

Beat: News

2014 on track to be hottest year on record amid floods, drought

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USPA News - The year 2014 is on track to become the hottest year on record, largely due to high global sea surface temperatures that has contributed to exceptionally heavy rainfall in many countries and extreme drought in others, the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Wednesday. Provisional data for the current year shows that the global average air temperature over land and sea surface for January to October was about 0.57 Celsius (1.03 Fahrenheit) above the average between 1961 and 1990, and 0.09 Celsius (0.16 Fahrenheit) above the average for the past decade.

If November and December maintain the same tendency, which is expected, 2014 will be the hottest year on record. "The provisional information for 2014 means that fourteen of the fifteen warmest years on record have all occurred in the 21st century. There is no standstill in global warming," warned WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud. The organization said the latest data confirms the underlying long-term warming trend, but it expressed particular concern over the fact that record temperatures are taking place in the absence of a full El Nino, which occurs when warmer than average sea-surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific combine with atmospheric pressure systems, affecting weather patterns globally. WMO said sea surface temperatures increased to near El Nino-thresholds despite the absence of atmospheric responses, and many weather patterns normally associated with El Nino were observed across the world, which Jarraud said is "particularly unusual and alarming." "What we saw in 2014 is consistent with what we expect from a changing climate. Record-breaking heat combined with torrential rainfall and floods destroyed livelihoods and ruined lives," Jarraud said. "Record-high greenhouse gas emissions and associated atmosphere concentrations are committing the planet to a much more uncertain and inhospitable future." Average surface air temperatures over land for January to October were about 0.86 Celsius (1.54 Fahrenheit) above the 1961-1990 average, the fifth warmest on record. Western North America, Europe, eastern Eurasia, much of Africa, large areas of South America and southern and western Australia were particularly warm, while cooler-than-average conditions were seen across the United States, Canada and central Russia, with notable cold waves in the U.S.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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