

# *Children, among those most affected by high temperatures*

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**Children, among those most affected by high temperatures**

by María Josefina Arce

The world has been experiencing months of intense heat. Last June, record temperatures were recorded, and this seems to be a trend that has led experts to predict that 2024 could surpass 2023 as the hottest year.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, the average global temperature has been 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels for twelve consecutive months.

Emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, from human activities continue to rise, causing temperatures to soar.

This situation particularly affects the most vulnerable populations, such as pregnant women, the elderly and children.

In this context, UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, warned that one in five children, some 500 million, have suffered at least twice as many extremely hot days as their older relatives.

The UN agency compared data from the 1960s with average temperatures from 2020 to the present, which showed a significant increase in the number of days with temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius.

The outlook for children is even more alarming in West and Central African countries, where much of the population does not have access to drinking water, which is essential to beat the heat and prevent dehydration.

In addition, most of them do not have education and health centers that are prepared for a changing climate in which excessive temperatures are becoming a constant.

Infants are therefore at serious risk. UNICEF points out that heat stress can lead to serious complications, ranging from malnutrition to increased susceptibility to diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, which already have a high global incidence.

Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can also have long-term effects on children's neurodevelopment, mental health and general well-being.

The world needs to raise awareness, join forces and take immediate action on climate change, as it is endangering future generations.

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