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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

CWU and TUC Welcomes Head of the United Nations (UN) Call for Protecting Workers from Extreme Heat

In a report published on Thursday, the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) called for greater protections for workers from extreme heat. Antonio Guterres stated that "A new rights-based approach is needed to safeguard workers from excessive temperatures." The report states that workers should have the right to refuse to work in sweltering heat conditions if their health is being placed at risk.

The UN Secretary General issued the 'urgent call to action' after the world experienced its three hottest days on record. He stated that "the fact is that extreme temperatures are no longer a one-day, one-week or one-month phenomenon. If there is one thing that unites our divided world, it's that we're all increasingly feeling the heat. Earth is becoming hotter and more dangerous for everyone, everywhere." He added that "heat is estimated to kill almost half a million people a year" and attributes fossil-fuel-charged, human-induced climate change to rising temperatures. Guterres said that "a growing number of workers face exposure to heat stress" and he called for urgent action and international cooperation to address the extreme heat in a number of critical areas. These include caring for populations that are vulnerable to climate change, protecting exposed workers and ensuring their safety and health, boosting the resilience of economies and societies by using data and science, and limiting the temperature rise to 1.5°C by phasing out fossil fuels and increasing investment in renewable energy. He stated that "We need measures to protect workers, enshrined in human rights and we must ensure that laws and regulations reflect the reality of extreme heat today – and are enforced". He concluded that "heat is estimated to kill almost half a million people a year."

The World Meteorological Organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and others have reported that extreme heat events are increasing in scale, intensity, frequency and duration. Last month was not only the hottest on record, it also marked the 13th consecutive month to break global temperature records.

The CWU has joined the TUC and other UK Unions in welcoming the UN Secretary General's call for urgent action on excessive working temperatures – and for workers to be given extra rights and protections. Extreme heat, hot summers and intense sunlight is becoming the norm around the world, and we agree for the need to strengthen UK laws to stop workers from being put at risk. Nobody should be forced to work in unbearable and dangerous conditions. TUC Congress policy is to call for a maximum indoor workplace temperature of 30 degrees. and if

the work is of a heavy nature, it should be 27 degrees. The CWU also wants better, consistent health and safety controls to consistently protect outdoor workers which is the workplace for the majority of CWU members. Two years ago, the health, safety and environment department pressed Royal Mail Group for action and it was agreed that outdoor work should cease on UK 'Red Warning' days when outdoor temperatures hit a UK record of 35C.

Attachments:

- UN Press Release
- UN Report
- UN Secretary General Flyer

Yours sincerely

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

UN Secretary-General issues call to action on extreme heat

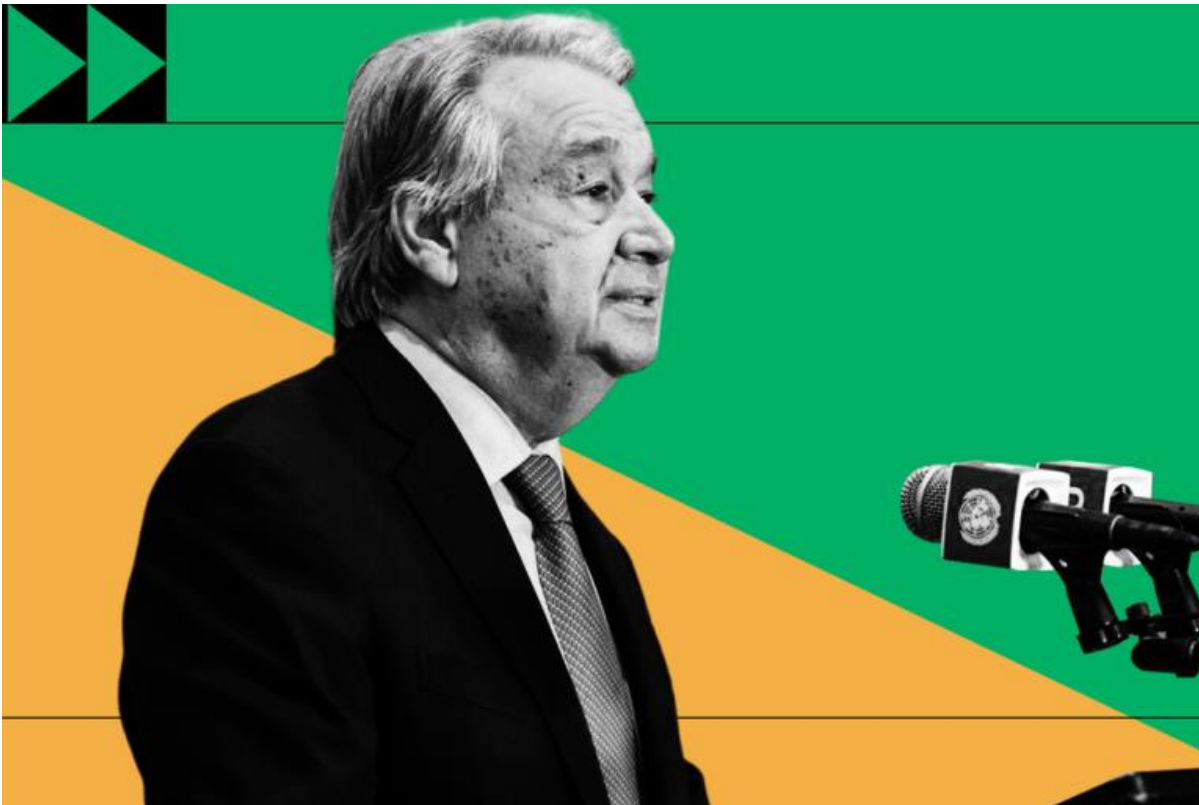
Press Release

25 July 2024

The World Meteorological Organization is one of ten specialized United Nations entities rallying behind UN Secretary-General António Guterres' Call to Action on Extreme Heat, which is posing an increasing threat to our socio-economic and environmental well-being.

Key messages

- WMO informs and supports call to action to save lives and livelihoods
- Earth just had 3 warmest days and 13 warmest months in recent history
- Extreme heat impacts all aspects of socio-economic well-being
- Integrated heat-health action plans are key to Early Warnings for All



Un Secretary-General call to action on extreme heat

United Nations

The new initiative was launched in a week which saw the three warmest days recorded on Earth in recent history, according to one of the datasets that the WMO uses to monitor the climate.

On 22 July 2024, the daily global average temperature reached a new record high at 17.16°C in the ERA5 dataset that extends back to 1940 from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S). On 23 July, the preliminary value was 17.15°C. On 21 July, the temperature record was 17.09°C. All three days were warmer than the previous record of 17.08°C, set only last year on 6 July 2023.

"Earth is becoming hotter and more dangerous for everyone, everywhere," said Mr Guterres.

“Billions of people are facing an extreme heat epidemic -- wilting under increasingly deadly heatwaves, with temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius around the world. That’s 122 degrees Fahrenheit. And halfway to boiling,” said Mr Guterres.

“The World Meteorological Organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and others have documented a rapid rise in the scale, intensity, frequency and duration of extreme-heat events,” he said.

Extreme heat is increasingly tearing through economies, widening inequalities, undermining the Sustainable Development Goals and killing people. It is estimated to kill almost half a million people a year, that’s about 30 times more than tropical cyclones, pointed out Mr Guterres.

The Call to Action on Extreme Heat says there must be a concerted effort to enhance international cooperation to address extreme heat in four critical areas:

- Caring for the vulnerable
- Protecting workers
- Boosting resilience of economies and societies using data and science
- Limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C by phasing out fossil fuels and scaling up investment in renewable energy.

It brings together the expertise and perspectives of ten specialized UN entities, including extensive and detailed input from experts at WMO and in the WMO-WHO Joint Office on Climate and Health. It is a first-of-its-kind joint report underscoring the diverse multi-sectoral impacts of extreme heat on human health, lives, and livelihoods.. National and local governments and businesses who are the most impacted around the world also supported the launch of the Call to Action.

“Our Earth is running an unprecedentedly high fever,” said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo. “In addition to this week’s three new global daily temperature records, we have seen monthly temperature records for 13 successive months.”

“Widespread, intense and extended heatwaves have hit communities on every continent. At least ten countries have recorded temperatures of more than 50° C in more than one location this year. Many dozens of locations have seen daytime maximum temperatures of more than 40°C and dangerously high minimum overnight temperatures,” she said.

“The WMO community is working hard with many partners to strengthen heat-health action plans and early warnings to treat the symptoms of this fever. But, in addition, we need to tackle the root cause and urgently reduce greenhouse gas levels, which remain at record observed levels,” said Celeste Saulo.

The Call to Action stresses the need to establish and bolster heat early warning systems in line with the Early Warnings for All initiative, ensuring at-risk populations receive timely alerts that include information on protective actions to undertake and sources of assistance. Strengthening capacities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) would be critical, it says.

There is good news, it says, heat illness and deaths are preventable and many impacts can be minimized with targeted economic and social policies and concrete actions, including public awareness campaigns.

It cites recent estimates produced by the WHO and WMO that the global scale-up of heat health-warning systems for 57 countries alone has the potential to save an estimated 98,314 lives per year.

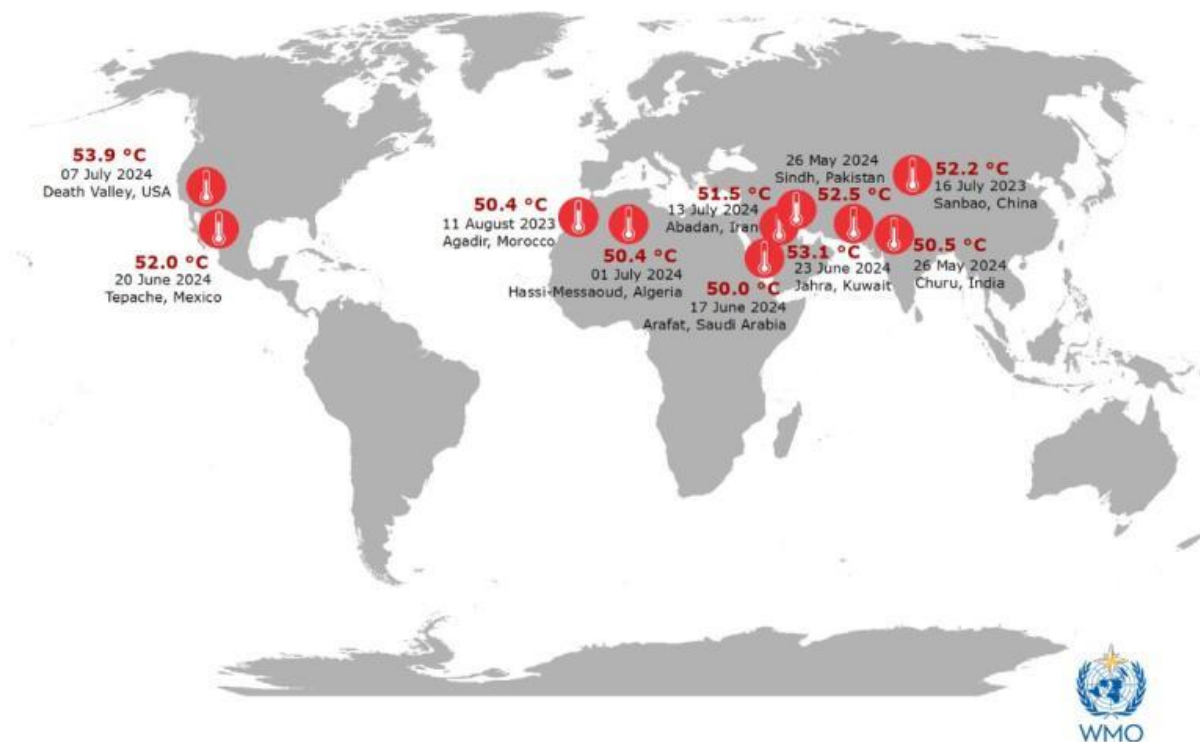
The need is urgent. Modelled estimates show that between 2000 and 2019, approximately 489,000 heat-related deaths occurred each year, with 45 per cent of these in Asia and 36 per cent in Europe. Worldwide, the official diagnosis and reporting of heat-related illness, injuries and deaths are recognized to be under-reported. The lack of

uniform reporting standards makes the aggregation and comparison of nationally reported impact statistics challenging, it says.

Every one of these deaths is preventable.



Extreme daily temperatures of 50° or more July 2023 to July 2024



Extreme heat in 2024

Extreme heat in 2024

Multi-sectoral health action

Heat directly impacts people and amplifies the risks of wildfire, droughts, and water shortages and food insecurity. Therefore the acute, long-term, and compounding risks of extreme heat must be managed across society by multiple sectors.

The WMO and [UNDRR Center of Excellence for Disaster and Climate Resilience](#) together with the [Global Heat Health Information Network](#) have been working with more than a dozen UN agencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to find common approaches to integrated planning, better resource allocation, and improved collaboration to address the systemic drivers of extreme heat risk.

WMO is committed to collaboration with partners in the Early Warnings For All Initiative and the [Global Heat Health Information Network](#) to provide a solid framework for more integrated and impactful heat action.

Heat risk management solutions are many. The WMO [State of Climate Services for Health 2023](#) features case studies from around the world showcasing how integrated climate and health action makes a very real difference in people's daily life. This includes early warning systems for extreme heat at city and national level, community based heat risk awareness campaigns, and nature based solutions for local cooling.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that Heat Action Plans and Heat Health Warning Systems are some of the most effective adaptation options for extreme heat.

Sensible occupational safety and health measures that protect indoor and outdoor workers could save US\$361 billion a year, according to the International Labor Organization.

Extreme heat in 2024

Extreme heat, like other facets of the climate crisis, does not affect everyone equally. It is the most vulnerable and exposed communities in society who are hit hardest. Urban poor and displaced persons are particularly defenceless in the face of extreme heat.

This year heatwaves have hit countries across the globe this year. This led to:

- A spike in hospitalizations and deaths in the Sahel in Africa;
- Record temperatures across the United States – reportedly placing 120 million people under heat advisory warnings.
- Scorching conditions that killed 1,300 pilgrims during Haj;
- Extended heatwaves in Europe;
- The closure of schools across Asia and Africa – impacting more than 80 million children.

“The world needs a strategy to deal with heat that serves to mobilize Governments, policy makers and all stakeholders to act, prevent and reduce heat risk; to increase resilience to heat; to manage extreme heat crises; and to mitigate its worst impacts,” says the Call to Action.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting international cooperation in atmospheric science and meteorology.

WMO monitors weather, climate, and water resources and provides support to its Members in forecasting and disaster mitigation. The organization is committed to advancing scientific knowledge and improving public safety and well-being through its work.

For further information, please contact:

- Clare Nullis WMO media officer clnullis@wmo.int +41 79 709 13 97
- WMO Strategic Communication Office Media Contact media@wmo.int

New record daily global average temperature reached in July 2024

The Earth has just experienced its warmest day in recent history, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) data. On 22 July 2024, the daily global average temperature reached a new record high in the ERA5 dataset, at 17.16°C. This exceeds the previous records of 17.09°C, set just one day before on 21 July 2024, and 17.08°C, set a year earlier on 6 July 2023.*

Based on data released by C3S on 25 July, Monday 22 July was the hottest day in the ERA5 dataset, which begins in 1940. The temperature on 23 July was very similar, at 17.15°C**.

While the temperature on 21 July 2024 (17.09°C) was almost indistinguishable from the previous record of 17.08°C reached on 6 July 2023, the difference between these and the new record temperature (17.16°C) reached on 22 July is larger than typical differences in day-to-day variations among alternative datasets.

What really stands out is also the difference between the temperatures since July 2023 and all previous years. The data can be explored in [Climate Pulse](#), the C3S application that provides historical and near-real-time temperature data from the ERA5 reanalysis dataset.

Before July 2023, the previous daily global average temperature record was 16.8°C, on 13 August 2016. From 3 July 2023 to 23 July 2024 there have been 59 days that have exceeded that previous record, distributed between July and August 2023, and during June and July so far in 2024.

Commenting on the record set on 21 July 2024, **C3S Director Carlo Buontempo** said: *"On July 21st, C3S recorded a new record for the daily global mean temperature. What is truly staggering is how large the difference is between the temperature of the last 13 months and the previous temperature records. We are now in truly uncharted territory and as the climate keeps warming, we are bound to see new records being broken in future months and years."*

Following the new record for 22 July 2024, Carlo Buontempo added: *"We now have a new record, and its value is sufficiently large to indicate with some confidence that this has exceeded the record set only last year. The event is still ongoing and it is possible the date of the peak may still change, but our data suggest we may see slightly lower temperatures in the next few days."*

Analysis of the years with the highest annual maximum daily global temperatures shows that both 2023 and 2024 have seen annual highs substantially above those recorded in previous years.

Another sign of the global warming trend is the fact that the ten years with the highest annual maximum daily average temperatures are the last ten years, from 2015 to 2024.

The difference between the lowest ranked of those ten years (2015) and the previous record prior to 2023 (13 August 2016) was 0.2°C. The jump from the 2016 record to 2023 is 0.28°C, and to the new 2024 record is 0.36°C, highlighting how substantial the warmth of 2023 and 2024 is (explore the data in the interactive chart below).

Annual maximum daily global average temperatures in the ERA5 record for the past 50 years (1974 to 2024). The ten highest annual maximum temperatures are highlighted in dark red. Data for 2024 are available up to 23 July 2024 at the time of publishing. Data source: ERA5. Credit: C3S/ECMWF.

What caused this new record global average temperature?

The global average temperature tends to reach its annual peak between late June and early August, coinciding with the northern hemisphere summer. This is because the seasonal patterns of the northern hemisphere drive the overall global temperatures. The large land masses of the northern hemisphere warm up faster than the oceans of the southern hemisphere can cool down during the northern summer months.

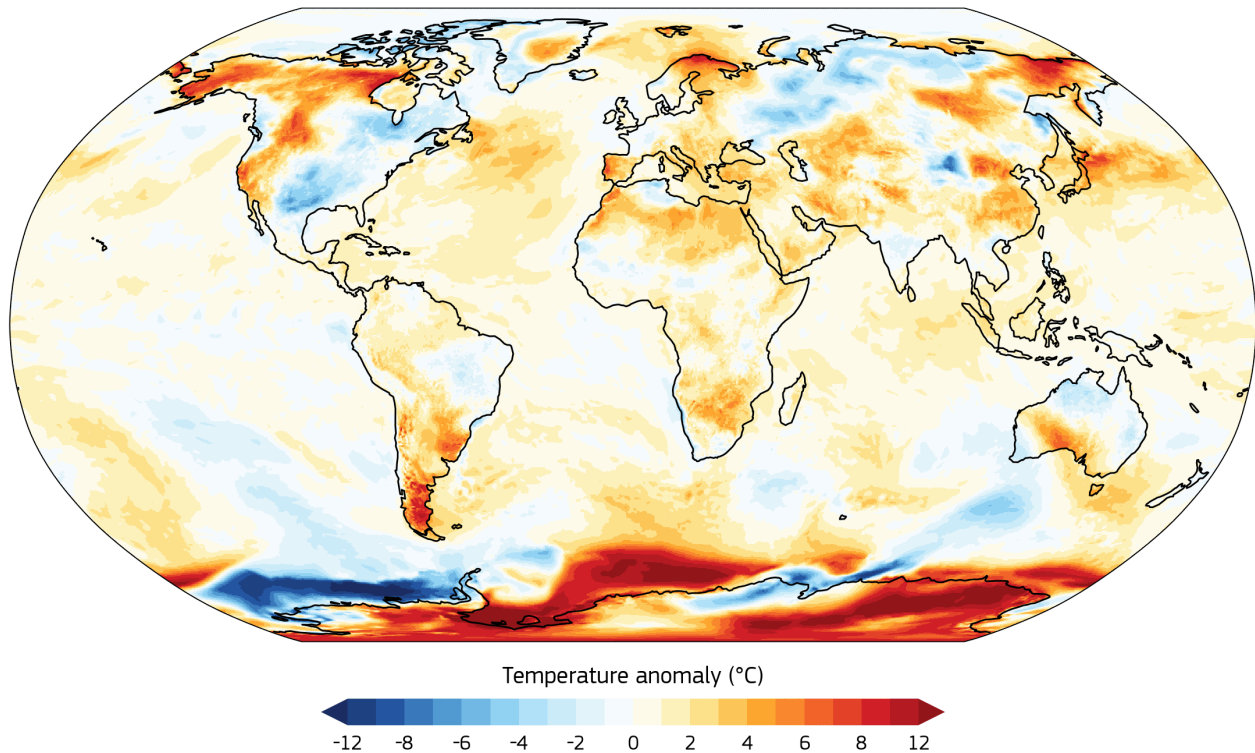
The global average temperature was already at near-record levels in recent days, slightly below the levels of 2023, after being at record levels for the time of year for more than a year.

Our analysis suggests that the sudden rise in daily global average temperature is related to much above-average temperatures over large parts of Antarctica. Such large anomalies are not unusual during the Antarctic winter months, and also contributed to the [record global temperatures in early July 2023](#).

What's more, Antarctic sea ice extent is almost as low as it was [at this time last year](#), leading to much above-average temperatures over parts of the Southern Ocean.

SURFACE AIR TEMPERATURE ANOMALY • 23 JUL 2024

Data: ERA5 • Reference period: 1991–2020 • Credit: C3S/ECMWF



PROGRAMME OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



IMPLEMENTED BY
ECMWF



Surface air temperature anomalies on 23 July 2024, relative to the average for the 1991–2020 reference period. Data source: ERA5, via Climate Pulse. Credit: C3S/ECMWF

Was this expected?

As the global average temperature was already at near-record levels during the first half of July, close to the temperatures seen at this time of year in 2023, and the global average temperature typically reaches its peak at this time of year, it is not completely unexpected that we are seeing global average temperatures of this magnitude.

What can be expected in the coming days and weeks?

Associated with the rise in temperature that resulted in the new records on 21 and 22 July, the highest temperatures were expected to occur on 22 or 23 July. In the days following this peak, the temperature is likely to go down slightly. Further fluctuations are possible in the coming weeks.

As the annual maximum global average temperature can occur any time between late June and the middle of August, the current conclusions are preliminary as we follow the evolution of the climate in near-real-time. In 2023, there was a second peak in the daily global average temperature on 4 August (reaching 17.05°C) that came close to the record set on 6 July 2023. C3S will continue monitoring the situation, providing more information in further updates as needed.

Is 2024 likely to be the warmest year on record?

The ranking for 2024 will largely depend on the development and intensity of the next phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) (i.e. when and how strongly La Niña develops). To date, 2024 has been sufficiently warm for it to be quite possible that the full year will be warmer than 2023, but the exceptional warmth of the last four months of 2023 makes it too early to predict with confidence which year will be the warmer.

What was the previous record?

The previous highest daily global average temperature was 17.08°C, a record set on 6 July 2023 as part of a long streak of record-breaking daily global average temperatures in July and August 2023. Prior to the long streak of record-breaking temperatures in July and August 2023, the highest daily global average temperature in the ERA5 dataset was 16.80°C, on 13 August 2016.



**United
Nations**

"Extreme heat is having an extreme impact on people and planet. The world must rise to the challenge of rising temperatures."



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, United Nations Secretary-General 25 July 2024