

What can be expected of Climate change at the global stage by 2030?

Water and climate change are inextricably linked. Climate change affects the world's water in complex ways. From unpredictable rainfall patterns to shrinking ice sheets, rising sea levels, floods and droughts – most impacts of climate change come down to water. Climate change is exacerbating both water scarcity and water-related hazards (such as floods and droughts), as rising temperatures disrupt precipitation patterns and the entire water cycle. About two billion people worldwide don't have access to safe drinking water and roughly half of the world's population is experiencing severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. These numbers are expected to increase, exacerbated by climate change and population growth.

The 'water we eat' daily through the food we consume is much more than what we drink. Depending on the diet, we need 2000 to 5000 liters of water to produce the food consumed daily by one person. Evidence suggests that two-thirds of the world population could be living in water-stressed countries by 2025 if current consumption patterns continue. Water scarcity is expected to intensify as a result of climate change. It is predicted to bring about increased temperatures across the world. Only 0.5 per cent of water on Earth is usable and available freshwater and climate change is dangerously affecting that supply. Over the past twenty years, terrestrial water storage including soil moisture, snow and ice has dropped at a rate of 1 cm per year, with major ramifications for water security. Water supplies stored in glaciers and snow cover are projected to further decline over the course of the century. Sea-level rise is projected to extend salinization of groundwater, decreasing freshwater availability for humans and ecosystems in coastal areas. Every person, in every country in every continent will be impacted in some shape or form by climate change. There is a climate cataclysm looming, and we are underprepared for it. What this could mean is, if left unchecked, climate change will undo a lot of the development progress made over the past years. It will also provoke mass migrations that will lead to instability and wars.

To limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, emissions must already be decreasing and need to be cut by almost half by 2030, just six years away. But we are drastically off track from this target. Urgent and transformative going beyond mere plans and promises are crucial. It requires raising ambition, covering entire economies and moving towards climate-resilient development, while outlining a clear path to achieve net-zero emissions. Immediate measures are necessary to avoid catastrophic consequences and secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

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