

## 2C warming goal now 'optimistic' - French scientists

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Snow falls on flowers in New York City, in 2011. French scientists unveiling new estimates for global warming said on Thursday the 2 C (3.6 F) goal enshrined by the United Nations was "the most optimistic" scenario left for greenhouse-gas emissions.

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The estimates, compiled by five scientific institutes, will be handed to the UN's [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) for consideration in its next big overview on global warming and its impacts.

The report -- the fifth in the series -- will be published in three volumes, in September 2013, March 2014 and April 2014.

The French team said that by 2100, warming over pre-industrial times would range from two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) to 5.0 C (9.0 F).

The most pessimistic scenarios foresee warming of 3.5-5.0 C (6.3-9.0 F), the scientists said in a press release.

Achieving 2C, "the most optimistic scenario," is possible but "only by applying climate policies to reduce [greenhouse gases](#)," they said.

In its Fourth Assessment Report published 2007, the IPCC said Earth had already warmed in the 20th century by 0.74 C (1.33 F).

It predicted additional warming in the 21st century of 1.1-6.4 C (1.98-11.52 F), of which the likeliest range was 1.8-4.0 C (3.24-7.2 F).

The French estimates are derived from two different computer models that crunch data for four scenarios based on atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the main greenhouse gas.

The work differs from previous calculations as it takes into account the [reflectivity](#) of clouds and uptake of CO<sub>2</sub> by the oceans and other factors that can skew the equation, the authors said.

Meeting in Cancun, Mexico in December 2010, countries under the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC) set 2 C (3.6 F) above pre-industrial times as the maximum limit for warming.

They vowed to consider lowering it to 1.5 C (2.7 F) if scientific evidence warranted this.

Small island states and other poor nations badly exposed to [climate change](#) are lobbying for the 1.5 C (2.7 F) limit.

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