



State of the Global Climate 2020: WMO

Why in News

Recently, the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#) released its annual **State of the Global Climate for 2020**.

- The report was released ahead of the **Leaders Summit on Climate**, hosted by the US.
- Extreme weather combined with [Covid-19](#) was a double blow for millions of people in 2020. However, the [pandemic](#)-related [economic slowdown](#) **failed to put a brake on climate change drivers and accelerating impacts**.

Key Points

▪ Global Temperature:

- 2020 **was one of the three warmest years on record**, despite a cooling [La Niña](#) event.
 - The global average temperature was about **1.2° Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) level**.
 - The other two warmest years are **2016** and **2019**.
- The **six years since 2015 have been the warmest on record**.
 - 2011-2020 **was the warmest decade on record**.

▪ Greenhouse Gases:

- **Emission** of major [greenhouse gases](#) **increased in 2019 and 2020**.
 - It will be **higher** in **2021**.
- **Concentrations** of the major greenhouse gases in the air **continued to increase in 2019 and 2020**.
- Globally, averaged **mole fractions** of carbon dioxide (CO₂) have already exceeded 410 parts per million (ppm), and if the CO₂ concentration follows the same pattern as in previous years, it could reach or exceed 414 ppm in 2021.
 - **Mole fraction** represents the **number of molecules of a particular component in a mixture divided by the total number of moles** in the given mixture. It's a way of expressing the concentration of a solution.

▪ Oceans:

- In 2019, the oceans had the **highest heat content** on record. In 2020, it has broken this record further. Over **80% of the ocean area experienced at least one marine heatwave in 2020**.
 - A marine heatwave is defined when **seawater temperatures exceed a seasonally-varying threshold for at least 5 consecutive days**.
- The percentage of the ocean that experienced **“strong” marine heat waves (45%)** was

greater than that which experienced “**moderate**” marine heat waves (28%).

▪ **Sea-level Rise:**

- Since record-taking started in 1993 using the satellite altimeter, sea-level has been rising. It is **due to the La Niña induced cooling**.
- Sea level has recently been rising at a higher rate **partly due to the increased melting of the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica**.

▪ **The Arctic and the Antarctica:**

- In 2020, the [Arctic](#) sea-ice extent came down to second lowest on record.
 - The 2020 minimum extent was **3.74 million square kilometre**, marking **only the second time** (after 2012) **on record that it shrank to less than 4 million sq km**.
- In a large region of the Siberian Arctic, **temperatures in 2020 were more than 3°C above average**.
 - A record temperature of 38°C was noted in the town of **Verkhoyansk, Russia**.
- The [Antarctic](#) sea-ice extent remained close to the long-term average.
 - However, the Antarctic ice sheet has exhibited a strong mass loss trend since the late 1990s.
 - This trend accelerated around 2005, and **currently, Antarctica loses approximately 175 to 225 Gigaton per year**, due to the increasing flow rates of major [glaciers](#) in West Antarctica and the Antarctic Peninsula.

▪ **Extreme Weather Events in India:**

- India **experienced one of its wettest [monsoons](#) since 1994**, with a seasonal surplus of 9% that led to **severe [floods](#) and [landslides](#)**.
- [Cyclone Amphan](#), which hit Kolkata in May 2020, has been named as the **costliest tropical cyclone for the North Indian Ocean region** that brought about an estimated loss of USD 14 billion.

▪ **Climatic Impact:**

◦ **Extreme Weather Situations:**

- Along with the pandemic, people across the world struggled to survive as they faced extreme weather in the form of storms, cyclones, heavy rainfall and record heat.
- **Response and recovery** to people hit by cyclones, storms and similar extreme weather was **constrained throughout the pandemic in 2020**.

◦ **Human Mobility Issues:**

- Mobility restrictions and economic downturns owing to Covid-19 **slowed down delivery of humanitarian assistance** to vulnerable and displaced populations, who live in dense settlements.
- The **pandemic added further dimension to human mobility concerns**, highlighting the need for an integrated approach to understanding and addressing climate risk and impact on vulnerable populations.

World Meteorological Organization

▪ **About:**

- It is an **intergovernmental organization** with a **membership of 192 Member States and Territories**. **India is a member**.
- It originated from the **International Meteorological Organization (IMO)**, which was established after the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.

▪ **Establishment:**

- Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23rd March 1950, WMO became the **specialized agency of the [United Nations](#)** for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.

- **Headquarters:**

- Geneva, Switzerland.

[Source: DTE](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/state-of-the-global-climate-2020-wmo-1>