



Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and it is happening even more quickly than we feared. But we are far from powerless in the face of this global threat. As [Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out](#) in September, “the climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win”.

No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are

↗ GLOBAL TEMPERATURES ARE RISING

Billions of tons of CO₂ are released into the atmosphere every year as a result of coal, oil, and gas production. Human activity is producing greenhouse gas emissions at a record high, with no signs of slowing down. According to a ten-year summary of UNEP Emission Gap reports, we are on track to maintain a “business as usual” trajectory.

The last four years were the four hottest on record. According to a September 2019 World Meteorological Organization (WMO) report, we are at least one degree Celsius above preindustrial levels and close to what scientists warn would be “an unacceptable risk”. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change calls for holding eventual warming “well below” two degrees Celsius, and for the pursuit of efforts to limit the increase even further, to 1.5 degrees. But if we don’t slow global emissions, temperatures could rise to above three degrees Celsius by 2050.

underwater

↗ FOOD AND WATER INSECURITY

wasted as a result. Meanwhile, climate change limits the availability and quality of water for drinking and agriculture.

In many regions, crops that have thrived for centuries are struggling to survive, making food security more precarious. Such impacts tend to fall primarily on the poor and vulnerable. Global warming is likely to make economic output between the world's richest and poorest countries **grow wider**.

Disasters linked to climate and weather extremes have always been part of our Earth's system. But they are becoming more frequent and intense as the world warms. No continent is left untouched, with heatwaves, droughts, typhoons, and hurricanes causing mass destruction around the world. **90 per cent** of disasters are now classed as weather- and climate-related, costing the world economy **520 billion USD each year**, while 26 million people are pushed into poverty as a result.

Climate change is a major threat to international peace and security. The effects of climate change heighten competition for resources such as land, food, and water, fueling socioeconomic tensions and, increasingly often, leading to **mass displacement**.

Climate is a **risk multiplier**