

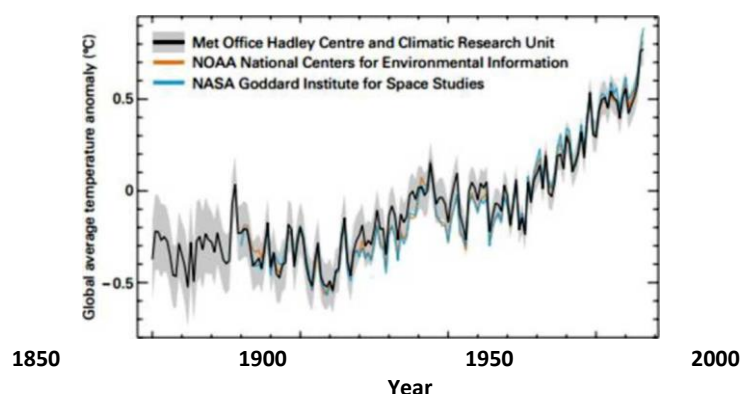
The French Water Partnership's water & climate news digest



A quarterly update on water and climate by Solène Fabrèges, program officer and coordinator of the climate working group at the French Water Partnership

A LOOK BACK ON THE YEAR 2016 WITH THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION'S NEW REPORT

Just over a year after the success of COP21, climate change issues are more concerning than ever. In its last status report on the global climate¹, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported 2016 as being the warmest year on record, with a rise of 1.1°C compared to the pre-industrial era, i.e. 0.06°C warmer than 2015. The intense El Niño episode observed in 2015-2016 played a major part in the acceleration of global warming in 2016, reminding that “when natural variabilities interact with anthropogenic climate change, the impacts on human societies and the natural environment can be severe”.



Average global temperature anomalies (1961–1990 reference period) based on the three main data sources used by the WMO. The grey shaded area shows the uncertainty of HadCRU data (source: UK Met Office Hadley Center), WMO Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2016, WMO-No 1189, 2017

Atmospheric greenhouse gas levels hit record highs again at the end of 2015, especially CO₂ and methane. In November 2016, sea-ice extent had fallen more than 4 million km² below the average of the period 1979-2015, while sea levels rose continuously as a result of expanding oceans and melting ice caps.

2016 was blighted by a number of extreme events: extensive drought in many parts of the world, particularly countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, led to poor harvests and major food shortages. Ethiopia experienced its worst drought in 50 years according to the United Nations, followed by considerable famine and the displacement of thousands of people. In contrast, severe floods hit South East Asia, causing hundreds of deaths and significant economic loss.

¹WMO Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2016, WMO-No 1189, 2017

In light of these circumstances, there is an urgent need to step up and accelerate international negotiations to lower the emissions of greenhouse gases and help populations to adapt to the now inevitable global warming. Yet, negotiations held in Marrakech in 2016 failed to establish a hard and fast framework for implementing the Paris Agreement. While developed countries have reiterated their intention to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020, there is a yawning gap between expectations in developing countries and the reality of funds available. Carbon price negotiations have been intense without actually resulting in a decision.

And we should bear in mind that the total amount of nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by States to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) after COP21 is based on an estimated increase in average of land temperatures of between 2.7°C and 3.5°C by 2100. Current efforts are therefore still insufficient to keep temperature rises below 2°C, which was the initial goal of COP21. It is urgent to scale up States' ambitions with a view to reassessing NDCs. However, the review and revision process for these contributions will only be addressed at the COP24 in 2018.

This means that adaptation strategies are now required in many countries. However, it is crucial to reiterate that such strategies must not be presented as a substitute to greenhouse gas reduction strategies. This delicate matter is particularly important in the current international context, and with the arrival of a climate skeptic at the head of the world's second biggest country in terms of CO2 emissions.

EXPECTATIONS FOR COP23 AND FOR THE WATER TOPIC

Consequently, expectations of the next COP, which will be held in Bonn (Germany) in November 2017 and presided by Fiji, seem relatively low.

Some positive progress in the water sector should, however, be highlighted, starting with a strongly-driven civil society, which is increasingly active in tackling climate change. The introduction of the Marrakech Partnership of Global Climate Action is a first step towards organizing the input of non-State entities in cohesion with the States. The UNFCCC secretariat demonstrates a genuine desire to fulfil its role of coordinating all the parties involved around the 7 topics selected in Marrakech (land use, oceans, water, human settlements, transport, energy, industry).

The Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A) established at COP21 and conducted by the Adaptation Committee, a subsidiary branch of the UNFCCC, prompts the more practical consideration of various climate negotiation matters. Water is among the topics on the TEP-A agenda for 2017. This sends out a positive message, although talks within UNFCCC branches are still far removed from the problems encountered by populations who suffer the drastic consequences of global warming on a daily basis.

ABOUT FWP

The French Water Partnership, presided by former French deputy Jean Launay, is a public and private platform gathering 140 internationally active members into 6 groups: the state and public bodies, NGOs, associations and foundations, local and parliamentary authorities, economic actors, training research institutes and qualified personalities. For a decade, it has been lobbying at international level to make water a policy priority and promoting French expertise in the field.

<http://www.partenariat-francais-eau.fr/en/>



THEY ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE FWP



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