

## Press release

18 January 2018 UNISDR 2018/01

### UN: THREE-YEAR HOT STREAK “EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO PLANET”

**GENEVA, 18 January 2018** – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Robert Glasser, today described the accelerating pace of climate change as “an existential threat to the planet”.

Mr. Glasser said: “Confirmation today that we have now had a three-year streak of record hot years, each above 1 degree Celsius, combined with record-breaking economic losses from disasters in 2017 should tell us all that we are facing an existential threat to the planet which requires a drastic response.

“We are getting dangerously close to the limit of the two-degree Celsius temperature rise set out in the Paris Agreement and the desired goal of 1.5 degrees will be even more difficult to maintain under present levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

“Now, with improved understanding of the climate science and extreme event attribution, we can no longer hide behind the fallacious argument that no particular extreme weather event can be attributed to climate change when such events can occur with such violence and frequency as we saw during last year’s Atlantic Hurricane Season, or with slow onset in the case of the drought conditions which affected 60 million people in 2016.

“My concern is that climate change is combining with poverty, the destruction of protective eco-systems, inappropriate land use, and population growth in hazard exposed areas to undermine efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, and to push more people to leave home.

“We need increased levels of ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions combined with concrete actions to reduce disaster risk especially in least developed countries which contribute little to climate change.”

The World Meteorological Organization confirmed today that 2015, 2016 and 2017 have been confirmed as the three warmest years on record. 2016 still holds the global record, whilst 2017 was the warmest year without an El Niño.

Ends...

**About UNISDR:** UNISDR is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which seeks “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses, in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

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