

Africa hit worst by extreme weather in 2015

November 8 2016



Superstorms, drought, heatwaves and flooding have become more intense and frequent due to human-induced global warming

Four of the 10 countries hammered hardest in 2015 by climate-boostered extreme weather are in Africa, according to a report released Tuesday at UN climate talks in Marrakesh.

"Africa is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change," said Sonke Kreft, lead author of the Global Climate Risk Index 2017 report, issued annually by risk analysts Germanwatch.

Poor countries in general are more exposed to the ravages of superstorms, drought, heatwaves and flooding, all of which have become more intense and frequent due to human-induced global warming.

"The distribution of climatic events is not fair," Kreft said, noting that the world's least developed countries have emitted only a small fraction of the greenhouse gases heating up the planet.

Mozambique tops the list of nations most affected on the 2015 climate risk index, followed by Dominica, Malawi and India. Myanmar, Ghana and Madagascar are also among the top 10.

The index measures level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme events.

Climate models predicting that global warming enhances both the intensity and frequency of such events have been borne out by a crescendo of deadly weather, especially over the last decade.

More than half-a-million people worldwide died as a direct result of almost 11,000 extreme weather events from 1996 to 2015, according to the report, which has been tracking risk, country-by-country, for more than a decade.

Climate pact

The Paris climate agreement entered into force November 4



Key points

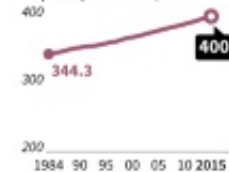
- Keep warming "well below 2 degrees Celsius". Continue all efforts to limit the rise in temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius
- Aim for greenhouse gas emissions to peak "as soon as possible". No binding objective set out by country

Rich countries must provide 100 billion dollars from 2020, as a "floor". Amount to be updated by 2025

Review mechanism

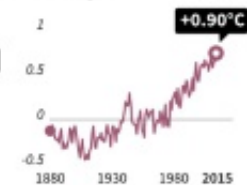
First world report in 2023
Reviews every 5 years, the first in 2025

CO₂ Principal gas responsible for global warming
Carbon dioxide (concentration in the atmosphere, parts per million)

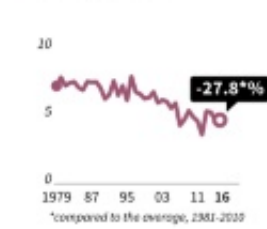


Sources: UN, climate analytix

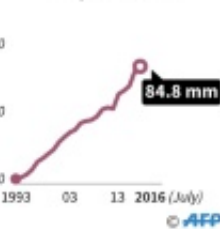
TEMP Global temperature
Variation in temperature compared to the 20th century average



ICE Sea ice in the northern hemisphere
Surface in September, in millions of km²



SEA Global sea levels
Variation in mm compared to 1993



Climate pact

Storms, heatwaves, floods and other climate-related natural disasters caused upwards of three trillion dollars (2.7 trillion euros) damage over the same period.

During those two decades, the countries worst hit were Honduras, Myanmar and Haiti.

The Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam and Thailand were also among the worst affected, taking into account both lives lost and the cost of damage.

The report does not factor out what percentage of the damage done can be attributed directly to global warming.

The UN talks, tasked with implementing the landmark Paris Agreement inked last December, run through November 18.

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