



MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF  
WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY 2016

BY  
PETTERI TAALAS  
SECRETARY-GENERAL  
WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Climate change is affecting our natural and human environment. Our emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise, and the temperature of the lower atmosphere and the ocean is increasing.

Today the Earth is already 1°C hotter than at the start of the twentieth century. The international community has unanimously recognized the need for bold action.

Governments adopted the Paris Agreement last year to "hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C."

This is an ambitious commitment, and the national plans adopted so far may not be enough to avoid a rise of 3 °C. Yet, we have the knowledge and tools we need to face the future.

WMO and the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services are playing an essential role in building climate-resilient societies. Because of past and present emissions, we must prepare for a future with more hot days, warm nights and heatwaves. This will affect public health and put a strain on our societies. We can reduce health risks related to heat through multi-hazard early warning systems that provide timely alerts to decision-makers, health services and the general public.

We must also address droughts more proactively through integrated drought management. We need to provide decision-makers with guidance on effective policies and land management strategies. We also need to improve access to scientific knowledge and share best practices for coping with drought.

Climate change is also increasing the risk of heavy rains and floods. We can protect lives and property from such hazards through impact-based forecasts. This approach to disaster risk is the best way to empower emergency managers with information they can act on.

The UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals establish a powerful global commitment to end poverty. This includes pursuing improved food security and water and sanitation for all. It calls for clean energy and resilient cities. And it promotes the sustainable management of natural ecosystems.

Building climate and weather resilient communities is a vital part of this global strategy for achieving sustainable development.

The WMO community will continue to support countries in pursuing sustainable development and tackling climate change through the provision of the best possible science and of operational services for weather, climate, hydrology, oceans and the environment.

Thank you.