

UN announces climate breakdown after record summer heat

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United Nations, September 6 (RHC)-- "Climate breakdown has begun", the United Nations chief has warned as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported that the world went through its hottest Northern Hemisphere summer on record. The WMO, citing data from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), said on Wednesday that August was the hottest month on record "by a large margin" and the second hottest ever month after July 2023.

August is estimated to have been about 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the pre-industrial average. It also saw the highest global monthly average sea surface temperature on record, nearly 21C (69.8F).

“The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement after the report’s release. According to C3S, so far, 2023 is the second hottest year on record behind 2016.

Scientists blame ever-warming human-caused climate change on the burning of coal, oil and natural gas with an extra push from a natural phenomenon El Nino, which is a temporary warming of parts of the Pacific Ocean that changes weather worldwide.

Usually, an El Nino, which started earlier this year, adds extra heat to global temperatures but more so in its second year. “What we are observing, not only new extremes but the persistence of these record-breaking conditions, and the impacts these have on both people and planet, are a clear consequence of the warming of the climate system,” C3S’s Climate Change Service Director Carlo Buontempo said.

Copernicus, a division of the EU’s space programme, has records going back to 1940, but in the United Kingdom and the United States, global records go back to the mid-1800s and those weather and science agencies are expected to soon report that the summer was a record-breaker.

Scientists have used tree rings, ice cores and other proxies to estimate that temperatures are now warmer than they have been in about 120,000 years. The world has been warmer before, but that was prior to human civilisation, seas were much higher and the poles were not icy.

So far, daily September temperatures are higher than what has been recorded before for this time of year, according to the University of Maine’s Climate Reanalyzer. While the world’s air and oceans were setting heat records, Antarctica continued to set records for low amounts of sea ice, the WMO said.

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