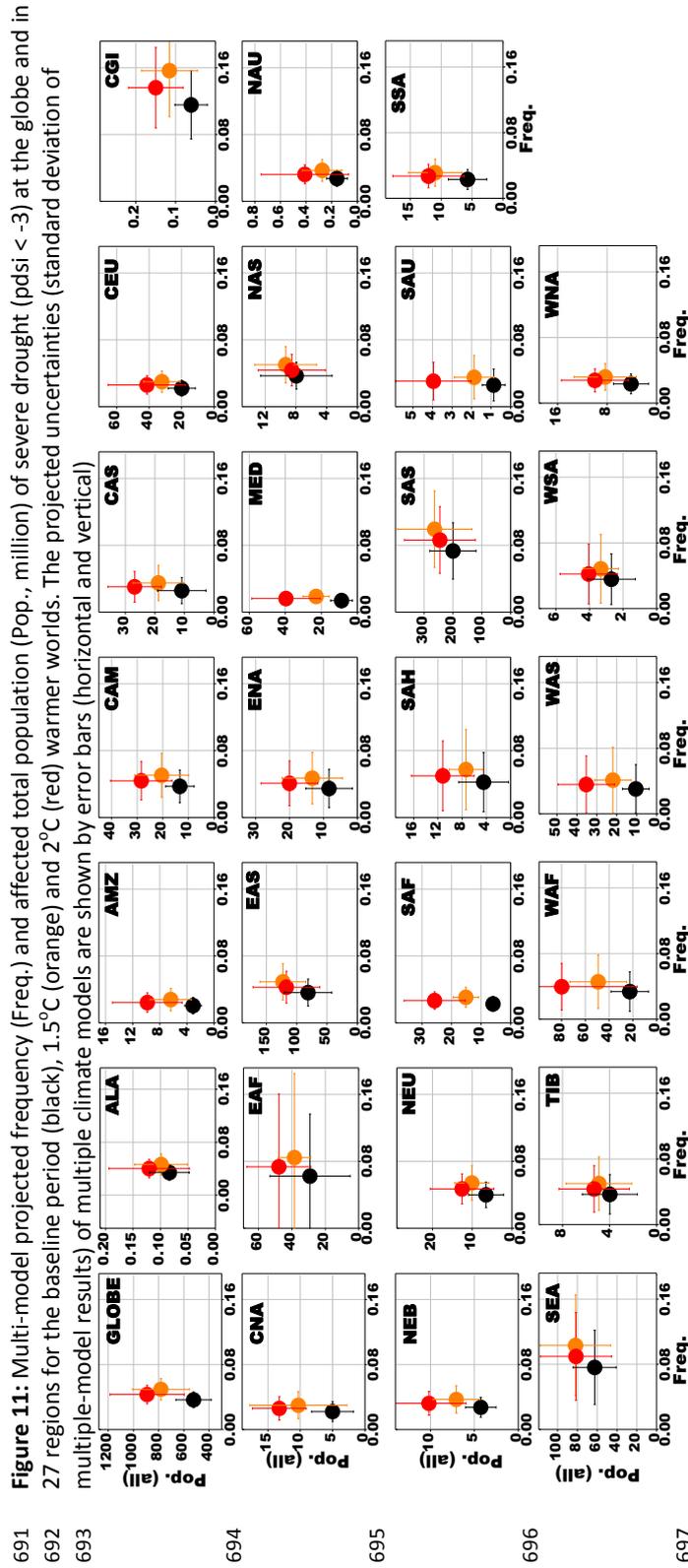


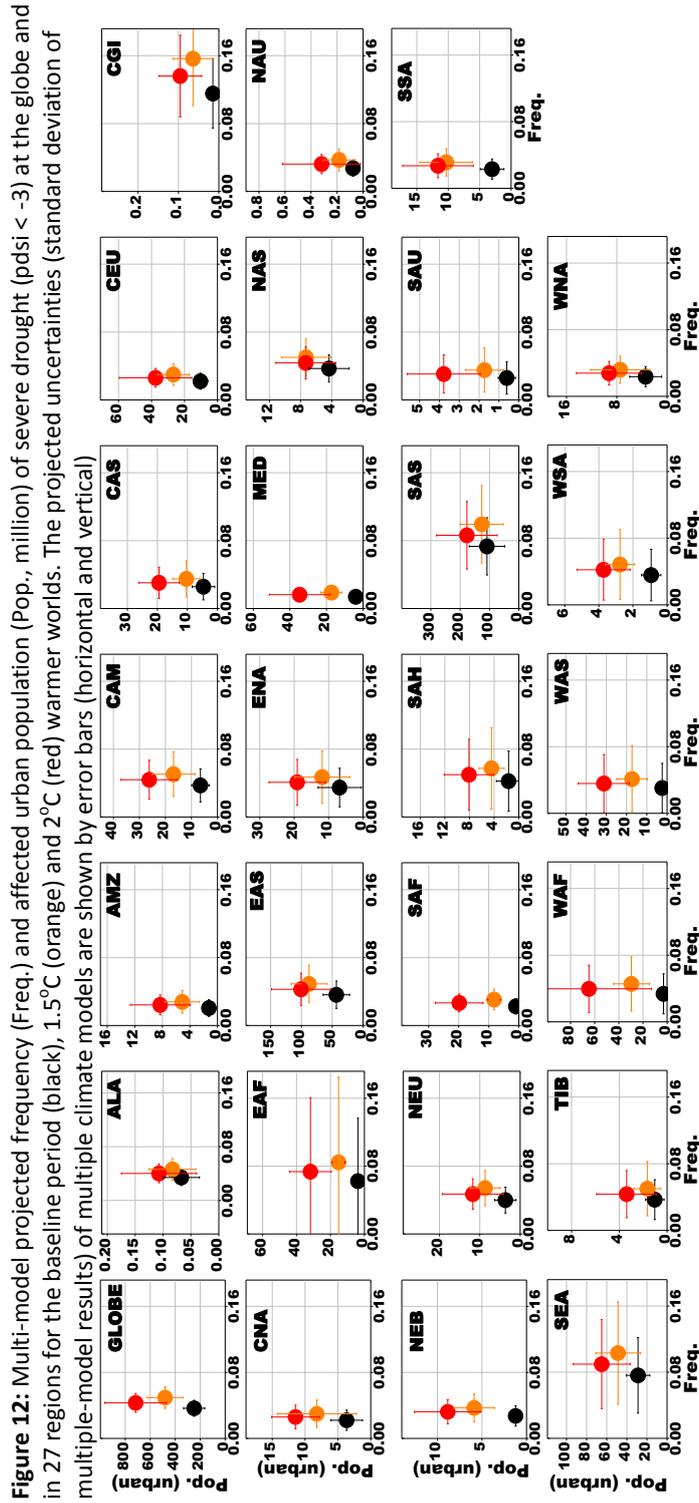
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 684 IPCC (2012), which are labeled in (a)(i) using the ID numbers defined in Table 2. Legend in (a)(i) applies to (b)(i) and (c)(i); legend in (a)(ii)
 685 applies to (b)(ii) and (c)(ii).



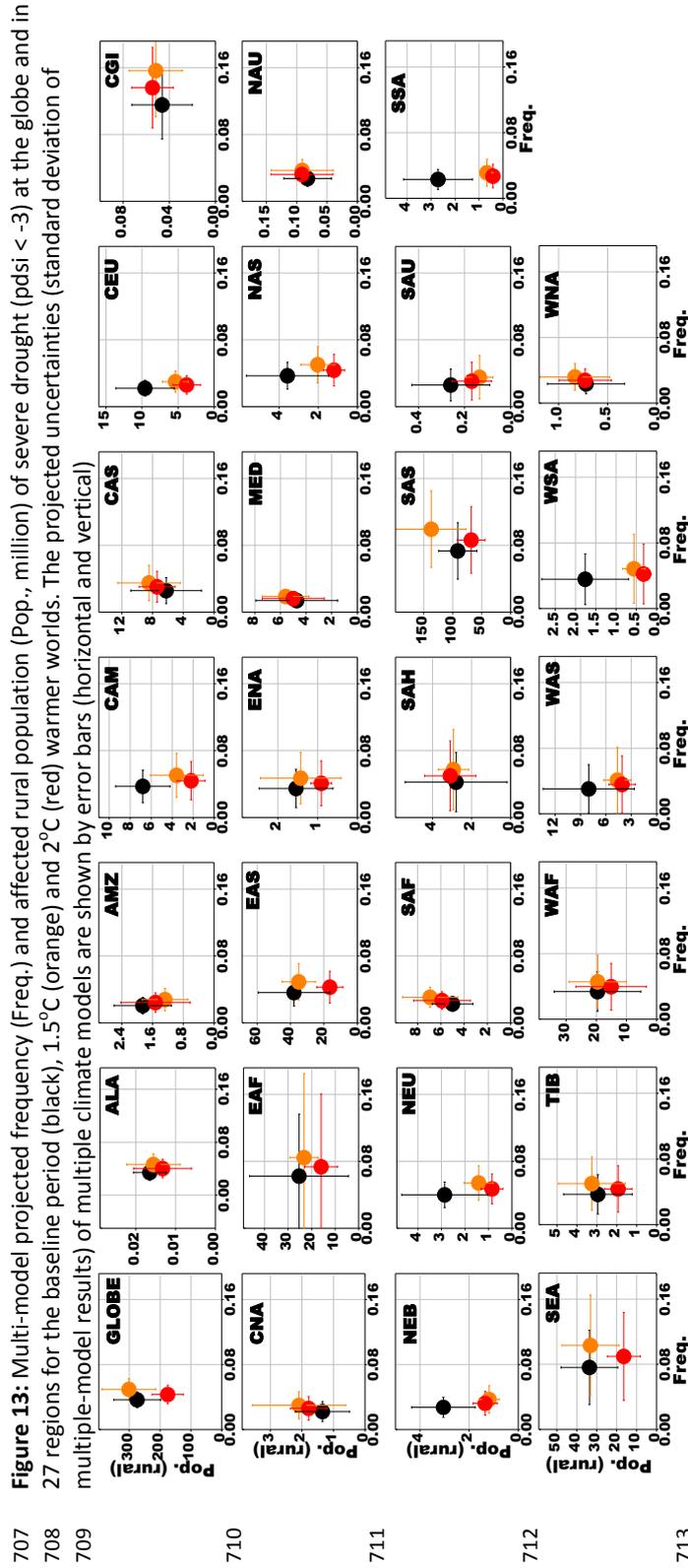


687 **Figure 10:** Multi-model projected drought severity at the globe (66°N-66°S) and in 27 regions for the baseline period, 1.5°C and 2°C warmer
 688 worlds. The projected uncertainty of multiple climate models is shown through box plots for each region and for each period





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