

UN says 2001-2010 decade shows faster warming trend

July 3 2013, by John Heilprin



People stand on roofs as their homes are seen inundated by floodwaters in Vijaywada, about 270 kilometers (169 miles) southeast from Hyderabad, India, Friday, Sept. 23, 2005. Health workers distributed food, medicine and drinking water Friday to thousands of homeless people in southwestern India where monsoon rains have killed 74 people over the last three days. (AP Photo, File)

Global warming accelerated since the 1970s and broke more countries' temperature records than ever before in the first decade of the new millennium, U.N. climate experts said Wednesday.

A new analysis from the World Meteorological Organization says average land and [ocean surface temperatures](#) from 2001 to 2010 rose above the previous decade, and were almost a half-degree Celsius above the 1961-1990 global average.

The decade ending in 2010 was an unprecedented era of climate extremes, the agency said, evidenced by heat waves in Europe and Russia, droughts in the Amazon Basin, Australia and East Africa, and huge storms like Tropical Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina.

Data from 139 nations show that droughts like those in Australia, East Africa and the Amazon Basin affected the most people worldwide. But it was the hugely destructive and deadly floods such as those in Pakistan, Australia, Africa, India and Eastern Europe that were the most frequent [extreme weather events](#).

Experts say a decade is about the minimum length of time to study when it comes to spotting climate change.

From 1971 to 2010, [global temperatures](#) rose by an average rate of 0.17 degrees Celsius per decade. But going back to 1880, the average increase was .062 percent degrees Celsius per decade.



In this Sept. 10, 2008 file photo girls hold hands to keep their balance as they walk the rails of flooded train tracks in Thiarye Sur Mer, on the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2008. U.N. climate experts say global warming accelerated since the 1970s, breaking more countries' temperature records than ever before. The World Meteorological Organization's analysis Wednesday, July 3, 2013 calls the first decade of the new millennium an unprecedented era of climate extremes ranging from heat waves in Europe and Russia, to droughts in the Amazon Basin, Australia and East Africa, to huge storms like Tropical Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina.(AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell, File)

The pace also picked up in recent decades. Average temperatures were 0.21 degrees Celsius warmer this past decade than from 1991 to 2000, which were in turn 0.14 degrees Celsius warmer than from 1981 to 1990.

Natural cycles between atmosphere and oceans make some years cooler than others, but during the past decade there was no major event

associated with El Nino, the phenomenon characterized by unusually warm temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Much of the decade was affected by the cooling La Nina, which comes from unusually cool temperatures there, or neutral conditions.



This Aug. 14, 2010 file photo shows an aerial view of the flooded Rohjan area in southern Pakistan. U.N. climate experts say global warming accelerated since the 1970s, breaking more countries' temperature records than ever before. The World Meteorological Organization's analysis Wednesday, July 3, 2013 calls the first decade of the new millennium an unprecedented era of climate extremes ranging from heat waves in Europe and Russia, to droughts in the Amazon Basin, Australia and East Africa, to huge storms like Tropical Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina. (AP Photo/Khalid Tanveer, File)

Given those circumstances, WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud says the data doesn't support the notion among some in the scientific

community of a slowdown, or lull, in the pace of planetary warming in recent years.

"The last decade was the warmest, by a significant margin," he said. "If anything we should not talk about the plateau, we should talk about the acceleration."



This Aug. 29, 2005 file photo provided by NOAA shows a satellite image of Hurricane Katrina. U.N. climate experts say global warming accelerated since the 1970s, breaking more countries' temperature records than ever before. The World Meteorological Organization's analysis Wednesday, July 3, 2013 calls the first decade of the new millennium an unprecedented era of climate extremes ranging from heat waves in Europe and Russia, to droughts in the Amazon Basin, Australia and East Africa, to huge storms like Tropical Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina. (AP Photo/NOAA, File)

Jarraud says the data show warming accelerated between 1971 and 2010,

with the past two decades increasing at rates never seen before amid rising concentrations of industrial gases that trap heat in the atmosphere like a greenhouse.



This Jan. 16, 2011 file photo shows an aerial view of a neighborhood affected by landslides in Nova Friburgo, Brazil U.N. climate experts say global warming accelerated since the 1970s, breaking more countries' temperature records than ever before. The World Meteorological Organization's analysis Wednesday, July 3, 2013 calls the first decade of the new millennium an unprecedented era of climate extremes ranging from heat waves in Europe and Russia, to droughts in the Amazon Basin, Australia and East Africa, to huge storms like Tropical Cyclone Nargis and Hurricane Katrina. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana, File)

By the end of 2010, the report shows, atmospheric concentrations of some of the chief warming gases from fossil fuel burning and other human actions were far higher than at the start of the industrial era in

1750. Carbon dioxide concentrations measured in the air around the world rose 39 percent since then; methane rose 158 percent; and nitrous oxide was up 20 percent.

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