

Fight climate change like coronavirus: UN

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The United Nations on Wednesday urged the world to fight climate change with the same determination as it is showing in the battle against COVID-19.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization said it was time to flatten

the curve on [climate change](#) as well, with its impact on the planet "reaching a crescendo" in the past five years—which were the hottest on record.

The trend is expected to continue, the WMO said Wednesday, as it marked Earth Day.

This year's celebration comes 50 years since the first Earth Day in 1970.

Carbon dioxide levels at one key global observing station are about 26 percent higher than in 1970, whilst the average global temperature has increased by 0.86 degrees Celsius since then, the WMO said.

Temperatures are also 1.1 Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial era, it added.

The agency said the COVID-19 crisis was exacerbating the socioeconomic impacts of [climate](#) change—for example making it harder to evacuate people and keep them safe from [tropical cyclones](#).

The WMO said the coronavirus crisis "may result in a temporary reduction in [greenhouse gas emissions](#), but it is not a substitute for sustained [climate action](#).

"And it will make it more difficult to tackle weather, climate and water-related hazards which are becoming more acute because of climate change."

WMO secretary-general Petteri Taalas said that extreme weather events had increased, and would not go away due to the new coronavirus pandemic.

He said failure to tackle climate change could threaten human well-

being, ecosystems and economies "for centuries" to come.

"We need to flatten both the pandemic and climate change curves.

"We need to show the same determination and unity against climate change as against COVID-19," calling for action not only in the short-term "but for many generations ahead".

Global Atmosphere Watch stations have recorded a reduction in key pollutants and improvements in air quality as a result of the industrial downturn during the pandemic.

However, with carbon dioxide concentrations at key reporting stations remaining at record levels, the WMO said it was important that any post-coronavirus recovery stimulus packages help the economy to grow back in a greener way.

"Previous economic crises have often been followed by 'recovery' associated with much higher emission growth than before the crisis," the organisation noted.

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