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Climate Change: On the Edge as Alarm Bells Echo Louder



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Doha, March 20 (QNA) – Climate change remains the most urgent and formidable challenge facing humanity, with its impact extending across ecosystems, economies, and societies worldwide. A newly released UN report has sounded the alarm on unprecedented climate shifts, warning that some consequences may be irreversible for centuries, even with immediate corrective action.

The State of the Global Climate report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirms that 2024 marked the first calendar year in which Earth's surface temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This made it the hottest year in recorded history. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations also reached their highest levels in 800,000 years, while each of the past ten years ranked among the warmest on record. Ocean temperatures continued their relentless rise, with sea levels now rising at double the rate recorded since satellite measurements began.

The report detailed devastating extreme weather events in 2024, displacing over 800,000 people, the highest annual displacement since records began in 2008. It documented 151 unprecedented climate phenomena, including record-breaking heatwaves in Japan, Australia, Iran, and Mali, where temperatures peaked at nearly 50°C. Severe floods in Italy, Pakistan, Brazil, and Senegal wreaked havoc on communities, while the Philippines endured six typhoons in a single month.

Hurricane Helen became the strongest storm ever recorded in Florida's Big Bend region, and Super Typhoon Yagi affected 3.6 million people in Vietnam.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the planet continues to send out distress signals, emphasizing that while limiting global warming to 1.5°C remains achievable, urgent and intensified efforts are needed. He urged world leaders to harness clean, affordable renewable energy to drive economic and environmental stability.

WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo reinforced these concerns, stating that 2024 data highlights persistent ocean warming, accelerated sea-level rise, and alarming ice sheet melting. The catastrophic consequences of extreme weather events have not only driven mass displacements but also exacerbated food insecurity and inflicted severe economic losses. Saulo underscored the urgent need for investment in weather, water, and climate services to build more resilient communities.

Climate scientists stressed that the climate crisis has intensified at least 550 extreme weather events, including wildfires, droughts, floods, and storms, making them more frequent and severe. They predict that the coming decade will bring even higher global temperatures, placing millions of lives at risk.

Experts emphasized that climate change is not just an environmental crisis but a fundamental threat to human survival. Without immediate, bold action, catastrophic outcomes are inevitable. They urged individuals, governments, and corporations to collaborate on sustainable solutions

that restore balance to the planet.

Studies estimate that every dollar spent on climate adaptation could prevent \$13 in damages and recovery costs, reinforcing the economic and environmental benefits of early intervention. As world leaders prepare new climate action plans, the WMO report serves as a stark reminder: the time for urgent, decisive measures is now.